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M.A. in ENGLISH

SEMESTER - IV

COR – 411

LITERARY CRITICISM: TWENTIETH CENTURY AND AFTER

Self-Learning Material

DIRECTORATE OF OPEN & DISTANCE LEARNING

UNIVERSITY OF KALYANI

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WEST BENGAL

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Director's Message

Satisfying the varied needs of distance learners, overcoming the obstacle of distance and reaching the unreached students are the threefold functions catered by Open and Distance Learning (ODL) systems. The onus lies on writers, editors, production professionals and other personnel involved in the process to overcome the challenges inherent to curriculum design and production of relevant Self-Learning Materials (SLMs). At the University of Kalyani, a dedicated team under the able guidance of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor has invested its best efforts, professionally and in keeping with the demands of Post Graduate CBCS Programmes in Distance Mode to devise a self-sufficient curriculum for each course offered by the Directorate of Open and Distance Learning (DODL), University of Kalyani.

Development of printed SLMs for students admitted to the DODL within a limited time to cater to the academic requirements of the Course as per standards set by Distance Education Bureau of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, India under Open and Distance Mode UGC Regulations, 2021 had been our endeavour. We are happy to have achieved our goal.

Utmost care and precision have been ensured in the development of the SLMs, making them useful to the learners, besides avoiding errors as far as practicable. Further suggestions from the stakeholders in this would be welcome.

During the production-process of the SLMs, the team continuously received positive stimulations and feedback from **Professor (Dr.) Amalendu Bhunia, Hon'ble Vice- Chancellor, University of Kalyani**, who kindly accorded directions, encouragements and suggestions, offered constructive criticism to develop it within proper requirements. We, gracefully, acknowledge his inspiration and guidance.

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Their persistent and coordinated efforts have resulted in the compilation of comprehensive, learner-friendly, flexible texts that meet the curriculum requirements of the Post Graduate Programme through the Distance Mode.

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COR - 411

LITERARY CRITICISM: TWENTIETH CENTURY AND AFTER

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BLOCK – I

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READER-RESPONSE THEORY

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UNIT – 1

UNIT 1 (A): AN INTRODUCTION TO READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

Reader-response criticism, as its name implies, focuses on readers' responses to literary texts. Attention to the reading process emerged during the 1930s as a reaction against the growing tendency to reject the reader's role in creating meaning, a tendency that became a formal principle of New Criticism that dominated the critical practice in the 1940s and 1950s. The New Critics believed that the timeless meaning of a text is ingrained in the text alone. Its meaning is not a product of the authorial intention; neither does it change with the readers' responses. Gaining its impetus in the mid-1970s, Reader-response criticism is concerned with the relationship between the text and the reader and vice versa, with the emphasis on the varied ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise in the relationship.

Louise Rosenblatt's "Literature as Exploration" (1937) is often believed to have initiated a shift from the text and the author to the role of the reader in producing meaning. The focus on the reader from the text and its author is also stimulated, in a way, by Roland Barthes's famous proclamation in his essay "The Death of the Author" (1967) that, " To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing." Instead, he argued that in order to "give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth; the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author."

Fundamentally, a text, whatever it be (poem, short story, novel, essay, scientific exposition), has no real existence until it is read. Its meaning lies *in potentia*, so to speak. A reader contemplates its meaning by reading it. The reading is complementary; it "actualizes" potential meaning. The reader, therefore, does not have, as had been traditionally perceived, a passive role. On the contrary, the reader is an active agent in the creation of meaning.

Thus, Reader-response criticism maintains that a text cannot have its complete meaning alone; and the theorists of this school, s proposed by Lois Tyson, share two beliefs:

a) That the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature, and

b) That readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text.

Reader-response critics believe that a single text can be read and interpreted in diverse ways. In fact, even the same reader who is reading the same text on two different occasions will probably produce different interpretations, because so many factors contribute to our understanding of the text.

UNIT 1 (B): MAJOR EXPONENTS OF READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

i) STANLEY FISH

"…it is the structure of the reader's experience rather than any structures available on the page that should be the object of description."

- *Interpreting the Variorum* (1976)

One of the pioneering theorists of Reader-response criticism, Stanley Eugene Fish was born April 19, 1938, at the state of Rhode Island in the New England region of the United States. A Jewish by origin, his father had migrated from Poland in his youth and had wanted his son to be educated in the proper way. On his father's motivation and endeavour, Fish became the first member of his family to have a formal education, completing his Undergraduate course in 1959 from the University of Pennsylvania, and Masters from Yale University in 1960.

On earning an M.A. from a reputed American institute, Fish started his academic career as a Lecturer at the University of California, where he was entitled to teach John Milton in class. An amateurish in the field of early modern English literature, the teaching assignment opened new horizons of interpretation for the young Fish, who offered new modes of studying the cult text in his phenomenal work *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967). The book reconciled two contradictory claims regarding Milton (one which believed that Milton was the "devil's party" without knowing it, and the other which viewed him sympathetically as the one who aimed to deliver "the ways of God to men") and produced a single overarching thesis that *Paradise Lost* is a poem about how it came to be the

way they are - that is, fallen—and the poem's lesson is proven on a reader's impulse every time he or she finds a devilish action attractive or a godly action dismaying. His next work *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (1972) emphasises upon the importance of words in the reading process and the reader's understanding of such "self-consuming artefacts" as Plato's Phaedrus, Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, John Donne's *Death's Duel*, Sir Francis Bacon's *Essays*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress*, John Milton's *The Reason of Church Government*, Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*.

In his subsequent essay "Interpreting the Variorum" (1976), Fish introduced his idea of "interpretive communities", which he elaborated in his book *Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Com*munities (1980). Taking its cue from the "Variorum" edition of the poems of John Milton, Fish argues that the reader's activities should be "the center of attention, where they are regarded not as leading to meaning but as having meaning." These activities, which include the making and revising of many kinds of decisions, are already interpretative by nature, hence a description of them will be an interpretation.

Fish is argument is centered on a particular kind of reader, whom he calls the "intended reader", whose education, opinions, concerns, linguistic competences . . . make him capable of having the experience the author wished to provide." He believes that it is the reader's experiences of the text which produces meaning, and this formation of meaning, Fish perceives, to be the primary goal of readers: "the efforts of readers are always efforts to discern and therefore to realize (in the sense of becoming) an author's intention."

Fish's argument, therefore, directly contradicts the opinion of the New Critics and the Formalists who viewed the text as the prime factor in generating meaning. Rather, he views the readers as prime agents of generating meaning, who become part of "interpretive communities" and contribute to the meaning-making process.

ii) WOLFGANG ISER

Against a narrow focus on "the text itself", Reader-response theorists and critics of the 1970s turned to consider the role of the reader. The "Constance School" in Germany was the most prominent in advocating the "aesthetics of reception".

Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007), a prominent member of the "Constance School", focused primarily on the ways in which texts are actively constructed by individual readers through the phenomenology of the reading process. Iser believed that "central to the reading of every literary work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient."

According to him, a literary work has two poles – the artistic and the aesthetic. While the artistic pole belongs to the author, the aesthetic pole is the reader's pole. The work or text is situated between these two poles.

Following the psychological structures of communication suggested by the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing, Iser talks about the dyadic relationship between the text and the reader. He argues that the lack of ascertainably and defined intention brings about the text and the reader; and in this sense, it is linked with social interaction. It is these 'gaps' which constitute the fundamental asymmetry between the text and the reader that gives rise to the communication in the reading process.

In his book *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1972), Iser argues that the literary texts provide the foundation for the interpretation, but they also imply the action of the reader. Reading, as Iser proposes, is not a passive exercise, but is a process of discovery. The reader questions, negate, and revises the expectations that the text establishes, filling in the "blanks" or "gaps" in the text and continually modifying his or her interpretation.

Similar to Fish's idea of "intended reader", Iser proposes the notion of an "implied reader" who is firmly rooted in the structure of the text. In *The Act of Reading* (1978), Iser states, "…we must allow for the reader's presence without in any way predetermining his character or his historical situation. We may call him, for want of a better term, the implied reader…he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader." Iser further argues that text provides "sets of instructions" or a "repertoire" that the reader must assemble so that the interpretation depends on both the text and the response, producing the "virtual text".

While addressing the question in the article "Do I Write for an Audience?"(2000). Iser clarifies, "Reception theory was a reaction to what appeared to be a stalemate in literary studies. Of paramount concern for this theory was the impact a piece of literature has on its readers and the responses it elicits. Instead of asking what the text means, I asked what it does to its potential readers…. The message (of the text) that was no longer to be ascertained

triggered interest in what has since been called text processing—what happens to the text in reading. This is undoubtedly the decisive shift in literary theory; it is a shift from meaning to the aesthetic processes constituting it. " Consequently, aesthetic response, as the hallmark of reception theory, is to be conceived in terms of interaction between text and reader. I call it aesthetic response because it stimulates the reader's imagination, which in turn gives life to the intended effects."

iii) HANS ROBERT JAUSS

Another prominent figure of Reader-response Criticism, Hans Robert Jauss(1921-1977) was also a member of the "Constance School", and has received critical acclaim for his contribution towards the history of reception in literary interpretation. Influenced by phenomenological ideas like Iser, Jauss viewed the literary work as an event rather than a fixed object.

In his essay "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (1970), Jauss examines the history of reception. He proclaims the importance of literary history while criticising its accepted forms, which centers on individual authors, genres, or current ideas. Traditional models of literary history like those offered by the Modern poet and critic T.S. Eliot, and later by Harold Bloom, focus on the genius of individual authors in the lineage of great works. Jauss, on the other hand, argues for expanding literary history to encompass the context and the recipient of a work. He believed that it is only through a rigorous study of the history of a work's reception, that one can fully understand it. To expand his ideas, he presents seven key theses:

First Thesis: Jauss argues in favour of the removal of historical objectivism with the insistence that the focus should be on the aesthetics of reception and influence: "The historicity of literature rests not on an organisation of 'literary facts'…but rather on the preceding experience of the literary work by its reader."

He relates the "coherence of literature" with the "horizon of expectation" of the readers, critics, authors and their posterity. The possibility of comprehension and representation of the history of literature depends upon the objectification of the horizon of expectations.

Second Thesis: According to Jauss, if the literary experience of the reader is described within the "objectifiable system of expectations", it may help in avoiding the psychological drawbacks. This objectifiable set of expectations include an understanding of genres, forms

an themes of previous works and a cognition of difference between poetic language and practical language.

Third Thesis: Jauss argues that the aesthetic value of a work can be determined by the way in which it effects the "horizon of expectations". When the horizon of the audience changes, and adapts itself to the aesthetics of new work, it results in the "horizontal change". If the work fulfils the horizon of expectation, then no "horizontal change" will take place and the audience will enjoy it according to the prevalent norm of the aesthetics.

Fourth Thesis: Jauss believes that when a work is created, reconstruction of the audience's "horizon of expectations" helps to envisage how the reader could have constructed the meaning and encounter the meaning posited by the text. As he states: "It brings to view the hermeneutic differences between the former and the current understanding of work, it raises to consciousness the history of reception…that its objective meaning determined once and for all, is at all times immediately accessible to the interpreter."

Fifth Thesis: The theory of aesthetics of reception serves two purposes: first of all, it conceives the meaning of a work in its historical context, and secondly, it helps in serializing the literary work to recognise its conspicuousness in the context of the experience of literature. The transition the history of reception of works to eventful history of literature renders the author's passivity. To put it in a simple way, the subsequent work can solve the problems presented by the previous work and simultaneously confront new problems.

Sixth Thesis: Jauss talks about the linguistic usage of diachronic-synchronic relationship which is helpful in overcoming the diachronic perspective in literary history. For him, the focus must be on: heterogenous multiplicity of contemporaneous works in equivalent, opposing, and hierarchal structures, and thereby to discover an overarching system of relationships in the literature of historical moment."

Seventh Thesis: in his final move, Jauss argues that diachronic and synchronic systems are not sufficient to represent literary history. A visualization of "special history" in relation to "general history" is also required. Jauss refers to the relationship of the reader with literature and reality, the "horizon of expectations" and the reader's understanding of the world which subsequently affects his social behaviour. Therefore, literary history should be connected with the reader's real world.

Jauss views literary history not as a series of unchanging 'objective" facts, but as a record of 'trans subjective" experience of readers. He is in favour of the opinion that interpretation does not evolve out of the reader's experience, but from an "objectifiable" set of expectations provided by a consensus of actual historical readers. This idea is similar to Stanley Fish's proposal that interpretation derives from an established consensus of the readers joined in "interpretative communities". But while Fish's conception has been criticised as being historical and static, Jauss accounts for the historical construction of and change within such communities.

UNIT 1 (C): DEFINING READERS AND THEIR TYPES

Before moving on to the discussion of diverse aspects of Reader-response Criticism, we need to understand different categories of readers who play a vital role in deciphering the meaning of a text. As Tyson observes, some reader-response theorists refer to "readers" while others refer to "the reader." When theorists discuss actual readers whose responses they analyse, as Norman Holland and David Bleich do, for example, they refer to them as "readers" or "students" or call them by some other name that denotes real people. Many theorists, however, analyse the reading experience of a hypothetical ideal reader encountering a specific text, as we saw, for example, in our examination of affective stylistics. In these cases, references to "the reader" are references to the critic analysing his or her own carefully documented reading experience of a specific text according to specific reader-response principles. Because the experience of hypothetical readers may or may not correspond to the experience of actual readers, some hypothetical readers have been given names that describe the reading activity they represent. Thus, in Fish's practice of affective stylistics, he refers to the informed reader: the reader who has attained the literary competency necessary to experience the text as Fish himself does, in the fullness of its linguistic and literary complexity, and who conscientiously tries to suppress the personal or idiosyncratic dimension of his or her response. Of course, there is a variety of informed readers because the informed reader of, say, Emily Dickinson's poetry may or may not be the informed reader of Richard Wright's fiction. Other terms you may run across that refer to similar hypothetical readers include the educated reader, the ideal reader, and the optimal reader. Analogously, Wolfgang Iser uses the term implied reader, by which he means the reader that the text seems to be

addressing, whose characteristics we can deduce by studying the style in which the text is written and the apparent "attitude" of the narrative toward the reader. Thus, the implied reader of a Harlequin romance is quite different from the implied reader of a philosophical novel like Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947) or the implied reader of a psychologically intense, historical novel like Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Other terms you may encounter that refer to readers implied by the text include the intended reader and the narrator. The point here is that critics who use hypothetical readers are trying to show us what particular texts require of readers or how particular texts Reader-response criticism works to position readers in order to guide their interpretations. Whether or not readers accept that guidance or are even aware of it is another matter. Of course, there are many more reader-response concepts than the ones discussed above. Our purpose here is merely to introduce you to the main ideas, the general principles you need to know in order to read reader-response theorists and literary critics with some understanding of the issues they raise. Naturally, some literary works will seem to lend themselves more readily than others to reader-response analysis or at least to certain kinds of reader-response analysis. And unlike many other theories addressed in this textbook, a reader-response analysis of a literary text is often an analysis not of the text itself but of the responses of actual readers. Mary Lowe-Evans, for example, analysed the oral and written responses of college juniors and seniors in her literature class in order to learn how students today form attitudes toward a specific literary text and how those attitudes determine their interpretation of it. The text she used was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and she mapped the ways in which the following factors influenced students' interpretations of the novel: film versions of the novel (which created students' preconceptions of the text), her own interpretive prompts (whose story is this? what does the novel mean? is the narrator reliable?), and the determinate and indeterminate meanings in the text itself. Among other findings, Lowe Evans confirmed the reader-response notion that interpretation is an ongoing process that evolves as readers use different interpretive strategies to actively work their way through a text. She also learned that preconceptions created by film versions of the novel, in which the monster is very different from Shelley's monster, facilitated certain interpretations of the story while frustrating others. Analogously, particular textual elements, such as the formal style of the tale's "Preface" and the epistolary format that opens the narrative (the story is presented as a series of letters from the narrator to his sister), counteracted the students' expectations of a superficial, entertaining monster story. Whatever kind of analysis is undertaken, however, the ultimate goal of Reader-response criticism is to increase our understanding of the reading process by

investigating the activities in which readers engage and the effects of those activities on their interpretations.

UNIT – 2

UNIT 2 (A): DIFFERENT MODES OF READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

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i) TRANSACTIONAL READER-RESPONSE THEORY

Often associated with the work of Louise Rosenblatt, the Transactional Reader-response theory analyses the transaction between the text and the reader. Rosenblatt doesn't reject the importance of the text in favour of the reader; rather, she clarifies the importance of both in producing meaning. She differentiates among the terms *text*, which refers to the printed words on the page; *reade*r; and *poem*, which refers to the literary work produced by the text and the reader altogether.

Regarding the process of transaction, Rosenblatt argues that when we read a text, it acts as a *stimulu*s to which we respond in our own way. In addition to it, while we read the text at various points, the text acts as a *blueprint* that we can use to correct our interpretation when we realise that it has gone too far from what written on the page. This process of correcting our interpretation as we move through the text usually results in our going back to reread earlier sections in light of some new development in the text. Thus, the text guides our self-corrective process as we read and will continue to do so after the reading is finished if we go back and reread portions, or the entire text, in order to develop or complete our interpretation. Thus the creation of the poem, the literary work, is a product of the transaction between text and reader, both of which are equally important to the process.

For this transaction between text and reader to occur, however, our approach to the text must be, in Rosenblatt's words, aesthetic rather than *efferent*. When we read in the

efferent mode, we focus just on the information contained in the text, as if it were a storehouse of facts and ideas that we could carry away with us. Lois Tyson cites the example of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) which is a play about a traveling salesman who kills himself so that his son will receive his life-insurance money" is an example of an efferent stance toward the text. In contrast, when we read in the aesthetic mode, we experience a personal relationship to the text that focuses our attention on the emotional subtleties of its language and encourages us to make judgments. "In Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman's plight is powerfully evoked by the contrast between his small house, bathed in soft blue light, and the large, orange-colored apartment buildings that surround it" is an example of an aesthetic stance toward the text. Without the aesthetic approach, there could be no transaction between text and reader to analyze.

Following Wolfgang Iser's idea, one might explain what Rosenblatt refers to as the blueprint and stimulus functions of the text in terms of two kinds of meaning: determinate meaning and indeterminate meaning. Determinate meaning refers to what might be called the facts of the text, certain events in the plot or physical descriptions clearly provided by the words on the page. In contrast, indeterminate meaning, or indeterminacy refers to "gaps" in the text – such as actions that are not clearly explained or that seem to have multiple explanations – which allow or even invite the readers to create their own interpretations.

The interplay between determinate and indeterminate meanings, as we read, results in a number of ongoing experiences for the reader: retrospection, or thinking back to what we've read earlier in the text; the anticipation of what will come next; fulfillment or disappointment of our anticipation; revision of our understanding of characters and events; and so on. For what at one point in the work appears to be determinate meaning will often, at a later point in the work, appear to be indeterminate, as our point of view shifts among the various perspectives provided by, for example, the narrator, the characters, and the events of an unfolding plot. Thus, for Iser, though the reader projects meaning onto the text, the reading activities through which we construct that meaning are pre-structured by or built into, the text. In other words, Iser believes that the text itself guides us through the processes involved in interpreting (projecting meaning onto) it.

According to transactional theorists, different readers come up with different acceptable interpretations because the text allows for a range of acceptable meanings, that is, a range of meanings for which textual support is available. Thus, transactional critical

analysis relies heavily on the authority of the text, as done by the New Critics, while also ringing the reader's response to the forefront.

ii) AFFECTIVE STYLISTICS

The idea of "affective stylistics" is formulated by Stanley Fish who has felt that a literary text is an event that occurs in time – that comes into being as it is read – rather than an object that exists in space. The text is examined closely, often line by line or even word by word, in order to understand how it (stylistics) affects the (affective) reader in the process of reading. Although there is a great deal of focus on the text (that is why some theorists consider this approach as transactional in nature), many practitioners of affective stylistics do not consider the text as an objective, autonomous entity – it does not have a fixed meaning independent of readers – because the text consists of the results it produces, an those results occur within the reader.

To elaborate it further, when Stanley Fish describes how a text is structured, the structure which he describes is the structure of the reader's response as it occurs from moment to moment, not the structure of the text as we might assemble it after we've finished reading. He himself has produced some finest examples of this procedure. For example, let us have a look at the following sentence:

> "That Judas perished by hanging himself, there is no certainty in Scripture: though in one place it seems to affirm it, and by a doubtful word hath given occasion to translate it; yet in another place, in a more punctual description, it maketh it improbable, and seems to overthrow it" ("Literature" 71).

Fish argues that the passage about Judas moves the reader from certainty to uncertainty. The first clause, "that Judas perished by hanging himself", is an assertion that can be accepted as a statement of fact. The readers begin to have a feeling of certainty that leads them, rather unconsciously, to anticipate a number of possible ways the sentence might end, all of which would confirm their certainty that Judas hanged himself. Fish offers these three examples of the kinds of endings the first clause leads us to expect.

1. That Judas perished by hanging himself is (an example for us all).
2. That Judas perished by hanging himself shows (how conscious he was of the enormity of his sin).

3. That Judas perished by hanging himself should (give us pause). (“Literature” 71)

But, with the presence of the three words “there is no” arise doubt in the reader’s mind, and makes him feel that “there is no certainty”. Now the fact of Judas hanging himself, upon which our understanding of the sentence has rested, becomes uncertain. Thus, the reader is involved in a completely different activity. As Fish puts it, “Rather than following an argument along a well-lighted path (a light, after all, has gone out), [the reader] is now looking for one.” (“Literature” 71). In such a situation, the reader will tend to read on in hopes of finding clarification. But as we continue to read the passage, our uncertainty only increases as we move back and forth between words that seem to promise clarity—“place,” “affirm,” “place,” “punctual,” “overthrow”—and words that seem to withdraw that promise: “though,” “doubtful,” “yet,” “improbable,” “seems.” Uncertainty is further increased by the excessive use of the pronoun it because, as the sentence progresses, the reader has more and more difficulty figuring out what it refers to.

In addition to an analysis of the reading activities that structure the reader’s response, other kinds of evidence are usually gathered to further support the claim that the text is about the experience of reading. For example, most practitioners of affective stylistics will cite the responses of other readers—of other literary critics, for example—to show that their own analyses of the reading activities provided by a particular text are valid for readers other than just themselves. A critic might even cite an extreme divergence of critical opinion about the text to support, for example, the contention that the text provides an unsettling, decentring, or confusing reading experience. This wouldn’t mean that the text is flawed but that by unsettling the reader it demonstrates, say, the fact that interpretation of written texts, and perhaps of the world, is a problematic endeavour from which we should not expect to achieve certainty.

Although many practitioners of affective stylistics believe that the text, an independent object, disappears in their analysis and becomes what it really is – an experience that occurs within the reader – their use of thematic evidence, as we’ve just seen it, underscores the important role played by the text in establishing what the reader’s experience is.

iii) SUBJECTIVE READER-RESPONSE THEORY

In stark contrast to the principle of affective stylistics and to all forms of transactional reader-response theory, subjective reader-response theory does not call for an analysis of textual cues. For the subjective reader-response critics, led by the work of David Bleich, reader's responses constitute a text in itself, both in the sense that there is no literary text beyond the meanings created by the reader's interpretations, and in the sense that the text which the critic analyses is not the literary work, but the written responses of the readers.

David Bleich makes a distinction between what he calls *real objects* and *symbolic objects*. Real objects are physical objects, such as tables, chairs, books, and the like. The printed pages of a literary text are also real objects; however, the experience created when someone reads these printed pages, like language itself, is a symbolic object, because it occurs not in the physical world, but in the conceptual world, that is, in the mind of the reader. This is why Bleich calls reading – the feelings, associations, and memories that occur as we react subjectively to the printed words on the page – symbolization: our perception and identification of our reading experience create a conceptual or symbolic world in our mind as we read. Therefore, when we interpret the meaning of a text, we are actually interpreting the meaning of our own symbolization. Thus, Bleich calls the act of interpretation *resymbolization*. Resymbolization occurs when our experience of the text produces in us a desire for explanation.

Bleich, whose primary interest is pedagogical, offers us a method for teaching students how to use their responses to learn about literature, or more accurately, about literary responses. Subjective criticism and what he calls the subjective classroom are based on the belief that all knowledge is subjective. While treating the classroom as a community, Bleich's methods help students to learn how communities produce knowledge and show the individual member of the community can function as a part of the process.

Although Bleich believes that, hypothetically, every response statement is valid within the context of some group of readers for w hose purpose it is useful, he stresses that, in order to be useful to the classroom community, a response statement must be negotiable into knowledge about reading experiences. By this, he means that it must contribute to the group's production of knowledge about the experience of reading a specific literary text, not about the reader or the reality outside the reader. Response statements that are reader-oriented substitute one's reading experience. They are confined largely to comments about the reader's memories, interests, personal experiences, and the like, with little or no reference to

the relationship between these comments and the experience of reading the text. Reader-oriented response statements lead to group discussions of personalities and personal problems that may be useful in a psychologist's office but, for Bleich, do not contribute to the group's understanding of the reading experience at hand.

In contrast, the response statements Bleich promotes are experience-oriented. They discuss the reader's reactions to the text, describing exactly how specific passages made the reader feel, think, or associate. Such response statements include judgments about specific characters, events, passages, and even words in the text. The personal associations and memories of personal relationships that are woven throughout these judgments allow others to see what aspects of the text affected the reader in what ways and for what reasons. Bleich cites one student's description of the ways in which particular characters and events in a text reminded her of her sexuality as a young girl. Her response statement moved back and forth between her reactions to specific scenes in the text and the specific experiences they recalled in her adolescence.

In addition, the experience-oriented response statement is analyzed by the reader in a response-analysis statement. Here the reader

(1) characterizes his or her response to the text as a whole;

(2) identifies the various responses prompted by different aspects of the text, which, of course, ultimately led to the student's response to the text as a whole; and

(3) determines why these responses occurred.

Responses may be characterized, for example, enjoyment, discomfort, fascination, disappointment, relief, or satisfaction, and may involve any number of emotions, such as fear, joy, and anger. A student's response-analysis statement might reveal that certain responses resulted, for example, from identification with a particular character, from the vicarious fulfillment of a desire, from the relief of (or increase of) a guilty feeling, or the like. The goal here is for students to understand their responses, not merely report them or make excuses for them. Thus, a response-analysis statement is a thorough, detailed explanation of the relationship among specific textual elements, specific personal responses, and the meaning the text has for the student as a result of his or her personal encounter with it.

iv) PSYCHOLOGICAL READER-RESPONSE THEORY

A leading Psychoanalytic critic Norman Holland also believes that reader's motives strongly influence the process of reading. He focuses on what reader's interpretations reveal about themselves, not about the text. He believes that we react to literary texts with the same psychological responses that we bring to events in our daily lives. The immediate goal of interpretation, like the immediate psychological goal of our daily lives, is to fulfill our psychological needs and desires. When we perceive a textual threat to our psychological equilibrium, we must interpret the text in some way that will restore that equilibrium. Imagine, for example, two readers who, at some point in their lives, have felt victimized—perhaps "picked on" by siblings, rejected by peers, or neglected by a parent — for reasons beyond their controls, rejected by peers, or neglected by a parent—for reasons beyond their control. These readers' defenses probably would be raised by the character of Pecola in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) because they would perceive her as a victim as they themselves had been. In other words, reading about Pecola would probably remind them of their own painful childhood isolation. The first reader might cope with this textual threat by interpreting the novel in a way that condemns Pecola instead of the characters who torment her: for example, Pecola instigates her own victimization by behaving in such a passive manner and refusing to stand up for herself. In this way, the reader identifies with the aggressor, rather than with the victim, and temporarily relieves his own psychological pain. The second reader for whom victimized characters threaten to stimulate painful childhood memories might cope with Pecola by minimizing the character's suffering, focusing instead on some positive quality Pecola retains intact: for example, Pecola is the only character in the novel who never hurts anyone, and she will remain forever in a state of childlike innocence. This reader denies Pecola's psychological pain in order to deny her own. Other readers upon whom victim figures have a personal psychological impact would have to cope with Pecola, too, and they would do so in the same ways they cope with their relationships to victimization in their own lives.

Holland calls the pattern of our psychological conflicts and coping strategies our identity theme. He believes that in our daily lives we project that identity theme onto every situation we encounter and thus perceive the world through the lens of our psychological experience. Analogously, when we read literature, we project our identity theme, or variations of it, onto the text. That is, in various ways we unconsciously recreate in the text the world that exists in our own mind. Our interpretations, then, are products of the fears,

defenses, needs, and desires we project onto the text. Interpretation is thus primarily a psychological process rather than an intellectual one. A literary interpretation may or may not reveal the meaning of the text, but to a discerning eye, it always reveals the psychology of the reader. The reason why the psychological dimension of our interpretations is not readily apparent to ourselves and others is that we unconsciously couch it in aesthetic, intellectual, social, or moral abstractions to relieve the anxiety and guilt our projections arouse in us. For example, the two hypothetical readers who react to Pecola as described above might interpret the character—respectively, as the representative of self-destructive human frailty, like the biblical Eve, or in contrast, as the representative of spiritual innocence—without realizing that their interpretations emerged from their own unconscious psychological conflicts. Holland's definition of interpretation can thus be summarized as a process consisting of three stages or modes that occur and recur as we read. First, in the defence mode, our psychological defences are raised by the text (for example, we find Pecola threatening because she reminds us of our own experience of victimization). Second, in the fantasy mode, we find a way to interpret the text that will tranquilize those defences and thus fulfil our desire to be protected from threats to our psychological equilibrium (for example, we minimize Pecola's pain by focusing on the childlike innocence that will remain forever hers). Third, in the transformation mode, we transform the first two steps into an abstract interpretation so that we can get the psychological satisfaction we desire without acknowledging to ourselves the anxiety-producing defences and guilt-producing fantasies that underlie our assessment of the text (for example, we decide that Pecola represents spiritual innocence). Thus, in the mode of transformation, we focus on an intellectual interpretation of the text in order to avoid our own emotional response to it, and we ignore the fact that our intellectual interpretation grew out of our emotional response.

Holland's definition of interpretation can, therefore, be summarised as a process of consisting three stages or modes that occur as we read. First, in *defence* mode, our psychological defences are raised by the text. Second, in the *fantasy* mode, we find a way to interpret the text that will tranquilize those defences and thus fulfil our desire to be protected from threats to our psychological equilibrium. Third, in the *transformation* mode, we transform the first two steps into an abstract interpretation so that we can get the psychological satisfaction we desire without acknowledging to ourselves the anxiety-producing defences and guilt-producing fantasies that underlie our assessment of the text.

For Holland, the purpose of such an analysis is an empathic merger with the author. Whether we're analysing a person or a literary text, every act of interpretation takes place within the context of the interpreter's identity theme, which, as we have seen, sets up defences against as well as a desire for such a merger. It is therefore the interpreter's task to break through the psychological barriers that separate self from others. Understanding an author's identity theme, Holland believes, allows us to fully experience, as a "mingling of self and other" (132), the gift the artist offers us.

v) SOCIAL READER-RESPONSE THEORY

While the individual reader's subjective response to the literary text plays a crucial role in the subjective reader-response theory, for social reader-response theory, usually associated with the later work of Stanley Fish, there is no purely individual subjective response. According to Fish, what we take to be our individual subjective responses to literature are really products of the interpretive community to which we belong. By interpretive community, Fish means those who share the interpretive strategies we bring to texts when we read, whether or not we realize we're using interpretive strategies and whether or not we are aware that other people share them. These interpretive strategies always result from various sorts of institutionalized assumptions (assumptions established, for example, in high schools, churches, and colleges by prevailing cultural attitudes and philosophies) about what makes a text a piece of literature—instead of a letter or a legal document or a church sermon—and what meanings we are supposed to find in it. An interpretive community can be as sophisticated and aware of its critical enterprise as the community produced by the followers of a specific Marxist critical theorist. Or an interpretive community can be as unsophisticated and unaware of its interpretive strategies as the community produced by a high school teacher who instructs his students that it is natural to read literature in search of static symbols that tell us the "hidden meaning" of the story. Of course, interpretive communities aren't static; they evolve over time. And readers can belong, consciously or unconsciously, to more than one community at the same time, or they can change from one community to another at different times in their lives. In any case, all readers come to the text already predisposed to interpret it in a certain way based on whatever interpretive strategies are operating for them at the time they read. Thus, while Bleich believes his students produce communal authority through a negotiation that occurs after they've read the text, Fish claims that a multiplicity of communal authorities, based on the multiplicity of interpretive communities to which students already belong,

determines how students read the text in the first place. In other words, for Fish, readers do not interpret poems; they create them. He demonstrated this point rather dramatically when he taught two college courses back to back. At the end of his first-class, he wrote an assignment on the board that consisted of the following list of linguists' names his students were studying.

Social reader-response theory doesn't offer us a new way to read texts. Nor does it promote any form of literary criticism that already exists. After all, its point is that no interpretation, and therefore no form of literary criticism, can claim to reveal what's in a text. Each interpretation will simply find whatever its interpretive strategies put there. This doesn't mean, however, that we are left with the anarchy of unconstrained interpretation. As Fish notes, interpretations will always be controlled by the relatively limited repertoire of interpretive strategies available at any given point in history. By understanding the principles of social reader-response theory, however, we can become more aware of what it is we're doing when we interpret a text and more aware of what our peers and students are doing as well. Such awareness could be especially useful to teachers by helping them analyze their students' interpretive strategies; helping them decide if and when to try to replace those strategies with others, and helping them take responsibility for the strategies they choose to teach instead of hiding behind the belief that certain ways of reading are natural or inherently right because they represent what's in the text.

UNIT 2 (B) IMPLEMENTING READER-RESPONSE THEORY IN STUDYING AND TEACHING LITERATURE

Based on the nature of the Reader-response theory, Ririn Kurnia Trisnawati argues, it is believed that readers are the ones that shape and become the core source of learning a particular literary text. Hence, studying and teaching literature using the Reader-response approach could not be more interesting and interactive. If teaching literature is to accommodate the students' role in making an interpretation, it is supposed to place them as active readers to interpret and shape the meaning of that particular literary works. The alternative of studying and teaching literature is not preaching or directing them into a specific meaning decided previously any longer. Studying literature is not based on the

teacher's "ideology" or interpretation prepared before she enters the classroom. Teachers will have to give students opportunity and space to develop their opinion and argumentation to shape and define what a particular text means to them as students are active readers. Besides, the procedure of applying Reader-response theory will make readers more engaged in the understanding of the literary Journal of English and Education, work, mingle with other readers, and learn various opinions, responses, and insight from the readers/students instead of a single interpretation only from the teacher.

In her report on “Implementing Reader-Response Theory: An Alternative Way of Teaching Literature”, Trisnawati (2009) states that the concept of students/ learners-centered learning or Learners-Center Classroom(LCC) has been recognized as an advancement of teaching and learning theories and approached since the first half of the twentieth century. The premise of this approach/ teaching method is to place and to encourage learners to be active and enthusiastic in the classroom. This is due to the fact that the former teaching method, especially language and literature subjects, has made students/learners reluctant to be active. It is when teachers have become the sole centre attention and have played a dominant role as the source of knowledge and interpretation. As a result, this condition discourages the activeness and optimism of the students and leads to hampering the spirit of learning in the long run. Further, in this case, according to McCombs and Whisler (1997:9), LCC has been defined as the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about leaming and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, leaming, and achievement for all learners). It gives a further understanding that LCC is a combination of focus among students by considering their various backgrounds and interests involved within and during the teaching and leaming process in order to achieve a certain level of knowledge and understanding. This brings further impacts that by employing LCC the roles of teachers will be a bit different from those of the previous method of teaching e.g. they will function as a guide and or facilitator. Here, students will be the readers and the active learners whereas teachers will be the moderator, guide, and facilitator of creating and shaping the meaning and responses upon that particular literary piece. By vocalizing various responses, opinions, and interpretations, students are constructing and presenting the earlier knowledge of the text's interpretation. Students will interact with each other by giving and asking opinions; therefore, they will be actively engaged and involved. Students will not

directly gain knowledge from their teachers; they will transfer the knowledge from their fellow students. Hence, the outcome is having active, interactive, and autonomous students with their deep and independent learning in a very cooperative and collaborative classroom. Furthermore, the resonance between reader-response theory and LCC carries on the several terms exercised in the implementation of LCC. If LCC-is implemented, some other benefits can be taken into account. They are related to psychological principles in LCC e.g. metacognitive and cognitive, affective, developmental, personal, and social as well as individual differences. McCombs and Whisler (1997:5) have defined them deeper. Metacognitive and cognitive psychological principles justify the nature of LCC. In a learner-cantered classroom, there is a seeking of knowledge process which is active, personal, and meaningful. Students' cognitive power is also exposed in a way that they have to think about knowledge and interpretation of the literary work, and it requires significant higher-order thinking. As a result, students have to facilitate themselves with creativity and critical thinking in the teaching and learning process as well as achieving the interpretation of that literary work.

UNIT 2 (C): A STUDY OF BOOKER T. WASHINGTON'S *UP FROM SLAVERY* AND ITS READERS – BY RIRIN KURNIA TRISNAWATI

Ririn Kurnia Trisnawati (2009) undertakes a study of Booker T. Washington's Up from Slavery from the perspective of Reader-response Theory. It is an autobiography written by one of the best African-American literary figures. This masterpiece consists of several chapters depicting how Washington had undergone his life as a slave in Franklin County, Virginia, had been a sporadical student to achieve fundamental literacy, and had gained success as an educator for Black people, eventually. This sequence of life, issues on slavery, oppression, and racial discrimination are the major theme that is depicted throughout the autobiography. This is one of the universal issues that worth analyzing and gaining attention from its readers. Therefore, this work was chosen though there was no prior information about the theme of the autobiography. It means that readers/ students were given the work to read without telling them what it was about. This is one part of consequences to employ the Reader-response theory i.e. readers are not guided by some preconceptions that later might influence them in a way responding and giving an interpretation of the autobiography. Hence,

readers were free to assume the context and the theme of the work. The readers or the students are some students joining the Elite-Club. They were students of the first year and the third year. There were no special requirements to join the club and no limitation on the number of club members. The students actively participated in this club were about 6 (six) students. The club ran for one month only as the writer gained and collected the data. The students' activities were receiving the text and were given a week to finish the given text-only some chapters of the autobiography; in addition, they read individually and then gathered in a classroom to discuss the work after a week. They were also writing their responses and commenting on others' responses and interpretations of the work. This activity has remarked the application of Reader-response theory in the study of a literary text. Further, for several meetings, students were gathering, transferring knowledge on their responses and opinions, and learning each other, too. At this point, they placed themselves as the source of information. Until in the last meeting, the gathering was purposely to discuss the final interpretation as the main meaning of that particular autobiography. Meanwhile, the writer that happened to be the moderator of the club and the teacher of the classroom was playing her roles as facilitator and guide. She only gave comments and contributions when the discussion was out of the topic and when the students asked her for confirmation and new information. This situation has been in line with the nature of the learners-cantered classroom. Besides, in order to undergo the valid data collection, she did that on purpose meaning that she intentionally gave fewer contributions and involvement on the teaching and learning process on the discussion of Washington's autobiography *Up from Slavery*.

CONCLUSION

Since its emergence in the 1970s, Reader-response theory has been an influential mode of analysis. Taking its cue from the Poststructuralist tradition, the literary school firmly established the reader’s role in interpreting or analysing literary texts. The Reader-response critics claimed that the text comes alive only with the readers’ active participation in and interaction with the text. Each ‘transaction’ is a unique experience in which the reader and the text continuously act, and are acted upon by each other. A written work does not have the same meaning for everyone, for each reader brings his/her individual background knowledge, beliefs, and subjective understanding into the reading act. In Rosenblatt’s view, the

reader/readers ensured that every book yielded many interpretations through the reader response initiative. In recent years, the Reader-response critical approach is useful in reading works of fiction, novels and short stories alike to produce varied interpretations of literary texts.

Reader-response theory is based on an effort to illuminate the relationship between the reader and the text. The underlying idea is that “literary texts frequently contain social dilemmas and conflicts. Such reading demands personal responses from readers” (Yang, 2002, p. 50). In order for readers to make sense of these literary texts, the theory tends to focus on a range of different roles readers should adopt when they are engaged in the process of reading. Reader response theory is grounded upon the assumption that in a reading experience readers act a part as much as the text to make an interpretation. Reader response theory rejects new criticism, which is based on the idea that meaning is solely generated by the text, and can only be discovered by improved analytic skills. By privileging them as experience builders in attempting to construct meaning, Reader-response theory considers readers as active agents who deal with the creation of meaning. As part of their engagement with texts, readers endeavor to arrive at an interpretation by drawing on their background knowledge and experiences. In this process, readers assume a highly active role in meaning construction. In focusing on the mutual relationship between the text and the reader, Reader-response theory posits that meaning can be negotiated only after the convergence between the reader and the text. In other words, a literary text is brought into existence by means of a transactional process, in which a reciprocal bond between the text and the reader is created because “the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or the realization of the text but in fact must lie halfway between the two” (Iser, 1972, p. 269).

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Assignments

Essay-Type Questions

1. What are the basic tenets of Reader-response Criticism? Discuss with suitable references.

2. Who are the main propagators of Reader-response Criticism? Briefly state their contribution to the field.

3. How does the interaction between the text and the reader generate the reading process?

4. Comment critically on the role of the reader in deciphering the meaning of a particular text.

5. How did Hans Robert Jauss contribute to the development of Reception theory? Briefly discuss his seven key theses.

6. How can the Reader-response theory be implemented in reading and teaching literature? Discuss.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. How is a particular kind of reading experience an important theme in the text?

2. How, exactly, does the text's indeterminacy function as a stimulus to interpretation?

3. What are the basic tenets of the Social Reader-response theory? Discuss briefly.

4. Write short notes on the following:

a) Implied Reader

b) Affective Stylistics

c) Transactional Reader-response Theory

d) Subjective Reader-response Theory

e) Psychological Reader-response Theory

f) Interpretive Communities

UNITS: 3 - 4

STRUCTURALISM

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

Unit 3 (a): What is Structuralism?

Unit 3 (b): Fundamental Assumptions of Saussurean Linguistics

- **i. Langue and Parole**
- **ii. Sign, Signifier and Signified**
- **iii. Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic**

Unit 3 (c): Russian Formalism

- **i. History of Russian Formalism**
- **ii. Features of Russian Formalism**

Unit 3 (d): Prague School and Roman Jakobson

- **i. Jakobson's Model of Communication**
- **ii. Metaphor/Metonymy**

Unit 4 (a): Mikhail Bakhtin and Dialogism

Unit 4 (b): Structuralist Narratology

- **i. A.J. Greimas**
- **ii. Tzvetan Todorov**

Unit 4 (c): Gerard Genette's Narrative Discourse

Unit 4 (d): Roland Barthes

- **i. Five Codes of Narrative**
- **ii. Structuralism after itself**

Suggested Readings

Assignments

UNIT - 3

UNIT 3 (A): WHAT IS STRUCTURALISM?

Structuralism, a form of criticism that flourished in the 1950s and 60s, tries to evaluate a work of art in the context of the larger structures that contain them: genre, culture and language. Structuralist criticism takes a text as the subject matter of criticism and seeks to answer how a narrative works and generates meaning. Structuralism considers the text as an entity by itself devoid of the shadow of authorial intention. And since a text is nothing but words, language and linguistic theories become the cornerstones of Structuralism. Along with its related field, semiotics (technically the study of ‘signs’), structuralism is one of the most influential modes of critical and cultural analysis of the twentieth century. Structuralism's emphasis on the language or formal properties of texts, their structures and frames in specific genres like the novel or poetry, is an extension of the kind of work New Criticism practiced.

Structuralism believes that the world is organized as structures. 'Structures' are forms made up of units that are arranged in a specific order. These units follow particular rules in the way they are organized or related to each other. Let us see how units are organized in a poem. A poem is a structure constituted by units such as sounds, phrases, pauses, punctuation and words. Every unit is connected to every other unit. The poem is thus the result of all these units put together. In order to understand the poem's meaning, we need to read all these component parts together and see how the images generated by the words are held together with the rhyme scheme, the sounds, and the punctuations. The meaning of the text is not confined to or generated by any one of these units—it is the result of all the units working together. A word in a poem makes sense because of its specific location in the poem and its

relationship with the other words, images and sounds in that poem. This is the *structure* of the poem. Thus 'literature' is a system, or structure, whose constituent parts include the poem, the essay, the novel and the drama. In this structure called literature, each form (or unit) generates meanings in particular ways.

Expanding this notion, we see that literature is one system within a larger system of representation of culture. The system of culture includes other non-literary forms such as cinema, reportage, television, political speeches, myths and traditions. 'Culture' is a structure where these various forms exist in relation to each other. Meaning is generated when we understand the rules by which myth, literary texts and social behaviour are linked to each other. As we shall see, such a notion of linked elements informs the definition of 'text'. Structuralism is interested in the relationship between the elements of a structure that results in meaning. Since it believes that meaning is the effect of the coming together of elements, it follows that if we understand the rules governing the relationship between elements we can decipher the processes of meaning-production. Structuralism is the study of structures of texts—film, novel, drama, poem, politics, sports—with specific attention to the rules, or grammar, of the elements. Structuralism looks at the relationships between the various elements within the self-contained, well-organized structure of a text in order to understand the ways (the grammar or rules) by which the text produces meaning. It focuses on the form of a text by looking at elements like voice, character, setting, and their combination.

UNIT 3 (B): FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS OF SAUSSUREAN LINGUISTICS

Structuralism finds its origin in the works of the early twentieth-century linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. However, he was not the first to study language. During the nineteenth century, much research was done in the field of language, but those historical linguists were mostly interested in the origin and development of related languages. Saussure realized that it was not enough to see how words acquire meaning over time (what is called a *diachronic study).* We need to see how words mean within a period and as part of a general system of language. This is the *synchronic study* where we look at words within the current state of the language

and not at its history. In his 1916 work, *A Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure calls for a scientific study of language rather than a historical one.

In order to better understand Saussure's ideas, we need to look at some of the key components of his theory.

i) Langue and Parole

Saussure argues for two distinct parts within the language. The system or structure of language and the conventions that rule and govern speech is Langue. The *set of rules* by which we combine words into sentences and use certain words in certain ways is termed *langue.* The actual utterance – the everyday speech where we use words in the social context is called *Parole*. *Langue* may be defined as a collective system of conventions or rules that is necessary for social transactions in a specific language. It is "a storehouse filled by the members of a given community through their active use of speaking, a grammatical system that has a potential existence in each brain, or, more specifically, in the brains of a group of individuals" (Saussure 13-14). *Parole* is the individual realization of the system by using the conventions of the said language. While *langue* is the shared system of rules that a speaker 'unconsciously' (Culler 10) draws from *parole* is the actual utterance of the speaker. In cleaving language into the social and the personal, Saussure reveals that language is "not a function of the speaker" (Saussure 14). Thus, when we are reading individual literary utterances such as a poem or a novel, we are in fact delving into a larger social structure that is the *langue.* Saussure proposes that language as a system of signs must be understood as a complete system at any given time and not as an accumulation of meaning over time.

'Speaking' or utterance is a willful and intellectual individual act, while 'language' is both the social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty. Then, in a nutshell, *Langue* is the whole linguistic system, the total content of a language shared by a community of speakers as a source when speaking. As such, it is the whole network of relations and differences of its units. Noam Chomsky, linguist and exponent of

transformational generative grammar, calls it ‘competence’. *Parole* is the specific utterance made when speaking or writing, using *langue* as the repertoire of words and grammatical rules. Chomsky calls it ‘performance’. Saussure opines that the study of *langue* is the *synchronic* study of the relationship among the elements of language at a particular point in time: therefore *langue* should be studied, not *parole*.

While constructing a *parole* out of the *langue*, two kinds of choices are made. First, an item (word) is chosen from other items of the same word-class, potentially available in that position. For example, ‘shirt’ is chosen from the word-class: coat, vest, blazer, tunic.... This is a ‘paradigmatic’ choice. Second, the position or arrangement of the items chosen paradigmatically is chosen now to convey intended meaning through the utterance. This is a ‘syntagmatic’ choice. Saussure pointed out that all utterances were made possible because words within a langue were arranged in a system that gave them meaning. This system worked by marking the difference of each word from others, and again in different situations or utterances. Thus, differences operate on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels within a *langue*. For example, we understand 'light' because it is different from 'darkness', and in another utterance, we may understand 'light' because it is different from 'heavy'. Meaning, then, is made by differences and is valid as long as the word or ‘speech sound’ exists within a given system. This implies that meaning is a matter of differential relations wholly independent of a thing in the material world beyond the linguistic system.

ii) Sign, Signifier and Signified

The concept of signs has been around for a long time, having been studied by many philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, William of Ockham, and Francis Bacon, among others. The term "semiotics" "comes from the Greek root, seme, as in semeiotikos, an interpreter of signs". It was not until the early part of the 20th century, however, that Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce brought the term into awareness. Saussure opines that things as diverse as the fashion system, a poem, toys, a cricket, or a traffic sign can be seen as a system of signs. He explains that words are not symbols that correspond to referent objects and a sign is not only a sound-image but also a concept. Thus he divides the sign into two components: the signifier (or "sound-image") and the signified (or "concept"). That is, ROSE is the sign made up of a) the letters that make up the word “rose” and b) the concept or image that the word evokes when one sees or hears the word “rose”.

Another good example is the traffic sign system –

Signifier (red)

Sign _____

Signified (stop)

It is easy to see that this signification works only within the system, outside which 'red' can signify 'bloody' or 'lively' or 'beautiful.' So, the relation between the signifier and signified is found to be arbitrary, provisionally agreed upon for temporal and area-specific communication systems. The American Semiotician C.S. Peirce usefully distinguished three types of signs in social use. They are —

(a) Iconic (the sign resembles the referent) e.g., a picture of a ship.

(b) Indexical (the sign associated with referent as cause and effect) e.g., smoke for fire.

(c) Symbolic (sign arbitrarily linked to referent) e.g., language.

In a *langue*, the word or 'speech-sound' is a symbolic sign pointing at a signified concept, defined by difference.

The relation between the signifier and the signified is an arbitrary one. For instance, the signifier s-k-y conjures an image of the blue sky. However, there is no reason why such a tiny three-lettered word should be able to describe the vast expanse above our heads. It works merely because people speaking the language have agreed upon the decision to call the sky, sky. There is no relational sense in the way languages associate a signifier with a signified. This is evident by the way the different languages have different signifiers for the same concept – sky is *ciel* in French and *himmel* in German. Thus, it becomes evident that words do not have inherent meanings but they only make meaning in a system of relations and differences.

iii) Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic

Language is structured through a system of binary oppositions. Everything from the smallest entity, the *phoneme,* to complex sentences follows these rules. For instance, the signifier *cat* is unique because of its phonic difference from signifiers where the vowel is altered such as

cut, cot and from signifiers bearing consonant differences such as *bat, sat, pat*. According to Saussure, the meaning of a sentence arises from the difference between signifiers along two axes of relationship—the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic. The syntagmatic is the horizontal axis of combination and the paradigmatic is the vertical axis of selection. *The cat sat on the mat* comprises words that make sense owing to the selective combination of signifiers. The process of arranging the subject (the cat) followed by the verb (sat), the preposition (on) and finally, the predicate noun (the mat) is what Saussure calls the syntagmatic axis of language. As Storey observes one can extend the meaningfulness of a sentence by still adding more parts and "meaning is thus accumulated along the syntagmatic axis of language" (117). So, we may modify the sentence by adding more words like "in the drawing-room", or "after having lunch" to it.

Every item of language has a *paradigmatic relationship* with every other item which can be substituted for it (such as *cat* with *dog*), and a *syntagmatic relationship* with items which occur within the same construction. The relationships are like axes, as shown in the accompanying diagram.

			Syntagmatic			
	The	cat	sat	on	the	mat
Paradigmatic	His	dog	slept	under	that	table
	My	brother	played	in	his	room

Therefore, Saussurean linguistics has three basic assumptions:

1) Arbitrariness: The meaning we attribute to words is entirely *arbitrary* and prescribed through usage and convention only. There is no inherent or "natural" connection between the word and the meaning. The word has no quality that suggests the meaning (except perhaps in onomatopoeic words like "hiss" "grrr" etc), nor does meaning "reside" in the word. Therefore, language cannot be said to stand for, or reflect, reality or the world: language is *a system in itself*. To phrase it in its proper terminology, the relationship between the signifier/word and signified/meaning is purely arbitrary.

2) Relational: No word has its meaning in isolation. It possesses meaning through its difference from other words in the organizational chain. Thus “cat” means cat only by virtue of its difference from “cap” or “hat”.

3) Systematic: The whole is greater than the parts. We need to analyze how meaning is produced through the acts of language and understand the set of structures in language that enables us to speak and make sense. In short, we need to study signs and sign systems. Language is this *form*, not substance.

The influence of Saussure’s theories of language can be seen in the works of anthropologists like Claude Levi-Strauss and Mary Douglas who analyze cultural norms and practices as part of binary systems of differences. Roland Barthes’ work on mythologies draws heavily on the Saussurean linguistic system. Barthes looks at popular culture from washing powder advertisements to steak-eating through the lens of the semiotics. Literary criticism adopted Structuralism with the hope that it would "introduce a certain rigour and objectivity into the impressionistic realm of literature.” (Selden 87) Structuralist narratology received a great boost from Vladimir Propp who wrote *Morphology of the folktale*. Propp theorized a system of thirty-one ‘functions’ which form the backbone of not just Russian but almost all tales, myths and stories in general.

UNIT 3 (C): RUSSIAN FORMALISM

Ferdinand De Saussure’s structural linguistics was first appropriated for the study of literature in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century (Eagleton: 97). Two groups of critics began working towards what became known as *Russian Formalism*: the Moscow Linguistic Circle (in 1915) and OPOJAZ – the Society for the Study of Poetic Language (in 1916). Russian formalism is the name given to this school of literary scholarship that originated in the second decade of the 20th century, flourished in the 1920s and was suppressed in the 1930s. Its leading exponents were unorthodox linguists and literary historians such as Boris Eichenbaum (1886-1959), Roman Jakobson (1895-1982), Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Boris Tomashevsky (1890-1957), and Yuri Tynyanov (1894-1943). As the movement developed other theorists and literary scholars were drawn into this school though they did

not describe themselves as formalists such as Viktor Vinogradov (1895-1969), Viktor Zhirmurskij (1891-1971) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1971).

History of Russian Formalism

The origins of Russian Formalism can be traced to the universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg before World War I where students, dissatisfied with the study of literature in the academy, formed private groups to discuss the problems of philology. These resulted in the formation of OPOJAZ (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language) an acronym formed of the Russian first letters of the society's name. OPAJAZ began in St. Petersburg in 1914 and was dissolved in 1923. The nucleus of the OPOJAZ group was formed by Shklovsky, Eichenbaum, Jakobson and Osip Brik (1888-1945). The second group of formalists, formed under the leadership of Jakobson, was called the Moscow Linguistic Circle which was formed in 1915 and remained active till 1920 when Jakobson went away to Prague. While OPOJAZ was mainly formed of literary scholars who were less interested in linguistics and focused on the study of literary history and close readings of works, the MLC applied the new scientific developments in linguistics to the study of literature. Another group that flourished with the OPOJAZ and the MLC was the so-called Bakhtin Circle which was formed in Leningrad around the classical scholar and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). Eventually, the Petersburg and part of the Moscow group merged and began to be referred to as the Petersburg and Moscow OPOJAZ. In 1919, the group received official recognition as a learned society. However, it was short-lived because of increasing attacks on Formalist aestheticism by the official Marxist critics. After its dissolution in 1923, some of the members attempted to continue under another socially oriented image called the Lef (Left Front of Art) and the Movyj Lef (The New Left Front of Art) which lasted for only two years between 1923 and 1925. Though the Moscow Linguistic Circle did not publish any of their work, the OPOJAZ published three collections of essays in 1916, 1917 and 1919 on which the information and theory of Russian Formalism is based. It is noteworthy, as Victor Evlich mentions, that the "formalist" label was applied to the new school by its opponents rather than its adherents; the latter favoured such abstruse and unveiled self-definitions as the morphologic approach or the 'specifiers' (spetsifikatory); naturally, these names were easily abandoned.

Features of Russian Formalism

Literariness

The formalists viewed literature as a distinct verbal art rather than a reflection of the society or a battleground of ideas. In an early study, Roman Jakobson thus wrote: “The subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality but literariness i.e. that which makes a given work a work of literature.” This implies that there is a *literary* function of language and another which is non-literary. Formalism came to be based on a binary scheme where the language is divided into the *poetic* and the *everyday.* Jakobson points out that of the six functions of language; the poetic is distinguished from the other five by the fact that it focuses on the communicative act and thus the actual words being used. The focus is on the message for its own sake. In literature, therefore, *language is foregrounded*; and in any literary use of language, the poetic function is *dominant.* The Formalists did not look, as literary students usually had, toward history, culture, sociology, psychology or aesthetics, but toward linguistics, a science bordering on poetics and sharing material with it, but approaching it from a different perspective and with different problems.

This literariness was sought not in the author’s life and mind or in the reader’s reception of the work, but in the work itself. Specifically, it is sought in the artistic devices peculiar to imaginative writing; the devices with which the writer reshapes his subject matter through the medium of language. For Viktor Shklovsky imaginative literature was a unique mode of discourse precisely because of its “orientation towards the medium” or the “perceptibility of the mode of expression”. In literature and especially in poetry, language is not simply a vehicle of communication. In fact, the word becomes here an object in its own right, an autonomous source of poetic value and significance. Thus, the multiple devices at the poet’s disposal such as — meter, rhythm, imagery, rhetorical tropes converge upon the verbal sign to reveal its complex structure. Unlike poetry, prose narrative does not have a similar complexity of organization but narrative fiction also has its own intricate patterns of tension and balance, its own parallels and contrasts.

Like the structuralists of the later decades, the Formalists believed in certain key assumptions:

- Literature, especially poetry, was a special function of language.

- It was possible to discover the underlying formulae or *structures* of literary texts by a study of its *devices* (a term they were fond of using to describe literary techniques such as symbolism).
- The literary analysis could be as accurate and precise as science.

The purpose of criticism was to find out how a literary text generated or possessed the *literariness.* This can be described as the main concern of the Russian Formalists. Literariness was the effect of the formal and the linguistic properties of a text — and the purpose of criticism was to discover these underlying properties. What a literary text did was to use language in such a way that everyday objects could be made to look different, extraordinary or even strange. Literary and poetic language transformed everyday objects into something else by using words about the objects differently. A literary text represents the world in such a way that ordinary things appear different. This is what engages our (the reader's) attention. This process is what Shklovsky termed *defamiliarisation.*

Victor Shklovsky and *defamiliarisation:*

One of the methods by which the literariness of literature and the foregrounding of language are affected is stated in Shklovsky's essay "Art as Technique", (1917) considered to be a theoretical manifesto of Formalism. In this essay, Shklovsky says that art creates symbols. These symbols help us to see things instead of merely recognizing them. Shklovsky admits that everyday life brings about an automatization of perception: "As a perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic. For Shklovsky, art helps us to destroy these automatic and superficial perceptions by isolating objects and events from their usual contexts and moving them to unusual ones: "Art exists to help us recover the sensation of life; it exists to make us feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The end of art is to give a sensation of the object as seen, not as recognized. The technique of art is to make things '*unfamiliar'* and to make forms obscure so as to increase the difficulty and duration of perception.

Defacilitation and *defamiliarization — Zatrudnenie and Ostranenie*

These are basic to the artistic perception and they become key techniques in the Formalist dialectics of representation. Shklovsky defined literature entirely in linguistic terms, calling it "the sum total of all stylistic devices employed in it." Advocating the idea of

"*defamiliarisation*" In "Art as Technique," he argued that the chief effect of literary language was to "make strange" everyday objects and experience. This helps us to see things "differently," thus inducing a change in our consciousness itself. This *defamiliarisation* enables us to experience the *"artfulness"* of an object and draws our attention to the material process of language itself. The essay treated Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as a novel that parodied earlier conventions of writing and thus drew attention to the very *act of literary writing.* Sterne, argues, Shklovsky, was testing the limits of realism (the established form for the novel during that time) by showing how literary representations of reality were only *representations* (or signification) of reality.

The Formalists focused on poetry as a supreme example of the device of *defamiliarization*. Poetic language has the following features that make it different from ordinary or everyday language:

- It does not seek to convey information; it is an end in itself.
- It is *self-reflexive,* drawing attention to itself. Poetic language makes us aware that it is unique (for example: 'My love is like a red, red rose' by Edmund Waller alerts us to the fact that something unusual is going on. The quality of love is not an object, so the poet is using the two keywords, love and rose, in an odd combination).
- It often uses a word to mean multiple things and thus *destabilizes* meaning itself. The words in poetry can mean more than one thing.

Together these features of poetic language produce the effect of *defamiliarization*.

Therefore, *defamiliarization* is the literary device whereby language is used in a way that ordinary and familiar objects are made to look different. It is a process of *transformation* where the language asserts its power to affect our perceptions. Reality is thus modified for us through a special use of language. In short, the content of reality, story or theme is made to look attractive, ugly or good through the representation in language. It is, therefore, about the *form* as it affects content and reading. *Defamiliarization* is what distinguishes poetic or literary language from non-poetic or non-literary language.

Roman Jakobson and *dominance:*

In fact, these ideas on *the form* can be extended to include Jakobson's concept of *dominance* which was another important theoretical premise in the Formalist theory. Jakobson defined *dominance* or the *dominant* as "the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure." The dominant may be sought not only in the poetic work of an individual artist, and in the poetic canon but also in the art of a given epoch as a whole. For instance, Jakobson says, sculpture dominated Renaissance art, music the Romantic period and the rise of prose realism in the novel. Poetic evolution was thus seen as a matter of the changes in the elements of the poetic system which was a result of a 'shifting dominant'.

Boris Eichenbaum and *Skaz:*

Another important contribution to the theory of fiction by the Formalists involves their examination of the relationship between the oral and the written story. Eichenbaum is better known as a literary historian and narratologist. In his essay, "On the Theory of Prose", Eichenbaum points out that the prose genre is usually cut off from the oral and vocal aspects of the narrative. However, with the use of speech, orality re-enters the realm of fiction. In tales like the *Decameron* or *The Canterbury Tales,* moreover, there are direct links with speech because they are based on the oral tale or the gossips anecdote and, therefore, emphasize the narrator's voice. This inclusion of the element of voice is related to the formalist concept of "*Skaz*" as a narrative technique. The Formalists believed that the writer *hears* his works when he creates them and that some of his effects are lost in the silent reading of fiction. *Skaz* thus implies an account of the manner speaking of the characters or the narrator (as distinct from the author) which is articulated through narrative styles. This consideration of the 'voice' in fiction finally develops into Bakhtin's definition of the novel as *polyphonic* as opposed to the monologic nature of epic and tragedy. The Formalists were among the first to investigate prose narrative and determine the laws of its construction, evident in Eichenbaum's essay "How Gogol's Overcoat is Made". In this famous essay, he emphasized the autonomous nature of the work of art and analyzed the tale without any references to extra-literary referents.

Criticism and Conclusion

This misrepresentation of language is probably a result of the Formalist emphasis on the immanence of meaning in literary works. Language is, therefore, seen as self-referential, generating its meanings within the literary structures and arrangements of a text and not dependent on any other context except that of literary and linguistic devices. In fact, this is the major criticism that was brought against the Formalists by the Marxist critics. Fredric Jameson sums up this view in his book *The Prison House of Language:*

> "Formalism is thus, as we have suggested, the basic mode of interpretation of those who refuse interpretation; at the same time, it is important to stress the fact that this method finds its privileged objects in the smaller forms, in short stories or folk tales, poems, anecdotes, in the decorative detail of larger works .... the Formalistic model is essentially synchronic, and cannot adequately deal with diachronic, either in literary history or in the form of the individual work which is to say that formalism as a method stops short at the point where the novel as a problem begins."

In fact, Shklovsky's concept of '*defamiliarization'* defines literature as its own end in the specific devices of its expression. When Shklovsky's concept is compared to Brecht's theory of 'alienation' — which has a similar function — the former is revealed to be a static function in the sense that it only designates a function of language as being literary. Brecht's concept, on the contrary, is dynamic because it posits a theory of literature that uses distortion and strangeness only to emphasize that the real/reality can be changed, reinterpreted and reinvented through human actions. By denying interpretation, the Formalists thus often, alienate themselves from history and the human attempts to understand the world.

An attempt to correct these lapses and contradictions was made by the later Formalists and others like Bakhtin and Viktor Zhirmunsky who attempted a historicizing of these aspects of literary language. This is clear in the consideration of genres and an attempt to re-examine literary traditions. Eichenbaum thus theorizes the evolution of genres which tend to move from serious and elevated forms (like the epic) to comic and parodic versions. There are obviously local and historical conditions that influence these variations, but the final result is a regeneration of genres and the discovery of new forms. Eichenbaum's theory of genres thus represents an increasing sophistication in Formalism anticipating Structuralism. In fact, Jakobson attempted to give a historicist emphasis to his Formalist study of shifts and transformation of literary forms which finally result in an attempt to reconcile the historical with the individual work in linguistic study. This aspect of Formalist analysis in the field of

poetic language had a pioneering significance for linguistic research in general since it provided important impulses towards overcoming and bridging the gap between the diachronic historical method and the synchronic method of a chronological cross-section.

The Formalists thus contributed to the development of a theory of literature which emphasized the importance of language and the structures and rules of language in the construction of literary texts and also in literary analysis. Thereby, it attempted to create a grammar for the creation of texts and for their scientific study. It foregrounded the importance of literary texts in terms of their method and function. Formalism engaged with the relationship between form and content in literary works and the structures and processes which contribute towards the formation of meaning.

UNIT 3 (D): THE PRAGUE SCHOOL AND ROMAN JAKOBSON

Closely aligned with Russian Formalism is the Prague School of Structuralists. Roman Jakobson, a Russian immigrant, was one of the central figures in this school. From Russia, Saussure's ideas spread to Prague when Jakobson migrated there in 1920 (and eventually he went to the USA). When the Prague Linguistic Circle (PLC) was founded in 1926, he became one of the major theorists of Czech Structuralism (Eagleton 98). Jan Mukarovsky, Felix Vodicka, Rene Wellek and Josef Vachek joined the group gradually. They represent a transitional stage between Russian Formalism and the later structuralism. The school saw poems as "functional structures" in which the signifiers and signifieds are governed by a set of relations. The Prague critics argued that these signs must be analyzed *in and as themselves*, without relating them to any external reality.

The Prague's School central tenet was that *language is a coherent system fulfilling a range of 'functions' in society.* Jakobson's work on language was built on this tenet. The Prague School believed that there was a poetic or aesthetic function of language. *Poetic language foregrounds its own use.* This means poetic language does not seek to convey information. Instead, it draws attention to its own utterance, to what and how it is saying / speaking. Jan Mukarovsky, therefore, declared that "the function of poetic language consists in the maximum of foregrounding of the utterance … it is not used in the service of

communication …" (Hawkes 75). Once again, we see the Russian Formalists' emphasis asserting itself: Poetic language is an end in itself, it does not seek to do more.

Prague Linguistics also used De Saussure's concepts as their point of departure, especially his emphasis on the *arbitrary relationship between sign and referent – that* is, between word and thing. This was also one of the basic concepts of the Formalists: consequently, Prague Linguistics agreed that the text was indeed an *autonomous object,* detached from its social, cultural and historical circumstances. But, more than the Formalists, the Czech structuralists stressed the *structural unity* of a work. The different *elements* of a text were in fact *functions of a dynamic whole:* texts were viewed as *functional structures* that ought to be studied in their own right as they functioned according to their own rules (Eagleton 100). In a sense, Prague Linguistics took over the ideas of the Formalists, elaborating on them and systematizing them further.

The Prague school of linguistics represented a kind of transition from Formalism to modern structuralism. Later on, the terms *structuralism* and *semiology* became merged, as *semiotic* or *semiology* means the systematic study of signs. *Structuralism* especially transformed the study of poetry; however, it *revolutionized the study of narrative. It created a whole new science - narratology* (Eagleton 103). However, after 1930, Russian Formalism and Prague structuralism had almost no impact on Western criticism and theory until 1960 in France, with the coming of French Structuralism (Martin 25; Davis & Schleifer 129).

Jakobson's Model of Communication

One of the most distinguished thinkers in linguistics, philology and aesthetics, Roman Jakobson was responsible for the development of semiotics as a critical practice. In the Jakobson model of communication (either oral or written) the following SIX constituent elements play pivotal roles:

CONTEXT

REFERENTIAL

MESSAGE

POETIC

ADDRESSER----------ADDRESSEE

EMOTIVE ***CONATIVE***

CONTACT

PHATIC

CODE

METALINGUAL

i) A message is sent by an addresser to an addressee. To facilitate this, they need to use a common code, a conduit/channel of communication, and the same frame of reference. Each of these elements has a corresponding function in the communicative act.

ii) Language seen from the addresser's point of view is emotive (expressing a state of mind). Seen from the addressee's perspective, language is conative (seeking an effect).

iii) If communication concerns itself with the context, it is referential (which privileges the information content of any utterance). If the communication is oriented towards the code of communication, it is metalinguistic (the query "do you understand me?" typifies this nature)

iv) When the message focuses on the words of the message itself, i.e., when the communication draws attention to itself it is poetic.

v) And finally, when the communication focuses on the act of contact it is phatic. (Denoting or relating to language used for general purposes of social interaction, rather than to convey information or ask questions. Utterances such as *hello, how are you?* and *nice morning, isn't it?* are phatic.)

Let us take an actual example. Suppose I write in a letter to a friend who lives in a different town, the following sentence:
"I work at a university that is at a distance of 12 km from my home".

We have six elements as follows:

1. Addresser (myself)
2. Addressee (my friend)
3. The message
4. Contact (the letter, handwritten or e-mailed)
5. Code (writing)
6. Context (the language used in the writing, both of us understand English)

The process of communication as it happens above can be described as follows:

- An addresser sends a message to an addressee.
- The message requires a medium or *contact* (visual, oral, audio, and now electronic).
- The message is in the form of a code or process (speech, writing, numbers).
- Both addresser and the addressee must share the same context of language and conventions of speech and writing in order to understand each other's speech/writing.

Roman Jakobson and Metaphor-Metonymy

Jakobson worked with aphasics, people with an inability to use language without difficulty. Observing the way aphasics use and understand ordinary speech, Jakobson developed a theory of using language. He argued that there are two major rhetorical figures: metaphor and metonymy. Both are figures of *equivalence* because they *substitute* a new term that is believed to be an equivalent for the main/original term. Adopting the two distinct uses of language, namely selection and combination, Jakobson elaborated on the terms *metaphor* and *metonymy*.

(a) In metaphor, one sign is substituted for another, entailing a transfer of meaning between two unrelated domains. An example would be the use of the words “jealous” and “green”. Here to “go green” commonly implies the state of being jealous. However, there is no logical or semantic link between the two. That is, the two words/ideas of the emotive state and the colour are actually unrelated.

(b) In metonymy, one sign is *associated* with another, where it utilizes a term that is property of the key-word, or is related to it contiguously (example: "sail" or "ship,"

since the sail is a part of the ship). In poetry, the metaphor is used more often than the metonymy because the stress in poetry is on similarity and/or startling opposition. Metaphor, therefore, involves a transfer of *sense*, whereas metonymy involves only a transfer of *reference* (part for the whole, but not a totally unrelated term/domain).

Selection and substitution constitute the metaphoric pole and combination and contextualization the metonymic pole (Nayar 30).

Let us now use an elaborate example to understand this concept. We often declare that on our roads the 'traffic crawls along'. Now, 'crawl' is a term used to describe the relatively slow movement of creatures, like worms, snakes and insects. How does it describe the vehicular movement on the road? What the image does is to posit equivalence between the patterns of movement of the vehicles with that of the insects. It assumes a *similarity* between the two. We could have picked ‘bustles’ or ‘races’ or ‘goes’, but we selected ‘crawls’ from this *vertical* list of possible descriptives because we think the movement of vehicles is *akin* to that of the insects. What we have, therefore, is a term that provides a *metaphor* for the vehicular movement. It is possible to visualize vehicular movement as the movement of insects through this metaphor. We have *substituted* insects for cars and vehicles. Thus using metaphor is an act of substitution through *selection* and *association*. In this case, the association or analogy is between the movements of cars and insects.

Another form of language use is metonymy. Metonymy is when a part is substituted for the whole. For example, we say, “The orders were issued by the ‘Rashtrapati Bhavana’”. Now, the building, that is, the ‘Rashtrapati Bhavana’ does not issue orders. It is the President of India, who lives in the Bhavana, who issues orders. Here the building is taken to be the equivalent of its resident by the principle of contiguity. One word is placed next to another as being contiguous. Here we choose a word that is seen as adjacent to another. This is the principle of *combination.*

Selection and combination are the two ways of language operation. We can select any word from a storehouse of words, and then use these words in combination to generate a sentence.

Drawing on this, Jakobson contends in *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances* (1956) that linguistic messages are constructed by the combination of a horizontal movement that combines words, and a vertical movement which selects the particular words from the 'inner storehouse' of language. In a 1958 paper entitled "Linguistics and Poetics", he declared: "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination." His main argument was that poetry is essentially metaphoric, while prose is essentially metonymic. In the same paper, he proposed a poetics of both poetry and prose based on the differential, oppositional functioning of metaphor and metonymy.

Expanding upon the metaphor/metonymy model, Jakobson could characterize whole periods of literature in the manner of Russian Formalists, where either functioned as 'dominant'– historical development from romanticism through realism to symbolism is an alternation of style from the metaphoric to metonymic back to metaphoric. In recent times, David Lodge has followed Jakobson's model and qualified it by pointing out that changing context can change the figure from metonymy to metaphor and vice versa. Summing up what we have learned, we can see that metonymy works diachronically and metaphor, synchronically.

UNIT - 4

UNIT 4 (A): MIKHAIL BAKHTIN AND DIALOGISM

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975)

This Russian thinker was "discovered" by the West decades after he wrote groundbreaking books in the 1920s and 30s. He is well-known principally for his books on Dostoevsky and Rabelais. Publishing under the name of his friend, V.N. Voloshinov, Bakhtin was the first thinker to provide a full critique of Russian Formalism in his book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*.

i) Bakhtin targets Saussure's emphasis on the formal aspects of language rather than the social parole. Language for Bakhtin was inherently *dialogic*. Language and words made sense only in its communication/orientation directed towards the other. The Sign was not, as

Saussure argued, a stable unit but an active component of speech in certain social contexts. The sign, therefore, was the scene of struggle and contradiction since societal conditions were always amorphous and heterogeneous with conflicting interests.

ii) Bakhtin focused on parole rather than langue, arguing that one cannot analyze texts as though they were independent of the context. Language is essentially a matter of utterances rather than of sentences. This eventually leads Bakhtin to formulate the idea of the chronotope. Thus, for Bakhtin, all languages were embedded in social, economic, political and ideological systems.

Bakhtin and Dialogism

Bakhtin proposed *dialogue* as an intrinsic feature of the language. While Bakhtin himself never used the term *dialogism*, it has been associated with his work and is the most recognizable concept from his oeuvre. In order to understand his work on the novel (i.e., narrative), it is important to look at his notions of dialogue. There are a few key terms in Bakhtinian thought that have to be understood, namely, *dialogue, heteroglossia, chronotope,* and *carnival.*

- ### Dialogue

Dialogue is a differential relation, and dialogue always implies a *relationship.* In any conversation, the speakers are different from each other. But what is interesting is that these differences are *retained* in the conversation. Dialogue is imposed upon us; we do not set out to engage in dialogue. Dialogue, therefore, is a concept that gestures at the *mutual difference* at the heart of all conversations; it asks us to pay attention to relations in language. It is, Bakhtin believed, the existence of mutual difference that enabled dialogue. Bakhtin was, therefore, focusing on the self/other aspect of all languages where there is always the 'other' within my speech. In fact, my speech anticipates and prepares for the other's response.

Bakhtin's emphasis on dialogue means that his focus was almost entirely on *the utterance.* Utterance takes place between speakers, who are located in a *social* context. Speakers have to assume that their values are shared by the others (the audience). Dialogue is the central

feature of all speech. What Bakhtin does is to underscore the novel as a form that explicitly foregrounds this dialogic aspect of speech and everyday communication. Bakhtin begins by assuming that literary texts, especially novels, are utterances in a given context of the text's production. *Dialogism* has already told us that meaning in any utterance is based on the social context. Indeed, the context is what makes us understand the words themselves. For example, when we hear a sentence like 'The ball is in the box', we immediately understand that it refers to *this particular box* and *not* to any box anywhere in the world, even though the sentence itself does not clearly specify which box.

- **Heteroglossia**

In his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin introduced the idea of the polyphonic novel. He proposes that novels are prime examples of what he calls *heteroglossia.* Heteroglossia is the simultaneity of many levels of dialogue and language. The subject, about to make an utterance, can pick one response out of the mass of languages around him/her. It would be impossible to systematize the mass and variety of languages because of the sheer heterogeneity. The other's voice is given as much importance as the self's. In the case of the novel (Bakhtin's example is Dostoevsky), the many voices are given equal importance, thereby showing the novel as a site of struggle, carnival and subversion. Working-class discourses, women's language, the language of ethnic minorities are all represented alongside that of the dominant one. Even if these other voices do not overthrow the dominant one, their very existence suggests that the main voice is not overwhelming or unchallenged. He emphasized the "*unfinalisability*" of works, as embodied in his famous statement: "Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is still open and free, and everything is still in the future and will always be in the future."

In the case of a novel, every novel refers to other works, other discourses. The novel is a genre that gives space, very consciously, to other works. This is what is now called *intertextuality*, and it is a feature that Bakhtin was particularly fond of in the novel. A novel refers to the discourse of history, of literary texts, of social conditions like poverty, of philosophy and theology. This leads Bakhtin to suggest that the novel embodies other voices. In fact, it gives space to the other, the different. For example, in a realist novel like that of Dickens' or Balzac's, the narrator controls the lives of his characters very firmly. Yet, even

these authors sometimes slip into phrases like ‘I think’ or ‘I suppose’. What does this mean? It means, simply, the novelist is unsure of the moral stance he or she has taken. The characters and their situations are not as rigidly controlled as one perceived. The main moral stance in the novel is, therefore, undermined by the other voices and opinions that circulate through the text. This is *heteroglossia.* Later, critics like Julia Kristeva built upon this the notion of *intertextuality*. The novel is constituted by the dialogue between discourses. What is clear, and important, is that the novel's dialogism even breaks down the distinction between literary and non-literary or extra-literary.

- **Chronotope**

Bakhtin further proposed that a novel often renders in an artistic way the interconnectedness of spatial and temporal relationships. Space and time are interconnected in plots and are central to the narrative/plot. This interconnected aspect is what he terms *chronotope.* Chronotopes are recurring, structural features of the narrative. Using the example of Greek romances, Bakhtin shows how time and space are both *fluid.* Every age has its own notions of space and time, and therefore chronotopes are rooted in their *local* conditions. In the twentieth century, after Einsteinian science and the developments in physics, we have a different sense of space and time. Chronotopes in science fiction today, therefore, suggest multiple worlds whose time zones are also multiple. The simultaneity of worlds and times is also connected with the globalized geopolitical world where radio, telephone, television and now the Internet and call centers functioning in a different time zone (the USA and the Europe) have altered our concepts of space and time.

Rushdie's novels slip between past and present, while also having fantasies woven into them. Ben Okri's fiction, especially texts like *The Famished Road,* does not allow us to know with certainty whether the world depicted is real or in the imagination. ‘Magic realism’ in postcolonial texts from South Asia, Africa and South America today generates chronotopes that are about multiple times–spaces co-existing next to each other, simultaneously, and is the effect of the twentieth century's historical developments of theories in physics and communication–transportation technologies. Bakhtin, as we can see, is keen on showing how the novel as a form is inherently heteroglossic, giving space to many voices. The novel resists monologic and situates languages and discourses alongside each other.

- **Carnival**

Bakhtin, evidently, was attempting to find literary examples where power was subverted. In order to do so, he outlined a concept of the *carnival* via a reading of the works of Rabelais. The carnival was laughter, the bodily, parody, the ugly, the grotesque and the so-called 'low'. The carnival, the site of laughter, is ambivalent. The laughter is not sanctioned by the power structures like the government or the institutions. It resists such control, and is, therefore, politically subversive. Bodily functions are a part of the carnival because they do not find expression in official cultures. The carnival embraces "lowness", incorporating bodily functions (including the "dirty" ones: copulation, urination and defecation). The body is an essential part of the carnival's ambivalence. Clowning, again not part of the official culture, is also a key element in the carnival. Carnival figures like the Clown cannot be theorized about because they resist any academic discussion by existing on the border between art and life — they are rooted in the everyday life of the people. The mask used by the clown, unlike the mask of the Renaissance period which symbolized hypocrisy and deception, is here the "distorting" element. It plays with contradiction (I am me and the mask, am I the mask? Or is the mask someone else? Does it make me someone else?) The mask is thus transition, metamorphosis, the transgression of natural boundaries.

The carnival is thus the subversive and the ultimate *other*. It is what escapes classification, theorization, and control. The carnival is a useful mode of discussing popular or mass culture because Bakhtin is essentially speaking of the need to subvert and interrogate established/institutional authority over meaning. Carnival logic undermines academic discourses because the carnival resists the academic repression of ambivalence. We see instances of the carnival in the writings of Salman Rushdie. Rushdie shows how the serious discourses and political themes of nationalism, patriotism and identity are often taken far too seriously. Rushdie inverts their significance by showing how these notions are accidental, highly personal and often limited. In *Midnight's Children*, for example, Rushdie's protagonist Saleem believes that the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 happened because he *imagined* it. Here Rushdie is reducing a massive event to a single individual's fantasy. There is nothing remarkable in the situation of war—it all exists in the person's mind. This is carnivalesque because it subverts a so-called national event and transforms it into a mundane act of day-dreaming and adolescent fantasy.

Margaret Atwood creates a heroine, Marian McAlpin, who cannot accept the ideal form of the fiancée that society wants of her in *The Edible Woman* (1969). Her anxiety over the changes she is expected to make results in an eating disorder. Her body— the epitome of identity and looks in the consumer society she lives in—is what she takes as the site of the battle for identity when she goes on eating binges or fulfills her culinary cravings. In a later novel, *Lady Oracle* (1976), Atwood creates a bored housewife, once an overweight teen, who abandons her quiet life for a wild one. In both these novels, Atwood creates heroines who do not fit the model of the quiet, amenable (and of course slim) fiancée or housewife. She is questioning the ideal of beauty itself: Does slimness alone constitute beauty? Does it matter that it is a *woman* who is fat? Atwood poses these questions when her heroines' fat and grotesque body inverts the traditional stereotype of the 'heroine'. This is another example of the carnival.

UNIT 4 (B): STRUCTURALIST NARRATOLOGY

Structuralist criticism enabled the development of a rigorous model of reading, breaking up the text into its constituent elements to uncover the method by which the text constructs meaning. *Structuralist narratology*, developed from an appropriation of linguistic models to narratives, (Selden 59-61; Eagleton 104) has benefited a great deal from structuralist insights of important exponents on the side of the French: Gérard Genette, Claude Bremond, A.J. Greimas and Roland Barthes. However, the way towards structural narratology was being paved from Russia, as far back as 1928 by a Russian Formalist, Vladimir Propp.

The work of the Russian Formalist school reached the western world through Victor Erlich's *Russian Formalism: History Doctrine* (1955). This movement emphasized the autonomous nature of art, its freedom from external data such as socio-cultural background or the writer's biography, and concentrated on an empirical analysis of the text's form and composition at different analytical levels. Their structural analysis of narrative took two main directions, along with Boris Tomashevsky's distinction between 'fabula' and 'syuzhet'. This distinction pertains to the difference between the raw material that an author has at his or her disposal *(fabula)* and the way that he or she arranges this material in a literary text *(plot).* Thus, the *plot* or *syuuzet* has bearing on the literary text. Propp took an interest in the *plot* of

Russian fairy tales to develop a narratology that was eventually modified by Greimas. He reduced all folk tales to *seven spheres of action* and *thirty-one basic functions* (Eagleton 104).

Following the *reductive* principles of Propp, Greimas in 1966, simplified the units of *narratology* even further by acknowledging only *six actants- actants* do not refer to characters of narratives but are merely *structural units.* These are Subject-Object; Sender-Receiver; and Helper-Opponent. But it was Gérard Genette who elaborated extensively on the Formalists' distinction between *fabula and syuzhet* and suggested a narrative should actually be divided into three levels: *histoire, récit* and *narration.*

i) A.J. Greimas (1917-1992)

One of the earliest practitioners of structuralist narratology was Algirdas Julien Greimas, whose work in *Semantique Structurale* (1966) built upon Saussure's idea of binary oppositions to develop what has been called *structural semiotics.* He built the model of narrative by positing "actants" as fundamental structural units. The actant is neither a specific narrative event nor a character. For Greimas, there are SIX actants paired as binary opposites: subject/object, sender/receiver, Helper/opponent. The subject is paired with the object h/she seeks, the object is sought by the subject, the sender sends the subject on the quest for the object, the receiver of the object to be secured by the subject, helper of the subject, and opponent of the subject. These actants describe and carry out three basic patterns in any narrative:

i. desire, search, aim (subject/object)
ii. communication (sender/receiver)
iii. auxiliary support or hindrance (helper/opponent)

In many cases, the categories might merge. For example, the Sender actant might very well be the Receiver. According to Greimas, a formula for the narrative can, therefore, be as follows:

- Contract or prohibition where the Subject is sent out on a quest or mission.

- The Subject might accept the contract or disobey the contract. If the Subject accepts then we have *the establishment of the contract.* If the Subject declines or disobeys we have *a violation of the contract.*
- If the Subject accepts we have rewards (from Sender-Receiver) if the Subject violates we have punishments.

The whole process can be read under three main *structures* or *syntagms*, that are common (according to Greimas) to all narrative.

1. *Contractual Structures*: Where the 'hero' (Subject) is given a task by a Sender, sent on a particular mission, seeks an Object, is offered a contract, or prevented from doing something. Contractual structures launch the plot.

2. *Performative Structures*: Here the Subject undertakes the tasks, battles obstacles aided by the Helper or thwarted by the Opponent, is lured into traps, is faced with trials and tribulations, loses heart, finds courage and hope. This is the 'action' in the narrative.

3. *Disjunctive Structures*: These are moments of arrival, departure and movement in the narrative when the Subject leaves the palace or the home, arrives at the Opponent's den or the palace. These are the interludes in the narratives where the scene for the next action is set. For example, in Hindi films, the hero swears vengeance and races out to the villain's house/den—here there is a gap between the scene of the swearing and the next one, where the hero wrecks vengeance. This gap is the disjunctive structure that enables a shift between scenes and brings in new actants. From a scene involving a hero-actant, we now have one with the villain-actant too.

ii) Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017)

Tzvetan Todorov coined the term 'narratology' in *The Grammar of Decameron* (1969). Todorov, like Greimas, builds on the notion that there is a definite grammar to all texts. He assumed, like Saussure, that language is the 'master code' for all signifying systems, and that the human mind and the universe share a common structure – that of the language. He applied this idea to assimilate the 'story' and 'discourse' approaches in his analysis and isolates three specific components of texts:

- *semantic*: which would be the form
- *syntactic*: the arrangement of structural units, the relation between events
- *verbal*: words and phrases through which the story is told, the narrative mode

Todorov's interest lies mainly in the syntactic arrangement of units within a narrative. He identifies two key structural components of all texts: *propositions* and *sequence.* Propositions are the basic actions in a narrative. In a novel like R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*, the basic propositions may be listed as follows:

Raju meets Rosie.
Rosie and Raju fall in love.
Raju encourages her in her art.
Rosie becomes popular.
Raju 'betrays' her trust.
Raju goes away.
Raju is transformed into a saint by accident. He decides to accept his 'sainthood' and fulfills his vow.

Now, these propositions have to be arranged in a sequence to generate a story. There can be many sequences in a text. Propositions can be arranged in any of the three sequences:

1. *Temporal*: where there is a sequence in time (this happened and then this happened).
2. *Logical*: where there is a cause-effect sequence (this happened and therefore this happened).
3. *Spatial*: where the plot has many sub-divisions (this happened meanwhile this other thing also happened).

UNIT 4 (C): GÉRARD GENETTE'S NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

The most important of the structural narratologists, Gerard Genette (1930-2018), has argued for the autonomous nature of the literary text. Genette's work on narrative discourse has

spread across many areas. His contributions include studies of narrative voice, levels of narration, and, more interestingly, on what he calls ‘paratexts’.

Genette identifies three levels of narrative:

a. *histoire*, or story, which is the set of real actions that happened and needs to be told
b. *récit*, or narrative, which is the telling of the story, either in oral or written form
c. *narrating*, the larger process of recounting that produces the *récit*

A commentator on Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, suggests that these are equivalent to *story, text* and *narration* respectively. Genette's scheme can now be elaborated as follows:

1. **Story *(histoire)*** is the larger set of narrated events, arranged in chronological fashion, no matter how they are presented in the text. The story is what we understand and interpret even without particular details from the storytelling.

2. **Text *(récit)*** is the organization (or what Genette calls ‘narrative discourse’) of the events for the purpose of storytelling. It can be in the spoken or written form. The text is what we read or listen to.

3. **Narration** is the act of producing the text, either by the speaker or the author. This can be a fictional narrator inside the text who delivers the story or it can be the ‘real’ author.

The analysis of the narrative has been Genette’s abiding concern. Here we shall look at the important notions of the narrative suggested by Genette.

***Narrative Voice*:** Genette identifies three elements that make up narrative voice:

i. *Narrative Instance*: This refers to the actual moment and context of narration. This is the setting of the narration or utterance itself and crucial to understand the meaning of that utterance.

ii. *Narrative Time*: This is the time indicated by the tense (the verbs - past, present, future) in

the narrative. When we read a sentence like ‘they would never see her again’, it suggests a future. Here the narrative is in the future.

iii. ***Narrative Levels***: It refers to the relation of the acts narrated to the act of narration itself and is based on *who* is doing the narrating (first-person or third-person). Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* opens with Walton's letter to his sister in which he recounts meeting Victor Frankenstein, who, in turn, narrates his story. Thus, the novel's main narrative level is that of Walton's letter. All other narratives are embedded within this level.

***Narrative Levels*:** Genette discerns four important categories in the analysis of narrative levels. They are:

a. ***Order*:** It is the *sequence of events* in relation to the order of narration. An event may have taken place before the actual narration *(analepsis*, or commonly, flashback). It may not yet have occurred but is anticipated or predicted by the narrative *(prolepsis).* Very often the story's sequence is not the sequence of the plot. For example, in *Frankenstein*, the story is Walton's discovery of Frankenstein. But the plot is the story of the scientist and the monster. Walton's order of events is not necessarily the order in which the plot of Frankenstein-monster moves. This is called *anachrony.* But *Frankenstein* also exhibits another level. It breaks up Frankenstein's story to give us something from Walton. Here the narrative moves between the two stories or narrative levels. This is *metalepsis,* a movement between one narrative level to another.

b. ***Duration*:** This is the rhythm at which the events take place. There are following four speeds of narration:

i. *ellipsis* : infinitely rapid, with quick shifts in time, space and plot
ii. *summary* : relatively rapid
iii. *scene* : relatively slow
iv. *descriptive*: no progress in the story.

c. ***Frequency*:** It refers to the extent of repetition in a narrative. This is the question captured in ‘frequency’: ‘How many times has an event happened in the story?’

d. *Mood*: It is distinguished by Genette into two further categories:

i. *Distance*: This is the relationship of the narration to what it narrates. This distance may be *diegetic* (a plain *recounting* of the story), or *mimetic*, or *representing* the story (or character, situation, event).

ii. *Perspective*: This is commonly called 'point of view' or focus. The narrative focus alternates and shifts throughout the narrative and may be of two kinds:

paralipse: where the narrator withholds information from the reader that the reader *ought to receive* according to the prevailing focus. This is a frequent device in detective stories where the narrator deliberately or unconsciously withholds information.

paralepse: where the narrator presents information to the reader that the reader according to the prevailing focus *ought not to receive.*

Narrative *Perspective or Focalisation*:

Genette favours "focalization" over the traditional "point of view." Types of focalization may be based on two criteria: (a) position of the narrator relative to the story and (b) degree of persistence. Focalization also includes two aspects – the subject or the focaliser (one whose perception orients the presentation) and the object or the focalized (what the foclaiser perceives/presents to the readers).

Jean Pouillon and Todorov had prepared a typology of narrators according to their degree of knowledge with respect to characters. Genette improved upon this when he classified three sorts of narrative on the basis of seeing or focalization:

(a) Non-focalized narrative (zero focalization), as in the omniscient narrator of realist fiction, where the narrator sees all.

(b) Internal focalization, which may be fixed (partial), variable (shifting viewpoints) or multiple (as in epistolary fiction).

(c) External focalization, where ‘seeing’ is done by the reader.

The narrator, for Genette, has five main functions:

- *Narrative*: to tell the story
- *Directing*: when the narrator interrupts the storytelling to describe the process of narration, her/his sources, organization of the story.
- *Testimonial*: where the narrator affirms the truth of the story s/he is about to narrate. It also involves, in many cases, a description of the narrator's responses (emotional, intellectual, and political) to the events s/he is narrating.
- *Communicative*: a frequent feature of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century narrative where the narrator addresses the reader directly with a ‘dear reader’.
- *Ideological*: where the narrator uses the story to generalize, speculate, philosophize about universal matters, make moral comments and so on (‘such is the fate of women’, for example, would be an ideological comment that steps out of the text to describe a general condition).

The kinds of narrators are based upon their position relative to the story they narrate. Genette develops a whole classification of narrators. In order to understand the typology of narrators, we need to first look at the levels of narratives.

The *first* level of a narrative, based on who is doing the telling, is the *main text of the novel.* This is *extradiegetic*, over and above the story to be told, it frames the story to be narrated. The *second* level is the *intradiegetic* level and contains the events or stories being narrated. If the narrator is *inside* the *story-level* s/he is narrating it is a *homodiegetic* narrator. This narrator may narrate the events unfolding but *may not be a part of the events*, a kind of silent *witness* or camera who is reporting or recording. This is often called a *first-person narrative.* And, if the narrator is telling her/his own story we have an *autodiegetic* narrator. Narrators in the autobiographies are *autodiegetic – homodiegetic* narrators: they are inside the story and the story is about them. A narrator who is outside the story s/he is narrating is a *heterodiegetic* narrator. This generates what Genette terms *zero focalization*, which is indeterminate and above everything that happens. It also means that the narrator knows more

about all the characters. This is the *third-person* or *omniscient* narrative. Now, sometimes a *heterodiegetic* can function as an *intradiegetic* narrator too, and narrate a story about *other characters* but from the inside of the story (that is, narrate a story that is *not* about himself/herself).

UNIT 4 (D): ROLAND BARTHES (1915-1980)

Roland Barthes is an extremely interesting figure in literary theory because he is located at the intersection of structuralism and poststructuralism. His early work is inspired by the structuralist ideas and later works gesture at his post-structuralist sympathies. Barthes, in his *The Structural Analysis of Narrative* (1977) and *S/Z* (1970), developed a detailed model of narrative. Like the structuralists, Barthes believed that one can break up a narrative into its constituent elements and discover how they combine with each other. Reading a short story by Balzac, Barthes identified 561 units of meaning, or what he called the 'lexias'. He proposed that we could organize the lexias into five main groups, all working in combination in a narrative. That is, the five groups, or *codes* as he called them, are the narrative's modes of organizing the units so that meaning is generated. These codes, argued Barthes, are common to all narratives.

1. *Proairetic Code*: This is the most visible aspect of a narrative, and refers to the *sequence* in which the events of a story unfold. It is often a temporal sequence: this happened and *then* this happened. This code governs our *expectations* of a narrative: if this happened, then this must certainly happen.

2. *Hermeneutic Code*: This is the code that informs our *interpretation* and the questions we ask of the narrative: What happened? How? Why? By Whom?

3. *Cultural Code*: This is the code that the narratives assume we all share. Cultural codes are those elements of common knowledge that we share as a community and therefore do not require a glossary. This can be medical, literary or even symbolic knowledge. An example would be a narrative that uses a sentence like 'during the Raj, things were very different'.

Most Indians would immediately understand the term *Raj* without any glossary or explanation. It is the cultural code in the narrative.

4. *Semic Code*: This is the code that draws upon, like in the cultural code, a common set of stereotypes that are self-descriptive and self-evident. When, for example, we see a man in white clothes and wearing a Gandhi cap, we know immediately that he is a politician. The stereotype is well in place for all readers and, therefore, does not require any explanation. On the other hand, like the cultural code, semic codes require explanations to a person coming from outside the community.

5. *Symbolic Code*: This is very similar to the semic code. It extends beyond the immediate icon or stereotype to refer to something larger. For example, a horror film thrives on the images of darkness. A shot of the moon and treetops (or streets) automatically functions as a code for night (this is the semic code). But, because we are aware of the significance of night in horror films (and here we are drawing upon our previous experience of such films), we expect something dangerous or evil to happen. This shifts the code from the *semic*where we understand it is night from the signs of the moon and empty streets to the *symbolic* where we know that something evil is about to happen. We move beyond the ordinary day/night semic code to a notion of good/bad that is equivalent to or corresponds to day/night in a process of semantic expansion (that is, the meaning of day and night is expanded to mean good and evil respectively). We have invested the day/night pair the symbolic meanings of good/bad.

STRUCTURALISM AFTER ITSELF

Structuralism represents a shift in literary criticism from content to form, from meaning to organization. The meaning of individual cultural signs like literary texts emerges only in opposition to other signs – it exists in the sign's differential position. Accordingly, the structuralist critic attempts to find the underlying grammar governing all individual signs by identifying their functions – a practice extending from language and literature to all communicative systems and events. This causes a shift of attention from historical and concrete messages of the text, turning to a play within interconnected structures. Focusing on this system that produces the only tenable meanings, structuralism signals the effacement of

the author, replaced by the creative reader. Yet, pointing out the provisionality and arbitrariness beneath all seemingly concrete significations, structuralism probably initiated the attack on logocentrism that was to become the heart of poststructuralist theories. Originating in general linguistics, structuralism offered to cultural studies and literary criticism a model of functional analysis based on a binary opposition between signs. The model soon came to be used in fields as diverse as anthropology and political theory and the basic functioning of computers, with practitioners aiming at an understanding of governing principles of the system. Literary uses include the genetic structuralism of the Marxist Lucien Goldmann, the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, the structural feminism of Julia Kristeva and New Critical analyses in the United States. Semiotics and structuralism together have opened up modes of analysis capable of exposing hidden ideological positions in modern capitalist societies, as Roland Barthes' work on bourgeois myths in French daily life shows. Barthes and Genette have been especially important in emphasizing the essential arbitrariness of all processes of signification and relativity of all discourse. This has prepared grounds for deconstruction and critiques of logocentrism as well as pointed to the questionable nature of constructions of history and socio-political ideology, culminating in the works of Michel Foucault and the New Historicists. Poststructuralism begins by attacking structuralist notions of immanent structures and deep-laid mental patterns rigidly determining signification and opts for a free play of meaning. Yet Barthes' essay *The Death of the Author* (1977) marks much of this transition of structuralism into its own critique, and *The Pleasure of the Text* notes the *jouissance* (bliss) that comes of 'vertical' reading.

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Pramod K. Nayar, *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory from Structuralism to Ecocriticism.*

Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction.*

Peter Barry, Beginning Theory.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism*.
2. E. M. Thompson, *Russian Formalism*.
3. P.M. Medvedev and Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*.
4. Peter Stainer, *Russian Formalism*.
5. Pramod K. Nayar, *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory from Structuralism to Ecocriticism.*
6. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*.
9. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form.*
10. Peter Barry, Beginning Theory.
11. H Porter Abbot, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*.
12. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature.*
13. Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics.*
14. Lodge, David (ed.), *Modern criticism and Theory: A Reader.*
15. Todorov, Tzvetan (ed.), *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay type questions

1) Evaluate the fundamental assumptions of the Sassurrean model of linguistics?
2) What are langue and parole? How are they related?
3) Trace the growth and development of Russian Formalism as a literary theory.
4) Comment on the major features of Russian Formalism.
5) Bring out the limitations of Russian Formalisms as a literary theory.
6) In what way does Russian Formalism bring out the ‘literariness’ of literature?
7) Evaluate the validity of the model of literary analysis provided by Russian Formalism.
8) Discuss Roman Jakobson’s model of communication.
9) How does Jakobson differentiate metaphor and metonymy?
10) How would you analyze Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of Dialogism?
11) What is Gerard Genette’s contribution to narratology?
12) Analyze the five "codes" of a narrative developed by Roland Barthes.

Short-answer type questions

1) Explain the following:
    a. Langue and Parole
    b. Signifier and Signified
    c. Literariness
    d. Defamiliarisation
    e. Heteroglossia
    f. Chronotope
    g. Carnival
    h. Focalisation

2) What do you know of Boris Eichenbaum's theory of *Skaz*
3) Write a short note on the Prague School.
4) What, according to A.J. Greimas, are the three *syntagms* of every narrative?
5) Analyze the "narrative levels" in Gerard Genette's model.

BLOCK – II

UNITS: 5 - 7

POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

Unit 5 (a): Introduction: Defining the terms "Colonial" and "Postcolonial"

Unit 5 (b): Some major Postcolonial theorists and Critics:

- **(i) Aimé Césaire**
- **(ii) Frantz Fanon**
- **(iii) Edward Said**
- **(iv) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**
- **(v) Homi K. Bhabha**
- **(vi) Ngugi Wa Thing'O**

Unit 6 (a): Some Key Terms Related to Postcolonialism:

- **(i) Imperialism**
- **(ii) Third World**

UNIT - 5

UNIT 5 (A): INTRODUCTION: DEFINING THE TERMS "COLONIAL" AND "POSTCOLONIAL"

The last couple of decades have witnessed the publication of a vast number of cultural critiques of empire and its aftermath, designated under the category of "postcolonial". Before addressing the term "Postcolonialism" and its relevance in the field of literary criticism, we need to understand what "Colonialism" was.

In general terms, "Colonialism" was a process of settlement by Europeans in non-European (roughly Asian, African, South American, Australian) countries. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it meant violent exploitation and appropriation of native races and spaces by the European powers. Colonialism often destroyed native cultures or altered them significantly often producing new (hybrid) forms. The term "Postcolonial" generally refers to the culture/writing of people/nations which were once colonised by the European powers. Postcolonial theory looks at the coloniser's strategies of representation of the native; the writing of colonial histories; the feminisation, marginalisation and dehumanisation of the native; the rise of nationalist/nativist discourse; and the psychological effects of colonialism

on both the coloniser and the colonised. One of the leading postcolonial critics Homi K. Bhabha defines postcolonialism as "that form of social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once-colonised Third World comes to be framed in the West."

The postcolonial theory attempts to uncover the colonial ideologies implicit in European texts about the Other i.e. the native/the non-European. Pramod K. Nayar notes:

> Postcolonial theory looks at colonialism's strategies of representation of the native; the epistemological underpinnings of colonial projects; the ―writing‖ of colonial histories; the feminisation, marginalisation and dehumanisation of the native; the rise of the nationalist and/or nativist discourse; the psychological effects of colonialism on both the coloniser and the colonised; the role of apparatuses like education, English studies, historiography, art and architecture in the 'execution' of the colonial project and the 'transactive' or negotiatory structure of postcolonialism. (Nayar 165)

Postcolonial theory is concerned with exclusion, denigration and resistance under colonial power. Elleke Boehmer in his essay "Postcolonialism" states, "…the term postcolonialism addresses itself to the historical, political, cultural, and textual ramifications of the colonial encounter between the West and the non-West, dating from the sixteenth century to the present day." (Boehmer: 340) Thus, postcolonial studies are concerned with the responses to colonial oppression. It is not only a critical theoretical approach in literary and cultural studies but "designates a politics of transformational resistance to unjust and unequal forms of political and cultural authority…", notes Boehmer. (340) It questions, topples, and refracts colonial authority, and by challenging the structural inequalities, it aims at social justice. It also seeks to understand how the colonised reacted to, adapted, or resisted 2 the domination and the effects of colonialism. It analyses identity formations of the colonisers and the colonised in the literary and cultural texts. To quote Peter Berry in this regard, "If the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim their own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued." (Berry: 186)

However, it is important to note that the terms "Post-colonial" and "Postcolonial" do not imply the same thing; they have completely different connotations. The term "Post-colonial" is a temporal marker, referring to a specific historical period after the erstwhile

colonies gained independence from the European hegemony. The term "Postcolonial", on the other hand, is a tool of study, a theoretical model of analysing the discursive phenomenon.

The critical part of a definition of "postcolonial" concerns the prefix "post", which signifies two different meanings in one compound word. Theorists such as Ashcroft et al (1989:1-4), Slemon (1995:45-52), Young (1996:67-68; 2001:1-10) and Moore (2001:182-188) have tried to address this issue. Slemon (1995:100) admits that one of the most "vexed areas of debate within the field of postcolonial theory has to do with the term 'postcolonial' itself." According to Moore (2001:182), such a conception of "post(-)colonial" can be viewed as "naïve, inadequate, or utopian". By contrast, Slemon (1995:101) argues that colonialism comes into existence within the concept of imperialism, "a concept that is itself predicated within large theories of global politics and which changes radically according to the specifics of those larger theories."

UNIT 5 (B): SOME MAJOR POSTCOLONIAL THEORISTS AND CRITICS

i) AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

Aimé Césaire, a Martinican intellectual, a politician, and a distinguished writer, was the founder-figure of the Negritude movement. The concept of Négritude emerged as the expression of a revolt against the historical situation of French colonialism and racism. The particular form taken by that revolt was the product of the encounter, in Paris, in the late 1920s, of three black students coming from different French colonies: Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) from Martinique, Léon Gontran Damas (1912–1978) from Guiana and Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) from Senegal.

The proclamation of Negritude would be done when the three friends founded the journal *L'Etudiant noir,* in 1934–1935 where the word was coined by AiméCésaire. It was meant to be (and, above all, to *sound* like) a provocation. *Nègre,* derived from the Latin "niger", meaning "black", is used in French only in relation to black people as in "art nègre". Applied to a black person it had come to be charged with all the weight of racism to the point

that the insult "*sale* nègre" (*dirty* nègre) would be almost redundant, "sale" being somehow usually understood in "nègre". So to coin and claim the word "Négritude" (*Négrité*, using the French suffix *–ité* instead of *-itude* was considered and dropped) as the expression of the value of "blackness" was a way for Césaire, Senghor and Damas of defiantly turning "nègre" against the white supremacists who used it as a slur. In sum, the word was and has continued to be an irritant. Indeed the "fathers" of the movement themselves would often confess how irritated they were too by the word. Thus, Césaire declared at the beginning of a lecture he gave on February 26, 1987, at the International University of Florida in Miami: "…I confess that I do not always like the word Négritude even if I am the one, with the complicity of a few others, who contributed to its invention and its launching" adding that, still, "it corresponds to an evident reality and, in any case to a need that appears to be a deep one" (Césaire 2004, 80). "What is that reality?" Césaire proceeded then asking. That is indeed the question: is there a content and a substance of the concept of Négritude beyond the revolt and the proclamation? In other words, is Négritude mainly a posture of revolt against oppression the manifestation of which is primarily the poetry it produced or is it a particular philosophy characteristic of a black worldview? One of the most eloquent expressions of Négritude as a posture primarily is to be found in an Aimé Césaire's address delivered in Geneva on June 2nd, 1978 on the occasion of the creation by Robert Cornman of a cantata entitled *Retour* and inspired by the *Notebooks of a Return to the Native Land*. In that address reproduced in *Aimé Césaire, pour regarder le siècle en face*, the poet from Martinique declares:

… when it appeared the literature of Négritude created a revolution: in the darkness of the great silence, a voice was raised up, with no interpreter, no alteration, and no complacency, a violent and staccato voice, and it said for the first time:

> "I, Nègre."
> A voice of revolt
> A voice of resentment
> No doubt
> But also of fidelity, a voice of freedom, and first and foremost, a voice for the retrieved identity" (Thébia-Melsan 2000, 28).

In fact, both answers have been given to that question of the posture of revolt vs. philosophical substance, at different moments and in different circumstances by Négritude writers. Nevertheless, it can be said that Césaire and Damas have put more emphasis on the dimension of poetic revolt while Senghor has insisted more on articulating Négritude as a

philosophical content, as “the sum total of the values of civilization of the Black World”, thus implying that it is an ontology, an aesthetics, an epistemology, or a politics.

Césaire’s attack on European civilization and colonial racism in *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1955) deeply influenced Frantz Fanon's revolutionary manifesto *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), an examination of psychic, cultural and social damages inflicted by colonialism. Césaire parallels the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized with the relationship between Nazis and their victims. "People are astounded, they are angry. They say: "How strange that is. But then it is only Nazism, it wont last." And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves: It is savagery, the supreme savagery, it crowns, it epitomizes the day-to-day savageries; yes, it is Nazism, but before they became its victims, they were its accomplices; that Nazism they tolerated before they succumbed to it, they exonerated it, they closed their eyes to it, they legitimated it because until then it had been employed only against non-European peoples; that Nazism they encouraged, they were responsible for it, and it drips, it seeps, it wells fro every crack in western Christian civilization until it engulfs that civilization in a bloody sea."

ii) FRANTZ FANON

One of the pioneering thinkers of Postcolonial theory had been Frantz Fanon (1925-61). Born in the French colony of Martinique, and trained as a Psychiatrist, Fanon has dealt with the psychological implications of colonialism in his books like *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; translated in 1963), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959; translated in 1965) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; translated in 1967).

In *Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon* critiques the complex ways in which identity, particularly Blackness, is constructed and produced as a means of subjugating the native. For the coloniser, the most vital area of domination was the psychological domain of the colonised. Fanon argues that the coloniser brings the colonised to the domain of madness by rejecting all his individual claims. The native is made into something less than a human, a nothingness. This was achieved by focusing on the psychic differences where the native’s psyche was repeatedly resented and treated as inferior. The native was always viewed and mentioned in terms of his beastly qualities. As he points out, “the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil, insensible to ethics, a negation of values.”

As argued by P.K. Nayar, Fanon reworks Lacanian theories to explain the complete dehumanisation process of the native under colonialism. For the black man, the white man symbolises power. He, therefore, tries to be more like the desirable white man by putting on "white mask", which, for Fanon, is the symbol of both imitation and schizophrenia in the native. Fanon also suggests that in their act of domination and governance, the coloniser turns into a "father-figure", treating the native as his child who has to obey the law of the father. After years of unreality, of living under the spell of illusion, the colonised subjects discover reality as they realise that in the process of upliftment, of power politics they have been carried afar of their original cultural roots. They discover the forces of colonisation at work and attempt to revolt against the hegemonic rule to gain complete independence. But, as it is not easy to launch a war against their master, the violence is directed against his own people, as a symbol to work off hatred. By exhausting most of the forces in the tribal feud, the native feels that colonialism does not exist. In this "collective auto-destruction", Fanon argues, "the native's muscular tension is set free". It is a kind of "reactionary psychosis".

Colonialism, Fanon argues, projects itself as self-born and the origin of everything. Nationalism arises as a counter to this. The anti-colonial nationalist struggle in different classes and groups in the colonies help to prevent the psychological and cultural damages of colonialism. At this stage of decolonisation, the colonised masses mock at the values of the white people. Fanon suggests that a "national literature", perhaps a "negritude" would help in overcoming the psychological damage, and enable the development of a nationalist consciousness.

Fanon's most significant contribution to the field of postcolonial theory lies in his controversial proposition concerning "revolutionary violence" as the most effective mode of opposition to the violence of colonial oppression. "His belief in the cleansing properties of violence was evidently a departure from the strategies of non-violence propounded by Gandhi as a means of exposing the inhumanity of the colonizer." (Boehmer 347). He proposes, on the contrary that it is only through exercising oppositional valence that the colonised 'non-entity' takes history into its own hands, as it were, and so becomes a marker its own future, a historical agent for the first time.

As observed by Boehmer, "In his tripartite schema or 'panorama on three levels' of anticolonial struggle, the keynote postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon outlines how the first level of colonial assimilation will almost inevitably lead the politicized native on to a second

phase of ‘disturbance’. This second phase involves, amongst other features, the reconstitution of identity through the reclamation of local cultural traditions. And from this stage, Fanon argues, might eventually emerge a third or ‘fighting phase’. In this last phase, the native intellectual, to whom Fanon’s theory mainly applies, “after having tried to lose himself in the poeple…will on the contrary shake the people.” In other words, through the process of violently seizing freedom, and asserting political power, the native intellectual learns to re-exercise agency and retrieve selfhood that was damaged under colonial oppression. Moreover, Boehmer observes, Fanon’s ideas have contributed in the formation of varied interpretations of postcolonial resistance. His book *The Wretched of the Earth* became a “virtual primer” for different movements such as the African American Black Power movement of the 1960s led by Malcolm X; Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s revolutionary Marxism in Kenya in the 1970s, and the activist Steve Biko’s Black Consciousness movement in South Africa (1960s-1970s).

Fanon's most remarkablecontribution lies in the way he explores the connection betw een imperialist domination and mentaldisorder. Fanon’s humanism has been criticized by the postcolonial critics who problematise the ideaof humanism itself and explore the nexus betwe en universalism and the colonial enterprise. Fanon’sindebtedness to Western theorists like Ma rx, Freud and Nietzsche has also been interpreted as an impediment to the growth of radical politics in a non- European social context.

iii) EDWARD SAID

With the publication of his books *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *Covering Islam* (1981), and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said became a prominent intellectual figure and a critic of colonialist cause. Said borrows his argument from Michel Foucault’s idea that power operates through systems of knowledge (gathering of information, cataloguing, etc.) and applied to the ways in which authority was exercised in the colonial world. Orientalism, for Said, was a systematic discipline or discourse about the Orient/the East/Palestine, functioned as a “corporate institution” for understanding and controlling other people. As he states,

> Orientalism is a style of thought based upon the ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and (most of the time) the

> Occident…Orientalism as a Western-style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient (ii).

The discourse of Orientalism deals with the production of ideas, knowledge and opinions about the Orient. These include various modes of representation of the Orient through "Othering" (where Orient was Europe's 'dark' Other). In an attempt to analyse this discourse, Said reads a wide range of texts, literary, philosophical, philological, administrative, ethnographic and others, which are worldly in the sense that they exhibit the pressures, prejudices and preoccupations around them, thereby arguing that no text is free from the context of its production. It means that knowledge and literary production cannot be considered innocent for they are complicit with the political agenda of colonialism. Certain kinds of ideological assumptions inform these texts and produced stereotypes of the natives – their ignorant nature, their effeminacy and indolence, their oversexed nature, their essential untrustworthiness and the superiority of the Europeans. These stereotypes of the weak, stupid and inferior native helped to justify, even necessitate the presence of the Europeans as the rational, superior and adult protector. As Said puts it, the Oriental man is first an oriental, and only secondly a man.

Said also makes a distinction between two forms of Orientalism, which he identifies as the Latent Orientalism and the Manifest Orientalism. The Latent Orientalism is the unconscious positivism; here, ideas and prejudices about the oriental backwardness, racial inequality and degeneracy exist. The Manifest Orientalism, on the other hand, is the various stated views about the oriental society, language, culture, and all those things which relegate the Orientals to "a dreadful secondariness." All the changes that occur in the domain of knowledge, takes the form of Manifest Orientalism.

Orientalist discourse, thus, depended on an absolute distinction being made between the dominant colonizing West and other people or "underground selves" , not only "Orientals" as such, but also Africans, Caribbeans, Latin Americans – in fact everyone, who did not conform to the value-laden image of the dominant European self. As Boehmar remarks, "Orientalism inspired the production of a host of spin-off and related studies that developed, refined, and expanded aspects of Said's thinking." The most important among these are Ashis Nandy's*The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (1983) on the effeminization of the colonized under colonialism and Gauri Viswanathan's study of the education system in imperial India as a means through which the colonisers attempted to inculcate the superiority of their cultural values in *Masks of conquest: Literary*

Study and British Rule in India (1989). Christopher Miller's Blank Darkness (1985) has also valuably examined the construction of Africa as against the Eastern 'Orient', how it has set up within colonial discourse as a third, unspoken other in relation to the dualism of Europe and the East.

In his later work *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said attempts an extensive reading of texts like Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, Kim by Rudyard Kipling, and A Passage to India by E.M. Forster to demonstrate their implication of imperialistic discourse. Said argues that the colonial resistance is observed in two phases – in the form of actual fighting against the colonial invasion, and also, in the form of ideological resistance to save and restore the community's culture and past tradition. The revival of the emphasis on the national culture and memory, local narratives, spiritual autobiographies, prison memoirs and so, act as a counterpoint to European histories, discourses and panopticon viewpoints. European narratives are replaced by a more playful narrative style (Said cites Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children as an example here). Building on the practice of post-colonial writers like Rushdie and the theories of anti-colonialism as propagated by Fanon, Said locates sources of resistance in the process of reading and writing against the grain. He identifies this approach as "contrapuntal", implying the postcolonial writers' and critics' ways of addressing the issue of colonial oppression. For Said, as Boehmer argues, the contrapuntal "writing back" involves taking up the techniques and weapons of negation of the West, such as stereotypes of the lazy native or the noble savage, in order first to remake, and eventually to transcend them.

iv) GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the most distinguished thinkers of the twentieth century. Beginning her theoretical work in the 1980s, she has been concerned with the point of *differences*, both pronounced and subtle, which separate and divide the natives or 'the colonized'. Spivak nurtures the belief that there is no "pure" pre-colonial past that we can recover. Rather, every past has been worked over and changed by colonialism. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish the pre-colonial from the postcolonial.

Spivak's early works of the 1980s are closely informed by her interaction with the Subaltern Studies group of Indian Bengali historians, including Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Since the day of its inception, the group aimed to focus on the colonial and

nationalist reading of Indian history in order to highlight the misery of the previously marginalised sections of society. The term "subaltern", which has a military etymology, is derived from the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who used it to designate non-elite social classes and groupings like the proletariat. In her most celebrated essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak exposes the irony of an attempt to discover the voice of the politically and historically 'silenced' groups (tribal people, or scheduled castes, untouchables, and most importantly, women). She argues that it is impossible to discover the pure or the authentic voice of the subaltern, that the subaltern cannot speak for himself or herself because the very structure of colonialism prevents speaking. For the colonised woman, the situation is even more difficult because the dual forces of colonialism and patriarchy repress her completely: she cannot represent herself. Using the examples of Sati and the suicide of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri (Calcutta 1926), Spivak argues that the subaltern wrote her own body because there was no other way of speaking.

A similar sort of a silencing occurs when 'First World' feminists investigate the issues involving 'Third World' women, as Spivak explores at length in the essay "French Feminism in the International Frame" (1987). Here, Spivak challenges the role of the Liberal Western feminists in trying to recover (or speak for) the "gendered subaltern". in her reading of Julia Kristeva, Spivak argues that Kristeva is speaking for the Chinese woman in her own identity as a Liberal Western feminist. This is an "epistemic violence", as Spivak views, an authoritative and ultimately colonial knowledge of the Other. In her essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1986), she critiques the canonical novel of Liberal feminism, *Jane Eyr*e by Charlotte Bronte. She argues that eve in a liberal Western feminist text that apparently valourises the individualist and independent woman, the protagonist Jane Eyre, the figure of the "native woman" Bertha Mason (the white creole from the Caribbean) is effaced. Spivak argues that the individual woman's identity is constructed out of the effacement of the native woman, who never figures out as a triumphant in the discourse of feminist individualism. Spivak's attempt has been to reveal the gendered side of the subaltern. The native woman, thus, is doubly colonised because of her relative economic depression and her gendered subordination.

Spivak argues that during colonialism in India, the British undertook the initiative, assumed the authority and prerogative to speak for the native woman, especially in the colonial discourse of Sati). The construction of the oppressed native woman was necessary to justify their presence as modernised subjects. The native woman "called out" for liberation,

which, for Spivak, was the only instance of the subaltern voice. Otherwise, the native women were only "ventriloquised", spoken for. During the era of anti-colonial struggle, the nationalists also took the initiative to speak for the native woman for their own end, but in the discourse of both colonialism and nationalism, the native woman is only spoken for.

Spivak, therefore, suggests that the subject must be treated as discursively created and decentred. The identity of the self is thus never self-present, only deciphered. She rejects the nativist's stress on the "authentic" identity of the colonised, arguing that there is no pure or essentially authentic subaltern voice. Instead, all subjectivity, the subaltern's subject-position is constructed out of the colonial discourse, and it is not possible to distinguish the pure subaltern from it. However, Spivak points out the need to create the narrative of the true subaltern, which will enable a critique of colonial historiography.

v) HOMI K. BHABHA

If Spivak has bequeathed the concept of the Subaltern to postcolonialism, the Indian-based critic Homi K. Bhabha's contribution lies in theorising the *ambivalence* which operates within the apparently binary or "dichotomous" colonial system (Boehmer 354). Bhabha's focus has been on the two particular areas: the first deals with the instabilities and ruptures of the colonial discourse; and the second deals with his concept of in-betweenness, the indeterminacy which lies in the interface between the self and the other. His critique of Said's idea of "Orientalism" and Fanon's stake on colonial resistance has gained greater attention in the past few decades, making him an eminent critic of postcolonialism.

For Bhabha, a major drawback in Said's Orientalism and Fanon's idea of anti-colonial violence is that they tend to posit the entire system of colonialism, and the colonial encounter as one-directional: it views the colonial process as preceding from the coloniser to the colonised. Borrowing from the post-Freudian psychoanalyst and theorist Jacques Lacan's concept of identity as negation, Bhabha, in a series of keynote essays collected in *The Location of Culture* (1995), radically argues that the coloniser's identity s derived from, and exists in an uneasy relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Instead of being uniform and one-directional, Bhabha contends, the colonial discourse is ambivalent, conflictual and ridden with contradictions; and the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is that of negation, not a one-dimensional will to power as the former postcolonial critics have demonstrated. Even the apparently established stereotypes of the colonised are

far from being fixed – the colonised may be described as passive and feminine, or wild and masculine, depending on the requirements of the colonial situation, or on how authority is configured.

Bhabha argues, following Poststructuralism and Psychoanalysis, that identities are established only through relations and displacements. Identity, for Bhabha, is a liminal reality, constantly moving between various positions, displacing others and being displaced in return. Bhabha borrows Derrida's argument concerning the idea of "repetition" in producing meaning. Any meaning, in order to be established, needs to be constantly reasserted or repeated. The same is applicable in the context of colonialism. The colonial regime creates a disciplinary gaze of power by creating the stereotypes of the natives as savage, inferior, and lustful. These stereotyping of the native, Bhabha argues, does not indicate the supreme nature of the colonial power, but its fractured nature. Therefore, what is already known or established, has to be constantly confirmed through repetitions. According to Bhabha, these repetitions indicate the lack of colonial identity itself, and thus, the identity of the colonial master is dependent upon the relationship with the oppositional native or the Other.

For Bhabha, the colonial discourse is fraught with contradictions because it both desire (fetishes) the similarity or the unity with the native, and fears (phobic) the nature of the native as different from the Self, the Other. Thus, the colonial discourse appears conflictual and contradictory because the native subject is simultaneously beyond comprehension and yet, totally controllable or knowable as the subject of the colonial power.

In the essay "Of Mimicry and Man" (1985), Bhabha elaborates upon his concept of mimicry to further analyse the fractured nature of colonialism. The colonial power requires that the native would internalise the forms and habits of the colonial master, the native should "mimic" the master. The entire colonial mission is to transform the native into "one like us", a copy of the coloniser. For Bhabha, mimicry is a defence, fraught with a resistance of the native; it produces a subject that reflects the distorted image of the coloniser. What is produced is a hybrid subject, which is half-acquiescent, half-oppositional, and marks the site of the slipperiness of authority. The mimicry of the coloniser is a combination of deference and disobedience (what Bhabha calls "sly civility"), and this marks the beginning of anti-colonial resistance. The resistance, for Bhabha, is the symbol of the failure of the colonial power to effectively control, reproduce and extend itself.

As Elleke Boehmer observes, "…in a crucial nuancing of his typically postmodern celebration of cultural diversity, Bhabha emphasizes at the same time that cultural vocabularies and values do not always translate across the linguistic, religious, and other boundaries dividing communities." Bhabha also argues that the multicultural blending between the European host and migrant communities often only produce conditions of cultural exchange. Indeed, what results from the intermixing may equally be entirely new cultural languages, which may not easily "map back on to" or are not "commensurate" with their original or source languages. "These languages do not therefore facilitate a relaxed cross-cultural interaction between different groups" (Boehmer 356). As Bhabha writes in *The Location of Culture*:

> …the migrant culture of the 'in-between', the minority position, dramatizes the culture's untranslatability; and in so doing it moves the question of culture's appropriation beyond the assimilationist's dream…towards an encounter with the ambivalent process of splitting and difference (224).

vi) NGUGI WA THING' O

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (formerly James Ngugi and known generally as Ngugi) was born in Limuru, Kenya, on January 5, 1938. Educated initially at a mission school and then at a Gikuyu independent school during the Mau Mau insurgency, he went on to attend Alliance High School in 1955-1959 and Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda, in 1959-1964. After earning a B.A. in English he worked as a journalist for Nairobi's *Daily Nation* for half a year before leaving to continue his studies in literature at the University of Leeds in England.

Through his book *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) Ngugi Thiong contributes to the debate on the choice of language in a post-colonial country. He argues that Africa will be able to break free from the clutches of Western control over its resources and culture only when the use of European languages is replaced by native languages. In the section 'The Language of African Literature', Ngugi discusses the way language is a carrier of culture and how the use of a foreign language alienates an individual from his/her own culture. Ngugi explores how alienation from one's native culture is accompanied with a hatred for it, and a reverence for the coloniser's culture.

According to Arushi Bahuguna, "*Decolonising the Mind* is an attempt to free the natives' minds from the coloniser's control by rejecting his language and adopting one's native language" (1). Ngugi establishes the relation between language and culture by approaching the "aspects of language" from a Marxist perspective. As language is understood to arise from the economic activities people engage in, language gradually defines a community's "way of life". Over time a particular "way of life" gets codified as customs of a specific culture, and hence language is the medium through which one experiences the culture it is a product of. Ngugi argues that the coloniser introduced his language in the colonies with an aim to make the natives' perception of his own culture as inferior and to be forsaken for the superior culture of the coloniser. Ngugi uses the case of a child's learning of the coloniser's language in order to analyse its role in the process of alienating the native from his culture. The coloniser's language is forced upon the native child because it is the medium in which education institutions are run. The spoken language however remains the native tongue, which causes a "break in harmony between the written and spoken word". Due to the close relation between language and culture, not only the coloniser's language but his culture also is forced upon the child. This displacing of the power that native language held in the child's understanding of the world is not only detrimental to his performance capabilities but is also "disastrous" in the way it sows hatred for one's own cultural roots. The plans and policies implemented in the colonial eras for dominance over the natives' minds seem to be running successfully when one sees the presence of institutions like the Malawi academy, where British not Malawi teachers train children for entry into Western institutions.

Ngugi takes this as a sign of "ultimate success" of the coloniser as the colonised themselves "sing praises" of those who emptied Africa of its material as well as cultural wealth. Ngugi also examines the adverse impact of the coloniser's language on the political functioning of the country. The essay informs us how "patriotic bourgeoisie" has only the support of the bourgeois class but in choosing the coloniser's language, it excludes the working class (the majority of the masses) from actively participating in the political sphere. He also criticises the literature of this bourgeois class which is removed from cultural realities due to its construction of characters like peasants speaking in European languages. According to Ngugi, African literature in European language only exemplifies rather than offers solutions to the problem of cultural identity. The African man torn between two worlds has become a defining feature of this "neo-African literature".

Ngugi critiques the way such literature fails to address identity crisis as it "avoids the issue of language." Ngugi therefore foregrounds his argument that as long as there is not a strong rejection of European languages from Africa's educational, cultural and political sphere, colonisers will continue to control resources and the minds of African "independent" nations. Ngugi highlights the importance of cultural independence from years of colonial control in order to pave the way for independence in other spheres of economic functioning, politics, and also knowledge creation. He argues that Africa will be able to make advancements in various academic fields only when they will be able to express themselves in a language that is of their own culture. He holds dependence on foreign languages as the reason why latest technologies seem foreign. In order to break the trend of everything advanced being foreign, Ngugi suggests that native languages should be allowed to grow so that they can replace foreign languages in all spheres. He considers it the duty of a writer to partake in the creation a literature for the native languages which will help them evolve and replace the "unassailable" position that the coloniser's language holds.

Ngugi directly addresses the community of African writers – "We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what all writers have done for their languages... by meeting the challenge of creating a literature in them, which process later opens the language for philosophy, science, technology, and all other areas of human creative endeavours." Decolonising the Mind makes compelling arguments for the elimination of the use of European languages. The work is Ngugi's struggle against colonial control over the natives' minds and their production. By making the minds decolonised, Ngugi means making African languages the medium of thought and expression in all spheres of life.

UNIT 6 (A): SOME KEY TERMS RELATED TO POSTCOLONIALISM

i) IMPERIALISM

A renowned critic of Postcolonialism, Matthew Stephen defines Imperialism as a relationship between societies that leads to the economic, political and social systems of subordinated societies being oriented towards serving the interests of another—has played a fundamental role in the formation of a single global economy and the modern state system.

Imperialism has acquired an indelibly economic connotation, but has been a fundamental concept in the explanation of military, racial, cultural, linguistic, legal, and even ecological hierarchies in the modern world. As such, imperialism is now widely seen as having an almost completely negative connotation, although it was once as likely to be considered a neutral or even positive term denoting a progressive and enlightening force in history.

The meaning attached to the word imperialism has changed over time. The widespread use of the word mostly dates from the later nineteenth century, in reference to the competitive carving up of the world into formal and informal spheres of influence by European powers, the United States and Japan. In this context, it was used almost interchangeably with colonialism. More recently, imperialism is more precisely distinguished from colonialism. Whereas colonialism is associated with population transfer from a metropolis to a colony, and often with the formal transfer of political authority to colonial power, imperialism refers also to a more diffuse and indirect form of relations by which one community comes to dominate another. By this definition, imperialism is a broader category of which colonialism and empire are manifestations.

As a historical process of the modern world, imperialism has traditionally been divided into two major phases, often described as “old imperialism” and “new imperialism.”

Old Imperialism The first phase refers to the expansion of European countries into the economic and political systems of other world regions in the period from the mid-1400s, which peaked in the mid-eighteenth century. Sometimes referred to as the old imperialism, this was the process of maritime expansion by which European powers conquered the New World and established overseas trading posts and minor colonies in Asia and Africa.

New Imperialism The second wave of imperialism, the new imperialism, is commonly dated from the 1870s up to 1914. In these four decades, a further one-sixth of the earth’s surface was added to formal European control, or perhaps one quarter if informal “spheres of interest” are included, primarily by seven countries: Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, and Japan. The preeminent imperial power was Britain, which established an empire that by 1922 covered one-quarter of the earth’s land and a similar portion of its population. Japan remained the sole non-European power to successfully transform into an imperial power. In 1885 the “scramble for Africa” was formalized in an agreement that distributed the African continent amongst the imperial

powers, and by 1900 virtually no territory in Africa or the Pacific was left to self-rule. The integration of the world under an imperial system ensured that in 1914 most of the world would be drawn into a basically European war. It was in this phase that the first systematic attempts were made to theorize imperialism.

The theoretical approaches to imperialism can be divided into three broad groups. The first of these was the "classical" theories of imperialism and were written by Rudolf Hilferding, Nicolai Bukharin, and (most famously) Vladimir Lenin in the early twentieth century. These drew on the work of the liberal John Hobson, who argued that the rush to imperialism was not inherent in the development of capitalism but a "social pathology" which resulted from the concentration of wealth and power in a capitalist oligarchy, causing underconsumption at home and a search for foreign markets abroad. In contrast to cosmopolitan liberalism, these authors linked capitalism to international conflict and descent into war.

The second group of theories emerged in the 1970s, which reinterpreted imperialism as the process underlying the enormously expanded gap in levels of development and wealth between the industrialized countries and the Third World. Drawing on intervening work by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Andre Gunder Frank sought to show how what he called the "underdevelopment" of the Third World was not, as commonly thought, a result of marginalization from the world economy. It was instead a direct result of integration into an unequal world economy in which metropole economies exploit satellite economies. This was later theorized to operate via the mechanism of unequal exchange. Later, the dependency theory was largely overtaken by the world systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, which drew on classical notions of imperial super-exploitation. World-systems theory took as its central unit of analysis the world economy, defined by a common international division of labour. Again, unequal exchange leads to the transfer of surplus from periphery to the core (with an intervening "semiperiphery"). This reinforces the power of the core states and growing levels of developmental disparity. Imperialism is thus a function of the world economy and does not rely on political rule.

The third and latest group of theories of imperialism emerged during the post-Cold War phase of globalization and U.S. dominance. Usually, imperialism is seen as an inherent aspect of capitalism, which is now truly global. This literature shares less with Lenin and more with Karl Kautsky, who was a Marxist who argued in 1914 that it would be possible for

major imperial states to put aside their rivalries and form a cartel, whereby exploitation of the periphery could continue but without the destructive military conflict of the new imperialism. This argument finds its most extreme articulation in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's empire thesis, which says that no country or group of countries is capable of forming a coherent imperialist project when all political sovereignty has been absorbed into a decentered, global "empire."

ii) THIRD WORLD

The concept of the Third World owes its origin to a French demographer, Alfred Sauvy who used it in an article of *L'observateur*on August 14, 1952. Soon after, its use became fashionable with other scholars. And within a decade of its birth, by the beginning of the 1960s, it acquired the acceptability as a widely used concept in international relations. Since then, its use as a synonym for various phrases such as Underdeveloped Countries, Less Developed Countries, Developing Countries, Former Colonies, and so on, and has been a conspicuous feature of international relations. Its emergence as an entity heralded a new era in international relations. The dyadic balance of world relations was transformed into triadic balance and today, the Third World is considered an essential part, both for the study and conduct, of international relations.

The concept of the Third World was used to describe a group of ex-colonial, economically weak, politically fragile, less industrialised, and technologically deprived nations of the world, geographically spread on the territories of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Almost all the Third World nations of today were the colonies in their past. They were given the status of independent nation-states in the post- Second World War period. The process of decolonization which was started in the aftermath of the second world war, and which reached to its supposed culmination in the Seventies, resulted in adding a large number of new states, into the community of independent nation-states. These independent nation-states today number about one hundred and thirty constituting two-thirds of the entire international community of nations.

These nations, in contrast to the geographic location of the First and the Second Worlds, are situated in the Southern Hemisphere and in terms of area and population are categorised as mini and macro nations. At present they consist of all nations from Latin America, Africa except South Africa and Asia except Japan, All these nations together,

constitute the Third World. And they are called so because almost all of them in their socio-economic development are different from both the First World, consisting of Industrially advanced liberal democracies of the West and Second World, consisting of industrially developed authoritarian socialist democracies of the East, These nations in contrast to the First and the Second Worlds, exhibit a wide range of diversities in their political, economic military and social orientations. The developmental problems and priorities of these nations also differ from the two other worlds.

Whereas the decolonization process led to the emergence and of the Third World as entity in international relations, it also generated transient as well as near-permanent differences and intrinsic sources of political dispute amongst the nascent nation-states. When the colonial rule expanding over centuries ended, it left behind colonial culture, inadequate political systems, economic weakness, technological scarcity, and, above all, artificially created boundaries. The ramifications of all this is that the Third World is full of diverse problems and conflicts.

iii) HYBRID IDENTITIES

Postcolonial theory is developed from anti-colonial philosophy, which in itself is a hybrid construct (Bhabha 1994:112-116; Young 2001:69; 2003:69-90). Homi K Bhabha defines hybridity as "the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority)". It is "the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (1994:112).

The mixture of concepts from the past and the present has given rise to a new foundation for socio-political identities. As a result, postcolonial theory, unfortunately, does not reproduce the old native culture, nor does it bring a totally new culture, but it produces a dislocated culture, a mixture of worlds – a "fragmented and hybrid theoretical language" within a "conflictual cultural interaction" (Young 2001:69; cf Loomba 1998:15). Postcolonial culture is an "inevitably a hybridised" phenomenon (Ashcroft et al 1989:195) that involves a dialectal relationship of the "grafted" Western cultural systems and a native ontology, which (re)creates a new local identity. The construction of a new identity is based on this bitter reality of interaction between the colonial hegemonic system and the colonised's perverted

peripheries. Young (1996:8; see 1995:1-28) defines hybridity as a mere product of "disruptions and dislocations" of any system. The term hybridity or métissage in Francophone African literature is invoked alongside the Négritude philosophy (Senghor 1964:45-83; Sartre 1976:11). The tools used to construct Negritude were provided by the industrialised cultures. In this way, Negritude became a derivative discourse, which Sartre (1976:59) calls a "dialectic" to enable both Negroes and Whites to read equality and sameness in races.

In the minds of Senghor and his colleagues, as Young (2001:266) analyses their thinking, Negritude was to forge a third option, a new way, a new society where "the antithetical values of racism and anti-racism [would] produce a society without racism and a new humanism". Through this context, humanity would at last be universally defined. Hybridity emerges in the context of compositions of a fluid mixture that undergoes its own initiation of reciprocal translation (Van Aarde 2004:11-12). This mixture of two original (yet different) materials becomes a new material in itself, failing however to identify fully with either of the two. Following Young's (2003:139-146) discussion colonialism, like translation, invades other territories, other cultures and imposes its meaning to dominate the new landscape, thereby "changing things into things which they are not". The indigenous person and his/her whole environment are forced into a subordinated culture of colonial rule. This is why the original culture has to be reconstructed.

UNIT 6 (B): A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH TO POSTCOLONIALISM

Self-Consciousness: Frantz Fanon (1986:84) asserts that the problem of colonialism "includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also the human attitudes towards these conditions." According to Nandy (1983:63), colonialism is first of all "a matter of consciousness", therefore it needs to be defined in people's minds. The war against colonialism and any other forms of oppression must not only be material, it must also equally engage the mental. For Fanon, the use of psychology in the anti-colonial struggle has a twofold purpose: it investigates the inner effects of colonialism on the colonised, and it provides the tools of resistance, "turning the inculcation of inferiority into selfempowerment"

(Young 2001:275). Consequently, the process of decolonisation begins with a positive change of mind, a self-consciousness.

A.M.Tolbert (1995: 347-361) grapples with the issue of "Christianity, imperialism and decentering of privilege". Her attempt raises important points concerning the mind of both coloniser and colonised in the process of decolonisation. She highlights three discrete ways in which appropriate reciprocal participation can be achieved, namely listening, reflecting/analysing and acting. Listening in postcolonial theory has to work at the conscience level of those engaged in and affected by imperialism and bring them to the level of responsibility and accountability. Self-consciousness can refer to a cultural revolution which refuses to remain in a state of subjugation. Consciousness informs about "desire", a spirit of longing, a spirit of want or satisfaction (Isasi-Diaz 2004:340-354). Cabral's (1969:41-43; cf Bhabha 1994:171-197) term "the survival of culture" refers to self-consciousness that is engaged in resistance to gain freedom. Self-consciousness as a means of cultural and personal rebirth is not ashamed of the past, but defies the oppressor's consciousness to see sameness and equality in the other, which henceforth acquires dignity. According to Fanon (1995:154), in the sphere of "psycho-effective equilibrium", self-consciousness brings about change in "the native" and in the oppressor alike. Nandy (1983:63; cf Young 2001:340) emphasises the psychological effects of colonialism in colonial powers as well as colonised cultures. Self-consciousness is a reciprocal revolution that goes from colonised to coloniser and vice versa (Nandy 1980:99-111).

Self-determination: Violent and non-violent approaches From Du Bois to Steve Biko the emphasis on self-determination and consciousness is important. Cabral (1969:89) and Guevara (1996:172) both stress the importance of self-sacrifice in liberation struggles. In a psychoanalytical approach, two dimensions can be discerned based upon the way in which they have been used by theorists and political practitioners. These two approaches, non-violent (passive resistance) and violent (active resistance) are usually regarded as opposites that rarely occur concomitantly. Nevertheless, over the years, they have been interchangeably used in conflicting situations, that is when one approach does not work, the other is switched on, a dilemma that Horsley (1993) deals with. Mariategui (1996:49) states that "the renunciation of violence is more romantic than violence itself ... Unfortunately, a revolution is not made by fasting." The anti-colonial struggle is about violence and it is hard to find any other dialectical discourse to define it. Derrida (1978:30) argues that colonial violence was

carried out in the name of pacification, whereas postcolonial violence is carried out in the name of degradation. This infinite passage through violence is what is called history. Fanon argues that colonial violence is a reciprocal dialect that works at the level of history and the individual. In 1961, the manifesto of the African National Congress (Mandela 1994:325-328) enacted the use of force as an alternative in the freedom struggle. In this instance Umkhonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation) was to carry on the armed struggle. Nkrumah (1957:92) who followed in Gandhi's Lazare S Rukundwa & Andries G van Aarde HTS 63(3) 2007 1187 footsteps regarding a non-violent approach, eventually had to lament that freedom had never been "handed over to any colonial country on a silver platter". Self-determination is defined by the language best understood by those involved in the conflict, and revolution prepares the ground of freedom for those who cannot get it by other means. Although the option of active violence is supported by Fanon and other freedom fighters, Jesus' philosophy for the church is non-violent. There are many forms of non-violent resistance against colonialism and other forms of oppression. Vail and White (1991:41) analyse various forms of local resistance and their modus operandi before the advent of independence movements. In Africa, songs and poetry were important weapons, not only by stimulating the consciousness of the oppressed but also by sending out a clear message of resistance to the oppressor. Connor (1996:107-128) gives a good example of African-American songs that were used in a Christianised manner in the struggle against slavery and racism. Whereas Fanon moved from an analysis of the disabling effects of the "psychological violence" of colonialism to an advocacy of military intervention against colonial regimes, Gandhi combined non-violence and non-cooperation with a more widespread "psychological resistance" (Young 2001:323). Taking Gandhi's example further, hybridisation and alliance begin at home where various cultural and religious beliefs are moulded through psychoanalysis and spiritual energy to form a resistance theory.

UNIT - 7

UNIT 7 (A): THIRD WORLD OR POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM

Postcolonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and in Western locations. It concentrates on construction of gender difference in colonial and anti-colonial discourses, representation of women in anti-colonial

and postcolonial discourses with particular reference to the work of women writers. The postcolonial feminist critics raise a number of conceptual, methodological and political problems involved in the study of representation of gender. While postcolonial theorist struggles against the maiden colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting him as inferior, the task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated. She suffers from "double colonization" (a term coined by Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherfold and refers to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy). She has to resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman. In this oppression her colonized brother is no longer her accomplice, but her oppressor. In his struggle against the colonizer, he even exploits her by misrepresenting her in the nationalist discourses. Not only that, she also suffers at the hands of Western feminists from the colonizer countries who misrepresent their colonized counterparts by imposing silence on their racial, cultural, social, and political specificities, and in so doing, act as potential oppressors of their "sisters". In this article, I explore these challenges of a postcolonial feminist, for it is in her struggle against the "postcolonial" and "feminist" theorists that she can assert her identity as a "postcolonial feminist."

Postcolonial feminist theory exerts pressure on mainstream postcolonial theory in its constant iteration of the necessity to consider gender issues. Postcolonialism and feminism have come to share a tense relationship as some feminist critics point out that postcolonial theory is a male-centered field that has not only excluded the concerns of women but also exploited them. Postcolonial feminist theorists have accused postcolonial theorists not only of obliterating the role of women from the struggle for independence but also of misrepresenting them in the nationalist discourses. Edward Said's seminal study Orientalism itself accorded little attention to female agency and discussed very few female writers. Homi K. Bhabha's work on the ambivalence of colonial discourses explores the relationship between a "colonizing" subject and a "colonized" object without reference to how the specifics of gender might complicate his model. Critics such as Carole Boyce Davies who are suspicious of the male-centered bias of postcolonial critique often ask "where are the women in the theorizing of postcoloniality?" (Black Women 80).

Nationalism has historically functioned as one of the most powerful weapons for resisting colonialism, and for establishing the space of postcolonial identity. Nationalist discourses are largely male-centric and control women by capturing them in traditional stereotypes. They are, however, not the only instruments of oppression on the colonized

female body. Western feminists, through their representations of colonized women, have also contributed to the oppression of the colonized female body and identity. Postcolonial feminist theory has always concerned itself with the relationship between White feminists and their indigenous counterparts. In their eagerness to voice the concern of the colonized women, White feminists have overlooked racial, cultural, and historical specificities that mark the condition of these women. In so doing, they have imposed White feminist models on colonized women, and thereby, worked as an oppressor. In this section, I analyze two major lacunae, the exclusion of the notion of "race" and the denial of the socio-historical context that characterize the work of Western feminists in their approach toward "Third World" women.

Gayatri Spivak criticizes Gilbert and Gubar's essay "The Madwoman in the Attic" for ignoring the colonial context of Jane Eyre when celebrating Jane as a proto-feminist heroine and questions the role of Western or "First World" feminists in addressing the concerns of "Third World" women. Spivak argues that Jane's journey from subservience to female self-determination, economic security, and marriage on her terms could not occur without the oppression of Bertha Mason, Rochester's Creole wife from Jamaica. She points out that Gilbert and Gubar read Bertha in relation to Jane, never as an individual self in her own right. In their words, Bertha is Jane's "truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self that Jane has been trying to repress" (140). Bertha's lunacy represents the anger that Jane represses in order to be deemed an acceptable woman in a patriarchal world. This reading of Bertha purely in relation to Jane's self leaves out the colonial context of Bertha's imprisonment and fails to examine some of the assumptions concerning Bertha's lunacy and her representation in terms of "race".

In the early 1980s, several critics explored the difficulties Black women faced in working with popular feminist discourses. Helen Carby explores these issues in her influential essay "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood." In identifying and discussing the condition of "Western feminism" in the 1970s, Carby explains that Black and Asian women are barely made visible within their discourses. And when they are addressed, their representation remains highly problematic. Western feminism is criticized for the Orientalist way in which it represents the social practices of other races as backward and barbarous, from which Black and Asian women need rescuing. In Carby's view, Western feminism frequently suffers from an ethnocentric bias in presuming that the solutions which White Western women have advocated in combating their oppression are

equally applicable to all. As a result, issues of race have been neglected which has hindered feminists from thinking about the ways in which racism and patriarchy interact. Black feminists have accused Western feminists of reading gender as a monolithic entity and emphasized the need to consider race and class as issues related to questions of gender. Some critics, such as Sandoval have stressed the need to acknowledge the intellectual and political debt that the White feminist consciousness-raising movement of the 1960s and 1970s owing to the Black Civil Rights movement.

Chandra Mohanty in her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" criticizes hegemonic Western scholarship and colonialism in Western feminist scholarship in particular. In a number of Western radical and liberal feminist writings, Mohanty detects the so-called "colonialist move" which consists of producing the "Third World" woman as a singular and monolithic subject. This constitution of a colonial Other in these White Western feminist texts on women in the Third World is, according to Mohanty, due to three analytical presuppositions in these texts. First is the assumption of the category of "'Third World' women as a coherent group with identical interests, experiences, and goals prior to their entry in the socio-political and historical field" (121). This Western feminist discourse defines Third World women as subjects "outside" social relations instead of looking at the way these women are constituted through these social structures. Economic, religious, and familial structures are judged by Western standards; the "typical" Third World woman is thus being defined as religious, family-oriented, legal minors, illiterate and domestic. Through this production of a Third World Other, White Western feminists are discursively representing themselves as being sexually liberated, free-minded, in control of their own lives.

Secondly, the model of power which these Western feminist writings imply, namely the humanist, classical notion of men as oppressors and women as oppressed is taken up by these White scholars. This concept is definitely not adequate, says Mohanty, as it implies a universal notion of patriarchy and thus only stresses the binary "men versus women". Furthermore, in not taking into account the various socio-political contexts, women are "robbed" of their historical and political agency. She pleads for a politics of location and a more Foucauldian model of power so that the colonialist move made by some Western feminist scholars can be made explicit as being a discursive institution, and "Third World" women, placed in their own particular historical and political contexts, now can have moments of empowerment with this "diverse, heterogeneous sort of subjectivity". In this

way, Mohanty is deconstructing the idea of “First World woman as subject” versus the “Third World woman as object” which eventually leads to an opening up of theoretical space to talk about differences among Third World women, and women in general.

Thirdly, Mohanty criticizes Western methodological practices that are over-simplified and are in fact just trying to find “proof” of various cases of powerless women in order to support the above-mentioned classical notion of Third World women as powerless victims. The White feminist concept of “sisterhood” is therefore also criticized by Mohanty, as it implies a false sense of common experiences and goals; as if all women are oppressed by a monolithic, conspiring sort of patriarchal dominance. This idea certainly cannot be fruitful, says Mohanty, as it only paralyses women. Mohanty not only exposes the weakness in Western feminism but also goes a step further to offer some solutions to these lacunae that plague Western feminist’s representation of “Third World” women. Mohanty tries to show the space between the Third World Woman as representation versus real-life (third world) women. Careful studies that take into account historical and socio-political backgrounds of different and diverse third world women will help to empower them. The idea of a politics of location, or “situatedness”, is very important with Mohanty. Consequently, she wants to do away with the too-simple model of power which consists of the dichotomy “oppressors (who have something) versus oppressed (who lack something)”. By criticizing the White Western feminist scholarship, Mohanty is in fact deconstructing the binary “first world woman versus third world woman” and the binary “men as oppressors versus women as victims”.

The dismissal of First World feminism at a stroke because of the problems discussed earlier in this article might risk losing its resources which can contribute to feminist critique. Hence, one needs to think of the possibility of building new, vigilant relations between women across “First” and “Third World” feminism, as is evidenced by a book edited by SusheilaNasta entitled Motherlands: Black Women’s Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia. Nasta states that a creative dialogue is possible where the First World and the Third World voices both contribute and learn from each other. Nasta also acknowledges the problems with the use of English as a father tongue that remains problematic for these women, as it houses both colonial and patriarchal values. She, however, reminds us that we must attend to ways in which women can transform the colonizer’s language in order to enable new kinds of representations through which they can speak.

UNIT 7 (B): POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM AND LITERATURE

Postcolonial criticism can be appropriately used to interpret literary works of varied national and temporal origin. In general, as Lois Tyson states in *Critical Theory Today* (2006), the postcolonial critics analyse the ways in which "a literary text, whatever its topics, is colonialist or anticolonialist, that is, how the text reinforces or resists colonialism's oppressive ideology (427). For example, in the simplest terms, a text can reinforce colonialist ideology through positive portrayals of the colonizers, negative portrayals of the colonized, or the uncritical representation of the benefits of colonialism for the colonized. Analogously, texts can resist colonialist ideology by depicting the misdeeds of the colonizers, the suffering of the colonized, or the detrimental effects of colonialism on the colonized. Such analysis is not always as straightforward as this simple outline might lead you to expect, however. The ideological content of literary texts is rarely able to confine itself to such tidy categories. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), for example, is extremely anticolonialist in its negative representation of the colonial enterprise: the Europeans conducting the ivory trade in the Congo are portrayed as heartless, greedy thieves who virtually enslave the indigenous population to help collect and transport the Europeans' "loot," and the negative effects of the European presence on the native peoples are graphically depicted. However, as Chinua Achebe observes, the novel's condemnation of Europeans Postcolonial criticism based on a definition of Africans as savages: beneath their veneer of civilization, the Europeans are, the novel tells us, as barbaric as the Africans. And indeed, Achebe notes, the novel portrays Africans as a prehistoric mass of frenzied, howling, incomprehensible barbarians: "Africa [is a] setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa [is] a [symbolic] battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril" ("An Image of Africa" 12). In other words, despite *Heart of Darkness*'s obvious anticolonialist agenda, the novel points to the colonized population as the standard of savagery to which Europeans are compared. Thus, Achebeuncovers the novel's colonialist subtext, of which the text does not seem to be aware.

There are a few more brief examples of postcolonial interpretations of literary texts. Homi K. Bhabha gives us a wonderful example of the global orientation of much postcolonial criticism when he offers a new way to analyse world literature, not in terms of national traditions, which is how it generally has been studied, but in terms of postcolonial topics that cut across national boundaries. For example, Bhabha suggests that world literature might be

studied in terms of the different ways cultures have experienced historical trauma, perhaps such traumas as slavery, revolution, civil war, political mass murder, oppressive military regimes, the loss of cultural identity, and the like. Or world literature might be seen as the study of the ways in which cultures define themselves positively by "othering" groups whom they demonize or otherwise devalue for that purpose. Or we might analyse world literature by examining the representations of people and events that occur across cultural boundaries, rather than within them, such as representations of migrants, political refugees, and colonized peoples. "The center of such a study," Bhabha says, "would neither be the 'sovereignty' of national cultures, nor the universalism of human culture, but a focus on . . . the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present" (12). That is, we might study what world literature tells us about the personal experience of people whom history has ignored—the disenfranchised, the marginalized, the unhomed—such are found in the works of South African writer Nadine Gordimer and African American writer Toni Morrison.

For example, Bhabha argues that Gordimer's *My Son's Story* (1990) and Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) are unhomely novels in which the female protagonists— Aila and Sethe, respectively—live in the hinterland between cultures. Aila is unhomed because she is imprisoned for using her house as a cover for gun-running in an effort to resist South Africa's racist government; Sethe, because she has killed her baby daughter in order to save the child from the abuses of a cruel slave master. Thus, Bhabha observes, these two characters are doubly marginalized: first as women of color living in racist societies, second as women whose actions have placed them outside the circle of their own communities. In representing the psychological and historical complexities of these characters' ethical choices, both novels reveal the ways in which historical reality is not something that happens just on the battlefield or in the government office. Rather, historical reality comes into our homes and affects our personal lives in the deepest possible ways. Marginalized people may be more aware of this fact because it is pressed on them by violence and oppression, but it is true for everyone.

Another attempt to find a common denominator in postcolonial literature is made by Helen Tiffin, who claims that the "subversive [anticolonialist] manoeuvr[e] . . . characteristic of post-colonial texts" does not lie in "the construction or reconstruction" of national cultural identity, but rather in "the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record" (95). Tiffin argues that, as it is impossible to retrieve a pre-colonial past or construct a new cultural identity completely free of the colonial past, most postcolonial literature has attempted, instead, "to investigate the means by which Europe imposed and maintained . . .

colonial domination of so much of the rest of the world" (95). One of the many ways postcolonial literature accomplishes this task, Tiffin maintains, is through the use of what she calls "canonical counter-discourse," a strategy whereby "a post-colonial writer takes up a character or characters, or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils [its colonialist] assumptions, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes" (97).

Tiffin sees this kind of "literary revolution" (97) in, for example, *Wide Sargasso Sea*(1966) by Jamaican-born writer Jean Rhys. Rhys' novel, a postcolonial response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), "writes back" (98) to Brontë's novel by, among other things, reinterpreting Bertha Mason, Rochester's West Indian wife. Brontë's novel portrays Bertha, the descendent of white colonial settlers, as an insane, drunken, violent, and lascivious woman who tricked Rochester into marriage and whom her husband must keep locked in the attic for her own and everyone else's protection. In contrast, Rhys' novel depicts Bertha, in Gayatri Spivak's words, as a "critic of imperialism" (Spivak 271), a sane woman driven to violent behaviour by Rochester's imperialist oppression. Rhys's narrative thereby unmasks the colonialist ideology informing Brontë's narrative. And part of Jane Eyre's colonialist ideology, we might add, is revealed when the novel associates Bertha with the non-white native population as seen through the eyes of colonialist Europe: Bertha's face is a "black and scarlet visage" (Brontë 93; Ch. 27; vol. II), and the room she inhabits is "a wild beast's den" (Brontë 92; Ch. 27; vol. II). In other words, according to the colonialist discourse in which Jane Eyre participates, to be insane, drunken, violent, and lascivious is the equivalent of being non-white.

Tiffin notes that similar canonical counter-discourse can be found, for example, in *Foe* (1988), by South African writer J. M. Coetzee, in the way the novel reveals the colonialist ideology of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), an ideology manifest in Crusoe's colonialist attitude toward the land on which he's shipwrecked and toward the black man he "colonizes" and names Friday. And of course, canonical counter-discourse occurs in the numerous modern Carib- bean and South American performances of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), which reveal the political and psychological operations of Prospero's colonialist subjugation of Caliban in the original play. As Tiffin observes, canonical counter-discourse doesn't unmask merely the literary works to which it responds, but the whole fabric of colonialist discourse in which those works participate.

Finally, Edward Said demonstrates how postcolonial criticism of a canonized literary work often involves moving the "margins" of the work (for example, minor characters and

peripheral geographical locations) to the center of our attention. This is what he does in his analysis of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814). The entire novel is set in England around the turn of the nineteenth century, most of it on the sizable estate of the wealthy Sir Thomas Bertram, who epitomizes the positive image of the traditional English gentleman of property: he is well-bred, rational, honourable, and highly moral, and is the proper patriarchal head of his home and of the overseas agricultural enterprise that financially sustains that home. This enterprise is in Antigua, in the Caribbean British colonies, and it is maintained by slave labour. But things are not going well in Antigua, and Sir Thomas must travel there to take control personally. And take control he does, apparently with the same efficiency with which he rules his home. For having set his "colonial garden" (*Culture and Imperialism* 86) in order, as Said puts it, Sir Thomas returns home to quickly set to rights his household, which, without his paternal guidance, has gotten out of order: his grown children have fought among themselves, engaged in clandestine courtships, and generally created a domestic uproar. Thus, among other things, Said notes that the novel draws a strong parallel between "domestic [and] international authority" (*Culture and Imperialism* 97). For, the financial well-being of the British estate depends on the success of the colonial enterprise, and the orderly operation of both depends on the guidance of the British patriarch. Although Sir Thomas' trip to Antigua is peripheral to the narration—it is mentioned only in passing and we see nothing that goes on there—it is "absolutely crucial to the action" (Culture and Imperialism 89). In Said's words, *Mansfield Park* [is] part of the structure of [Britain's] expanding imperialist venture. . . . [And] we can sense how ideas about dependent races and territories were held [not only] by foreign-office executives, colonial bureaucrats, and military strategists [but also] by intelligent novel-readers educating themselves in the fine points of moral evaluation, literary balance, and stylistic finish (*Culture and Imperialism* 95). In other words, the colonialist ideology contained in literature is deposited there by writers and absorbed by readers without their necessarily realizing it.

CONCLUSION

Postcolonial theory is built from the colonial experiences of people who engaged in liberation struggles around the world and particularly in the tricontinental countries in Africa, south and southeast Asia, and Latin America (Rukundwa and Aarde 2009, 1189-1190). It bears witness

to constant cultural forces for representation. It allows people emerging from socio-political and economic domination to reclaim their negotiating space for equity. In a dislocated culture, the postcolonial theory does not declare war on the past but challenges the consequences of the past that are exploitative. In so doing, postcolonial theory engages the psychology of both the colonised and the coloniser in the process of decolonisation. Those engaged in and those affected by colonisation and imperialism are consciously brought to a level of responsibility because the cultural revolution refuses to endure a state of subjugation. The postcolonial theory raises self-consciousness which revolutionalises the minds of the colonised and the coloniser to build a new society where liberty and equity prevail.

As argued by Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their *Post-Colonial Studies* (2007),

> …post-colonial theory has been found useful in examining a variety of colonial relationship beyond the classic colonizing activities of the British Empire. The concept of boundaries and borders has been crucial in the imperial occupation and domination of indigenous space. And the question of borders and borderlands has now become a pressing issue in an age of increasingly hysterical border protection. Cultural borders are becoming recognized as a critical region of colonial and neo-colonial domination, of cultural erosion, and of class and economic marginalization (viii-ix).

The field of post-colonial studies now includes the vexed subjects of contemporary neo-colonialism: the identities and relationships of Chicano, Latino, and hybrid subjectivities of various kinds. These subjects, who slip between the boundaries of the grand narratives of history and nation, are becoming an increasingly important constituency for post-colonial studies.

One of the terms emerging from post-colonial studies seems to circumvent some of the perceived problems inherent in descriptions such as ‘post-colonial’ and diaspora. ‘Transnational’ as an adjective is growing in use since it extends to migrant, diasporic, and refugee communities not directly emerging from the colonial experience. The increasing flow of populations, the mobility of individuals, the increased crossing of borders, and the blurring of the concept of ‘home’ have produced a range of transnational literature and other forms of cultural production that extend the field of the post-colonial in productive ways.

UNIT – 8

UNIT 8 (A): INTRODUCTION TO SUBALTERN STUDIES

Subaltern studies began as revisionist historiography of peasant movements in colonial India. The Subaltern Studies Group was formed in 1979–80 under the tutelage of historian Ranajit Guha at the University of Sussex in England. The first edited volume of Subaltern Studies was published in 1982. In the late 1980s, Guha moved to the Australian National University and the project started a new life; since then, a series of 12 edited volumes have been published by the group (Amin and Bhadra 1994). The group consisted of heterodox historians of South Asia, who were critical of the nature of the historiography prevalent at that time because of its elitist biases and "bourgeois-nationalist" and "colonial" mode of history writing. These forms of history distorted the historical portrayal of the subalterns or the "people" and neglected their role in the anti-colonial struggle.

The term 'subaltern' has a rather long history. It was initially applied to the serfs and peasants in England during the Middle Ages. Later, by 1700, it was used for the subordinate ranks in the military. It, however, gained wide currency in scholarly circles after the works of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), an Italian Marxist and Communist Party leader. Gramsci generally used the term in a broader connotation of 'class' to avoid the censorship of the prison authorities as he was in jail and his writings were scanned. Gramsci had adopted the term to refer to the subordinate groups in the society. In his opinion, the history of the subaltern groups is almost always related to that of the ruling groups. In addition, this history is generally 'fragmentary and episodic'.

Ranajit Guha, however, in the Preface to Subaltern Studies I, did not mention Gramsci's use of the term, even though he referred to Gramsci as an inspiration. Instead, he defined it as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary:

> "The word "subaltern" in the title stands for the meaning as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that is, "of inferior rank". It will be used in these pages as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way."

A little later, at the end of his opening essay in the volume, he further clarified this term:

> ‘The terms “people” and “subaltern classes” have been used synonymously throughout this note. The social groups and elements included in this category represent the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the “elite”.’

The Subaltern historians made a radical departure in the use of the term from that of Gramsci. Even while accepting the subordinated nature of the subaltern groups, they argued that their history was autonomous from that of the dominant classes.

UNIT 8 (B): MAJOR INFLUENCES

Subaltern studies have been diversely influenced by global Marxist and left-leaning scholarship. With an eclectic but creative conceptualization, Guha and his colleagues borrowed from various sources such as Louis Althusser's structuralist Marxism, Levi-Strauss's structuralism, and Michel Foucault and Edward Said's notion of power and discourses. It was also considerably influenced by the “history from below” school, initiated by Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rude, and others (Dhanagare 1993). But it was from the Italian Marxist theorist of the Third International, Antonio Gramsci, that it drew its vital inspiration. The Subaltern Studies Group developed its theoretical apparatuses mainly by reworking the concept of the “subaltern” used by Antonio Gramsci. He wrote his *Prison Notebooks* from 1929–35, during his period of incarceration in the jails of fascist Italy. In them, he charted an inventory for studying the complex history of the subaltern people. Against prevalent Marxist orthodoxy, Gramsci argued that the rise of the bourgeoisie was not only through coercion but through the creation of hegemonic consent to cultural and ideological institutions of civil society established over the people or the subalterns. In the context of southern Italy, which was marked by the presence of a vibrant peasantry active in rebellions, Gramsci criticized the notion of the incapability of the peasantry to revolt, expressed in the Marxian epithet “sack of potatoes” and promoted by

European orthodox Marxist theory. Conversely, he suggested that the subaltern consciousness of the peasantry, immersed in traditional religion and popular culture, should be nurtured by "organic intellectuals" to unleash the revolutionary potential them (Chatterjee 2010).

Colonial capitalism, undoubtedly, changed some aspects of society with coercive force, but a larger space of life and consciousness remained untouched by it. This was a typical instance of "dominance without hegemony." This signifies that the bourgeoisie dominated using a coercive state apparatus but was unable to gain the ideological, political, and cultural legitimacy in society needed to construct a hegemonic "national-popular" rule. Hence much of the subaltern domain remained relatively autonomous from elite politics. Autonomy also originates from the distinct structure of subaltern consciousness that evolved from the experience of their subjugation and subservience. The evidence of this subaltern consciousness can only be found in the moments of peasant insurgencies. Thus, the central focus of subaltern studies has been to unravel the rebel consciousness (Guha 1997).

UNIT 8 (C): THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Guha's framework, the subaltern is portrayed as a noble savage who possesses "pure" rebel consciousness. History shows that subaltern consciousness is a bricolage of elements drawn from both dominant and subaltern class consciousness. Through experiences of resistance and rebellion in interaction with the state and dominant elite classes, a sort of synthetic develops in it. Thus, the bone of contention was regarding the historicity of the structure of such a resilient consciousness. If according to Guha, the subaltern consciousness is formed within a specific historical configuration of power relations of domination and subordination, it should change with time. The theory needs a spatiotemporal narration of subaltern history so that various historical trajectories and narratives explain the mutating forms of subaltern consciousness (Ludden 2002).

Guha retired from the editorial team of Subaltern Studies in 1988. An anthology *titled Selected Subaltern Studies* was launched in the same year, which made its formal entry into the higher echelons of Western academia. The initial Subaltern Studies Group was later joined by about another 36 scholars, who contributed in the 12 volumes of the Subaltern

Studies series. Through a new paradigmatic shift in 1987–89, subaltern studies more staunchly moved toward the study of fragmentary and incomplete subaltern consciousness.

As these elements of change became incorporated into subaltern theory, a new vista of inquiry opened up whereby the subaltern studies scholars started focusing on all the processes of the modern state, public institutions, and the representation of subaltern classes in its loci. By encompassing these analyses, subaltern studies came closer to postcolonial studies as practiced in American academia. Scholars like Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, David Arnold, and others undertook many such studies, incorporating views from postcolonial theory. Recently, some of the scholars have participated in unearthing the subaltern consciousness of various other marginalized groups like women, minorities, and the so-called lower castes. From the 1990s onward scholars like Gyanedra Pandey, Shahid Amin, Partha Chatterjee, and others have provided post-nationalist critiques of the nation through their celebration of "fragments" and their questioning of the very form of Eurocentric discourses. Currently, subaltern studies have turned into a global field of scholarship. It has inspired the creation of various groups such as the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group in 1992 (Chatterjee 2010). Its foundational statement (Latin American Subaltern Studies Group 1993) acknowledges the huge inspiration it drew from subaltern studies. It states that the ideology of nationalism is an invention of the elites in Latin America as in South Asia. Accordingly, in a changing global economy, the subaltern functions as a mutating and "migrating" subject both in its cultural self-representation and in the changing nature of its social pact with the state. Hence there is a need to capture the essence of this subalternity in transition. Recently, Chatterjee (2012) has programmatically stated that subaltern studies was a product of their own time and a "new time needs a new project," not a reworking of an old project. He advocates an ethnographic turn in subaltern studies, which might set a future agenda for research in the field.

UNIT 8 (D): CRITICISM

There has been wide-ranging criticism of the Subaltern Studies from many quarters. Right from the beginning the project has been critiqued by the Marxists, Nationalists and Cambridge School historians, besides those who were not affiliated to any position. Almost

all positions it took, ranging from a search for an autonomous subaltern domain to the later shift to discourse analysis, came under scrutiny and criticism.

Some of the earlier critiques were published in the *Social Scientist*. In one of them, Javeed Alam criticised Subaltern Studies for its insistence on an autonomous domain of the subaltern. According to Alam, the autonomy of the subaltern politics is predicated on the perpetuity of rebellious action, on 'a consistent tendency towards resistance and a propensity to rebellion on the part of the peasant masses'. Whether this autonomous action is positive or negative in its consequences is of not much concern to the subalternists:

> 'The historical direction of militancy is … of secondary consideration. What is primary is the spontaneity and an internally located self-generating momentum. Extending the implications of the inherent logic of such a theoretical construction, it is a matter of indifference if it leads to communal rioting or united anti-feudal actions that overcome the initial limitations.'

In another essay, a review essay by Sangeeta Singh and others, Ranajit Guha was criticised for presenting a caricature of the spontaneous action by peasant rebels. In Guha's understanding, it was alleged, 'spontaneity is synonymous with reflexive action'. Since 'Spontaneity is action on the basis of traditional consciousness', Guha's whole effort is said to 'rehabilitate spontaneity as a political method'. Moreover, Guha, in his assertion about the centrality of religion in rebel's consciousness, approves the British official view which emphasises the irrationality of the rebellion and absolves colonialism of playing any disruptive role in the rural and tribal social and economic structures.

Ranjit Das Gupta points out that there is no precise definition of the subaltern domain. Moreover, the subaltern historians 'have tended to concentrate on moments of conflict and protest, and in their writings the dialectics of collaboration and acquiescence on the part of the subalterns … have by and large been underplayed'. The rigid distinction between the elite and the subaltern, ignoring all other hierarchical formations, was criticised by others as well. David Ludden, in the Introduction to an edited volume (2001), writes that:

> 'Even readers who applauded Subaltern Studies found two features troubling. First and foremost, the new substance of subalternity emerged only on the underside of a rigid theoretical barrier between "elite" and "subaltern", which resembles a concrete slab separating upper and lower space in a two-storey building. This hard dichotomy alienated subalternity from social histories that include more than two storeys or

> which move among them;… Second, because subaltern politics was confined theoretically to the lower storey, it could not threaten a political structure. This alienated subalternity from political histories of popular movements and alienated subaltern groups from organised, transformative politcs….'

Rosalind O'Hanlon offers a comprehensive critique of earlier volumes of Subaltern Studies in her article 'Recovering the Subject'. She argues that, despite their claims of surpassing the earlier brands of history-writing, 'the manner in which the subaltern makes his appearance through the work of the contributors is in the form of the classic unitary self-constituting subject-agent of liberal humanism'. Among the Subaltern historians, particularly in the writings of Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Stephen Henningham and Sumit Sarkar, there is 'the tendency to attribute timeless primordiality' to the 'collective traditions and culture of subordinated groups'. She finds an essentialism at the core of the project 'arising from an assertion of an irreducibility and autonomy of experience, and a simple-minded voluntarism deriving from the insistence upon a capacity for self-determination'. This leads to an idealism, particularly 'in Guha's drive to posit an original autonomy in the traditions of peasant insurgency. He does at times appear to be approaching a pure Hegelianism'.

Christopher Bayly, in 'Rallying around the Subaltern', questions the project's claim to originality. According to him, the Subaltern historians have not made use of 'new statistical material and indigenous records' which could substantiate their claim of writing a new history. Their main contribution seems to be re-reading the official records and 'mounting an internal critique'. Thus, the only distinguishing mark which separates the Subaltern Studies from the earlier and contemporary 'history from below' is 'a rhetorical device, the term 'subaltern' itself, and a populist idiom'. Bayly thinks that 'the greatest weakness of the Subaltern orientation' is that 'it tends to frustrate the writing of rounded history as effectively as did "elitism"'.

Sumit Sakar, who was earlier associated with the project, later criticised it for moving towards postcolonialism. In his two essays, 'The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies' and 'Orientalism Revisited', he argues that this shift may have been occasioned due to various reasons, but, intellectually, there is an 'attempt to have the best of both worlds: critiquing others for essentialism, teleology and related sins, while claiming a special

immunity from doing the same oneself.' Moreover, such works in Indian history have not produced any spectacular results. In fact, 'the critique of colonial discourse, despite vast claims to total originality, quite often is no more than a restatement in a new language of old nationalist positions – and fairly crude restatements, at that.' The later subaltern project became some sort of 'Third World nationalism, followed by post-modernistic valorisations of "fragments"'. In fact, the later Subaltern Studies 'comes close to positions of neo-traditionalist anti-modernism, notably advocated by Ashish Nandy'. Even earlier, according to Sarkar, there was a tendency 'towards essentialising the categories of 'subaltern' and 'autonomy', in the sense of assigning to them more or less absolute, fixed, decontextualised meanings and qualities'. Sarkar argues that there are many problems with the histories produced by the subaltern writers and these arise due to their 'restrictive analytical frameworks, as Subaltern Studies swings from a rather simple emphasis on subaltern autonomy to an even more simplistic thesis of Western colonial cultural domination'.

SUMMING UP

The Subaltern Studies began in the early 1980s as a critique of the existing historiography which was accused by its initiators for ignoring the voice of the people. The writers associated with the project promised to offer a completely new kind of history in the field of Indian studies. Judging from the reactions from the scholars and students in the early years, it seemed to have fulfilled this promise to some extent. It soon received international recognition. In the early years, encompassing six volumes, edited by Ranajit Guha, the Subaltern Studies made efforts to explore the consciousness and actions of the oppressed groups in the Indian society. However, there was another trend discernible in some of the essays published in it. This trend was influenced by the increasingly important postmodernist and postcolonialist writings in the Western academic circles. In the later years, this trend came to dominate the works of the writers associated with the Subaltern Studies. This trend was marked by a shift from the earlier emphasis on the subaltern themes. Sometimes the scepticism became so extreme that it questioned the need for the writing of history itself.

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ASSIGNMENTS

Essay-Type Questions

1. Define Colonialism. How would you distinguish Postcolonialism from Post-colonialism?

2. How does Fanon justify the necessity of "revolutionary violence" in achieving freedom from the colonial rule?

3. What was Said's stake on "Orientalism"? Discuss.

4. Comment on the contribution of Spivak to the field of Postcolonial Studies.

5. Why does Bhabha offer a critique of the argument propagated by Fanon and Said? Discuss.

6. In what way is feminism linked with postcolonialism? What are the basic premises of Postcolonial feminism?

7. How can psychoanalytical approaches be applied to the study of Postcolonialism.

8. How can Postcolonial criticism be used to study works of literature? Discuss.

9. Attempt a study of any text of your choice from the perspective of postcolonialism.

10. How would you define the term 'Subaltern'? Briefly discuss the basic premises of Subaltern Studies.

11. Who were the major influences on Subaltern Studies? Discuss their contribution to the field.

12. Comment on Ranajit Guha's contribution to the development of Subaltern Studies.

13. On what ground was Subaltern Studies criticised? Elucidate.

Short Answer Type Questions

1.How would you define Imperialism and differentiate it from Colonialism?

2. What are different phases of Imperialism? Describe each of them.

3. Briefly comment on Cesaire's concept of "Negritude".

4. How can language be used as a weapon of rejecting the claims of colonialism?

5. What does the term "Third World" signify?

6. Write short notes on the following: a) Subaltern Studies

b) Mimicry

c) Hybrid Identities

d) Decolonization

BLOCK - III

UNITS: 9 - 12

"IS THERE A TEXT IN THIS CLASS?"

BY

STANLEY EUGENE FISH

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

UNIT - 9

UNIT 9 (A): LIFE AND WORKS OF STANLEY FISH

Stanley Eugene Fish is an American literary theorist, legal scholar, author and public intellectual. He was raised Jewish. His father, an immigrant from Poland, was a plumber and contractor who made it a priority for his son to get a university education. Fish became the first member of his family to attend college. Fish was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University. He completed his Ph.D. in 1962, also at Yale University. He has taught at the University of California at Berkeley, Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Florida International University in Miami. He is currently the Floersheimer Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City, although Fish has no educational degrees or training in law.

Fish started his career as a medievalist. His first book, published by Yale University Press in 1965, was on the late-medieval/early-Renaissance poet John Skelton. But he rose to prominence with the publication of his second book *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967). Fish explains in his essay, "Milton, Thou Shouldst be Living at this Hour" how he started reading and analyzing Milton by an academic accident. When in 1963 Fish joined the University of California as an assistant professor, he was asked to teach a course on Milton. They had no idea that the young professor had never studied Milton and the result was this book. Here Fish first presented his theory of "reader-response criticism," in which he argues that reading is a temporal phenomenon and that the meaning of a literary work is located within the reader's experience of the text. Fish suggested that the subject of John Milton's masterpiece is, in fact, the reader, who is forced to undergo spiritual self-examination when led by Milton down the path taken by Adam and Eve and Satan. He eventually became an outstanding Milton scholar and wrote, *How Milton Works* (2001) which reflects five decades' worth of his scholarship on Milton.

His *Self-consuming Artifacts* (1972) elaborated and developed the notion of reader response into a theory of interpretive communities, in which a reader's interpretation of a text

depends on the reader's membership in one or more communities that share a set of assumptions. In *Is There a Text in This Class?: the Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980), Fish further developed his reader-as-subject theory. This collection of Fish's essays established his position as one of the most influential literary theorists of his day. In his later works, Fish extended literary theory into the arenas of politics and law, writing on the politics of the university, the nature of free speech, and connections between literary theory and legal theory. These works include *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (1989), *There's No Such Thing As Free Speech, and It's a Good Thing, Too* (1994), *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* (1995), *The Trouble with Principle* (1999), *How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One* and *Winning Arguments: What Works and Doesn't Work in Politics, the Bedroom, the Courtroom, and the Classroom* were published in 2011 and 2016, respectively.

This American literary critic is particularly associated with reader-response criticism, according to which the meaning of a text is created, rather than discovered, by the reader; with neopragmatism, where critical practice is advanced over theory; and with the interpretive relationships between literature and law. He is best known for his analysis of interpretive communities — an offshoot of reader-response criticism. His work in this field examines how the interpretation of a text is dependent upon each reader's own subjective experience in one or more communities, each of which is defined as a 'community' by a distinct epistemology. Fish is associated with postmodernism, at times to his irritation. Instead, he views himself as an advocate of anti-foundationalism.

UNIT 9 (B): THE INFLUENCE OF ROLAND BARTHES' "THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR" ON STANLEY FISH

A massive influence on Stanley Fish's development of the Reader-response theory was "The Death of the Author", the famous 1967 essay by the French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes (1915–1980). The essay was first published in the American journal Aspen and later appeared in an anthology of his essays, *Image-Music-Text* (1977). Although Fish does not quote Barthes anywhere in his essay, he is actually corresponding to Barthes ideas. Barthes'

essay argues against traditional literary criticism's practice of incorporating the intentions and biographical context of an author in the interpretation of a text. He criticizes the tendency to consider aspects of the author's identity – his political views, religion, ethnicity, psychology, historical context, or any other biographical or personal attributes – to distill meaning from his work. In this critical schematic, the experiences and biases of the author serve as its definitive "explanation." Barthes has a problem with this attitude and suggests that the author should not be seen as a divine creator. Barthes agrees that this method of reading may be apparently tidy and convenient but is actually sloppy and flawed: "To give a text an author" and assign a single, corresponding interpretation to it "is to impose a limit on that text." Readers must thus, according to Barthes, separate a literary work from its creator in order to liberate the text from interpretive tyranny.

In the similar fashion of what W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley do in their essay titled "The Intentional Fallacy", Barthes also warns the reader not to pay unnecessary attention to the authorial intention or the life and background of the author. According to him, the intentions of the author are irrelevant and the work is not an exact replica of his intentions. In the process of giving words to the thoughts, the writer intentionally or unintentionally is involved in a process of meaning-making on which he does not have full control. Thus the pursuit of trying to figure out the authorial intention is both a complete distraction and an unnecessary activity. Even if the author is alive (which is not the case several times as many authors are dead) once cannot be fully certain if the author is being genuine about his intentions. And even if the author is honestly telling his intentions behind what he has written, there is no guarantee that he was successful in depicting the same in his work. Barthes critiques the idea of "originality" and "truth" that one associate with the author. This approach gives the author excessive "authority" over the process of interpretation. This approach has two problems: Firstly, that it falsely assumes, as discussed above, that the reader can uncover the real intentions of the author. Secondly, it imposes a fixed meaning on the text.

By associating the Author with the text, the text is automatically limited. Instead of drawing their own meaning from the text using their own experiences and therefore stimulating their own thoughts of their lives and how it connects with the world around them the reader is then restricted to trying to guess what the author meant. The reader focuses on understanding the Author's opinions and whether they agree with the Author and don't focus

on their own thoughts and opinions of the piece. In a well-known quotation, Barthes draws an analogy between text and textiles, declaring that a "text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations," drawn from "innumerable centers of culture," rather than from one, individual experience. The essential meaning of a work depends on the impressions of the reader, rather than the "passions" or "tastes" of the writer; "a text's unity lies not in its origins," or its creator, "but in its destination," or its audience. Therefore, he shifts the focus from the author to the reader. Being, no longer the locus of creative influence, the author is merely a “scriptor” (a word Barthes uses to disrupt the traditional continuity of power between the terms “author” and “authority” The scriptor exists to produce but not to explain the work and “is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, [and] is not the subject with the book as predicate.” Barthes is not interested in the “true meaning” of the text as, according to him, there is no such thing. Both the readers and the author bring with them preconceived knowledge and notions which definitely affects their reading of the text.

So, there could be as different ways of reading and interpreting a text as there are a number of readers. He declares at the end of the essay that “The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.” Thus, he lays the foundation of reader-response theory. This conclusion is important because it provides us with new options for reading a text. Our reading of texts no longer needs to be trammeled by considerations regarding the person who wrote them. The essay had a huge impact on literary theory. Its popularity is made clear simply by the prevalence of its translations. However, Barthes’s abstract notion of “the reader” is also different from many other redder-response theorists. Many reader-response theorists, when they talk of readers, mean real readers of flesh and blood. For Barthes, “the reader” simply means the conceptual space where all the many potential meanings of a text are contained.

UNIT - 10

UNIT 10 (A): ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT AND ITS MAJOR THEMES

In his famous article, “Is there a Text in This Class,” Stanley Fish argues what constrains the interpretation is not fixed meanings in a linguistic system but the practices and assumptions of an institution. It is not the linguistic system that gives determinacy to the meaning of an utterance but rather the context of the utterance. Fish offers an anecdote about a student in the John Hopkins University who approached a professor, one of his colleagues, on the first day of the semester by asking: “Is there a text in this class?” The professor heard this utterance in one context, assuming the question to be an inquiry about the textbook that might be required for his class. The student’s question, however, referred to the concept of textuality as advanced in some modern literary theory. The professor later learned that the student previously took a class with Fish and understood that the interpretation of a text is open and indeterminate. Fish turns this dialogue on itself in order to talk about the possibility of a definite interpretation and the relativistic dangers of reader-based subjectivity. He uses this example to show that his colleague, having initially heard the question in one context (which includes whatever is associated with “the first day of class”), was obliged to modify this context (to embrace the concerns of modern literary theory) in order to understand the utterance (ITC, 309–311). His point is that “it is impossible even to think of a sentence independently of its context,” and that our making sense of an utterance and our identifying of its context occur simultaneously: we do not, as M. H. Abrams and E. D. Hirsch imply, first scrutinize an utterance and then give it meaning (ITC, 313). We hear an utterance as already embedded within, not prior to determining, knowledge of its purposes and interests (ITC, 310). Fish wonders if not having one fixed literal meaning of a text actually means that there are as many "meanings as there are readers"?

In light of the above-mentioned argument, let us examine the question: “Is there a text in the class?” what exactly is the normative/literal/linguistic meaning of “Is there a text in this class?” Fish argues that two meanings are possible:

Whether or not there is a required textbook in the class for a particular course?
What is the instructor’s position (within the range of positions available in contemporary literary theory) on the status of the text?

Both interpretations are derived from the normal use of language. Here what is important is that the professor and the student are within the established practices and assumptions of an educational institution. Hence their interpretive activities are common.

They get their meanings from the practices of the institution and not from the rules and fixed meanings of a language system.

Fish now takes the argument one step further. He classifies both questions thus:
“Is there a text in the class” – (1)
“Is there a text in the class” – (2)

The meaning of question number (1) is immediately available to any native speaker. The meaning is understood in the context of the “first day of class”. The meaning of question number (2) will be understood by only the person who is aware of these disputes in contemporary literary theory. This prior knowledge is, in fact, neither prior nor later since it is activated at one and the same time with the reception of the utterance and its interpretation. Fish holds that the meaning is always constrained "not after it was heard but in the ways in which it *could*, in the first place, be heard". This assertion by Fish echoes with Wittgenstein's famous "the meaning of a word is its use in the language".

But Fish says that one more meaning is possible:

“Is there a text in the class” – (3): It might mean that next morning someone has forgotten to bring the textbook to the class and is asking for one.

This is where critics like M.H. Abrams are afraid of the plurality of meaning because that might lead to an endless succession of meanings (4), (5), (6) etc. and undermine the normative and the determinate. But Fish says that the example need not be taken in that sense at all. “In all these situations the meaning of the utterance is restricted, “not after it was heard but in the ways in which it could be heard”. “An infinite plurality of meaning would be a fear only if sentences existed in a state in which they were not already embedded in” some situation or other. But there is no such state. Sentences emerge only in situations. Within a particular situation, the normative meaning of an utterance is clear to all native speakers. Another situation may provide the same sentence with another meaning. However, one of the above meanings is more common than the other. Most people will understand question number (1) easier than question number (2). In fact, (2) has to be laboriously explained to make someone understand the idea. Fish is arguing that what grants us "protection" against the indeterminacy of signifiers is that they "emerge only in situations, and within those

situations, the normative meaning of an utterance will always be obvious or at least accessible". This means that meaning, although determined, is always relative to the situation in which the utterance appears. What enables us to rank interpretations is that norms will almost always favor one over the other.

E.D. Hirsch gives another example of a “verbal meaning” accessible to all speakers of the language. The sentence “The air is crisp”, Hirsch says, has a determinate and sharable meaning. Fish agrees with this argument. Most people will immediately understand the utterance as a rough meteorological description of the local atmosphere. However, Fish turns the same example against Hirsch’s arguments favoring stability of meaning. Fish says that the obvious meaning of the expression is not because of the value of its words. Even this expression is not free from the context. Fish says that we hear the words already embedded in a context. On the other hand, if we hear the words in the middle of a discussion on music [‘when the piece played correctly the air is crisp’] the same comment would become a comment on the performance. “Thus Hirsch invokes a context by not invoking it: by not surrounding the utterance with circumstances, he directs us to imagine it in the circumstances in which it is most likely to have been produced…” Thus, it is impossible even to think of a sentence independently of a context. If there is no context given, we will imagine a context which is usually linked to the utterance.

Fish holds that words do not have meaning which is independent of context since they are always already embedded in contexts. He thinks what promises us the ability to have common meaning is that there is always "a contextual setting and the sign of its presence is precisely the absence of any reference to it". Even if we hear a sentence without any context, we will fall back to context in which we are accustomed to hear such utterances. Fish claims though an utterance is already determined by its context that does not mean we cannot misunderstand the language. It is because sometime one may self-consciously try to figure out what an utterance might mean which leads to misunderstanding. But that misunderstanding is not due to semantics and syntax but of context. The professor, when heard the question, assigned it a meaning that was not appropriate. He only assumed the meaning and that was challenged by the student. It was not a syntactical mistake but a mistaken identification of intention. The professor "has not misread the text but mis-pre-read the text". In order to understand the student, the professor had to alter the meaning of her intentions in approaching him, not the meaning of her words which are perfectly clear and

intelligible in both cases, just in different ways. People unfamiliar with the literary debate on the determinacy of meaning will have a hard time reaching the proper understanding while people familiar with Fish's position in the debate will immediately recognize the proper meaning, especially when they hear the story coming from Fish himself.

Fish says, "... meanings come already calculated not because of norms embedded in the language but because language is always perceived (from the very first) within a structure of norms. That structure is not abstract and independent but social". He adds that the structure is "not a single structure" with a special or privileged relationship "to the process of communication as it occurs in any situation". But it is a structure that changes when one situation (which has a lot of assumed practices, goals, purposes) has given way to another". He states that "the change from one structure of understanding to another is not a rupture but a modification of the interests and concerns that are *already* in place; and since they are already in place, they constrain the direction of their own modification". He links this to the question of authority over interpretation which saves us from relativistic subjectivity. Many will say that if norms and standards are context specific, they will bring in infinite plurality of norms and standards with no way to adjudicate between them. To have many standards is to have no standards at all.

Fish says that this counter argument rules out the possibility of a norm whose validity would be recognized by everyone no matter what the situation. But the absence of a situational norm is not of any practical importance or consequence. It does not affect the speaker's/reader's ability to perform. Hence it does not matter. Relativism, according to Fish, is a position we can entertain. But it is not a position we can occupy. To be a relativist we have to keep a distance from our own beliefs and assumptions. Then our beliefs and assumptions will not be authentic for us any more than the beliefs and assumptions of others. However, the individual is never indifferent to the norms and values that enable his consciousness. Any individual acts on the basis of personally held norms and values. He does so with full confidence. When his beliefs change, the norms and values to which he once gave unthinking assent will be demoted to the status of opinions. They will become the object of analytical and critical attention. The individual's old values and norms will then be replaced by another set of norms and values which will remain unexamined for the moment. There is never a moment that one believes in nothing—when our consciousness is free from all kinds of thought. It can be argued that an individual's thought has no public value,

and when an individual is trapped in his own thoughts a shared intelligibility (understanding) will become impossible. The answer to this is that an individual's assumptions and thoughts are never 'his own'. He is not their 'origin'. They are available prior to him. Their prior availability delimits in advance the paths that his consciousness can take. An individual speaks or reasons on the basis of a shared understanding. The categories are his own only in the sense that he is automatically the heir to the institutions' way of making sense; its sense of intelligibility.

UNIT 10 (B): THE "INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY"

For social Reader-response theory, usually associated with the later works of Stanley Fish, there is no purely individual subjective response. According to Fish, what we take to be our individual subjective responses to literature are really products of the *interpretive community* to which we belong. According to Roland Barthes, the text is broken up or emptied so that the imaginative reader-writer may construct his own estate. But for Stanley Fish, the text is largely an opportunity for interpretations by an academic community bound together by shared assumptions. Among American reader-oriented critics, he has been in the Vanguard as an abolitionist of the independent text and a foremost democratic advocate of the pluralistic interpretive communities as the source of authority. Against the prevailing New Critical orthodoxy that the text is the source of meaning, Fish decided in favour of the reader. He discovered in the course of reading and debate that the idea of a stable, meaningful text did not disappear with the privileging of the reader. Like Barthes, Fish in his thinking about text, has undergone continual change and the change has been in the direction of emptying the text, denying it inherent structure, properties, and intention: it is the reader who comes to realize that text. Fish's conception of the role of the reader has also undergone changes. If the reader is still in a privileged position in relation to the text, he is no longer and isolated entity; he now suffers the constraints of an interpretive community. Properties, structure, and meaning reside neither in the reader nor in the text rather they emerge, from a transaction between the communal reader and the text. It is the community that now provides the constraints which were formally attributed to the text.

Perhaps the best place to begin the understanding of the “interpretive community” is with the story Fish tells in his “Is There a Text in This Class” about a joke he once played on an undergraduate class. One day, he wrote on the blackboard at the end of his first class, the following list of names as an assignment for the next day’s reading:

Jacobs–Rosenbaum
Levin
Thorne
Hayes
Ohman (?)

The first five mean on the least are well-known linguists; the last, Richard Ohmann, is a literary critic. Fish misspelled Ohmann’s name, because he knew he couldn't recall whether it had one or two n’s, so he placed a question mark after it. Fish, his next class, asked the students to interpret it. The class apparently did not suspect anything and went to work applying the critical tools they have learnt in the course. The first student got the ball rolling by identifying the poem as a hieroglyph either of across or an altar. These observations lead to a discussion of specific words. Jacob’s was then taken as a reference to Jacob's ladder, a traditional symbol for the Christian Ascent to heaven. The pairing of the word Rosenbaum with Jacobs suggested, however, that in this case, the means of ascent was not a ladder but a Rosenbaum, a rose tree, which the class saw as an allusion to the Virgin Mary. The poem was thus seen to pose the question, “how is it that a man can climb to Heaven by me is means of a Rose tree?" and to provide the answer: "by the fruit of the tree, by the fruit of Mary’s womb, Jesus”. Fish tells the story not to illustrate critical *tour de force*, but to illustrate the manner of all reading and indeed all human thought as he now understand them.

In the early 1970s Fish had sought to shift the focus of interpretation away from the text, where it had been in the New Criticism, to the reader of the text and to describe the reading process rather than its outcome. Meaning, as Fish’s reader-response School of Criticism conceived of it, was dynamic and temporal, rather than Static and spatial. At the same time, fish wanted to avoid one possible implication of is interpretive evolution – the implication that there is no single “correct” reading of a text, that in fact, there are as many interpretations and texts as readers, no one of them superior to another. Fish was caught between wanting to locate the meaning of a text in the reader and wanting to say also that the

meaning was not ultimately in the reader but in the text itself. The solution to the problem has come through his new theory of the interpretive community, which he has formulated in a series of essays reprinted in “Is There a Text in this Class” and in his subsequent essays. This new theory has two basic hypotheses. The first involves a rejection of both Fish’s earlier views that reader in some sense construct the text through their interpretive activities and that the facts of the text shape their experience. Now reading is seen as a function of neither the text not the reader, but of the reader’s particular assumptions about the text and the world, his or her “interpretive strategies”. The reader does not first obtain the facts of the text and then deploy an appropriate interpretive strategy; interpretive strategies are always at work *prior* to the act of reading, Fish insists, and determine both the activities of the reader and the facts of the text that the reader will find central or peripheral or even noticeable. The driving force behind the interpretation arrived at by Fish’s class was not the words on the blackboard or the students themselves, but the concept about poetry in general and seventeenth-century poetry in particular that were already in their Minds.

The second hypothesis in Fish’s new theory is that the interpreter strategies are the creations of interpretive communities, groups of people who share purposes and goals. Interpreter strategies have social and institutional “interests”. A main premise here is that “selves are constituted by the ways of thinking and seeing that inhere in social organizations.” We are all conventional down to the beliefs that guide our reading and our lives. It was not Fish’s class that actually read the poem on the class board, but the interpretive community into which those students were being inducted through classes like Fish’s. In our world an interpretation is not “correct” because it is based on verifiable hypotheses, for such do not exist: there are no facts apart from hypotheses about the facts. Rather an interpretation is “correct” only in the sense that it adheres to the interpretive strategies of the dominant interpretive community at that time. Thus “reader,” “author,” “text” and “facts” are postulated terms that are useful in discussing perception and interpretation (the two are identical), but that refer in a sense to non-existent entities: interpretive communities create them all.

By interpretive community, Fish refers to those who share the interpretive strategies we bring to texts when we read, whether or not we realize we’re using interpretive strategies and whether or not we are aware that other people share them. These interpretive strategies always result from various sorts of institutionalized assumptions (assumptions established,

for example, in high schools, churches, and colleges by prevailing cultural attitudes and philosophies) about what makes a text a piece of literature—instead of a letter or a legal document or a church sermon —and what meanings we are sup- posed to find in it. An interpretive community can be as sophisticated and aware of its critical enterprise as the community produced by the followers of a specific Marxist critical theorist. Or an interpretive community can be as unsophisticated and unaware of its interpretive strategies as the community produced by a high school teacher who instructs his students that it is natural to read literature in search of static symbols that tell us the "hidden meaning" of the story. Of course, interpretive communities are not static; they evolve over time. And readers can belong, consciously or unconsciously, to more than one community at the same time, or they can change from one community to another at different times in their lives. In any case, all readers come to the text already predisposed to interpret it in a certain way based on whatever interpretive strategies are operating for them at the time they read. Fish claims that a multiplicity of communal authorities, based on the multiplicity of interpretive communities to which students already belong, determines how students read the text in the first place.

By now we fully understand the point Fish is trying to make in front of us: every literary judgment we make, including the judgment that a particular piece of writing is a poem, results from the interpretive strategies we bring with us when we read the text. A list of linguists' names, or anything else, can become a poem if a reader or group of readers uses the interpretive strategies required to make it one. That is, the qualities that make a poem a poem do not reside in the text but in the interpretive strategies we've learned, consciously or unconsciously, before we ever encountered the text. Social reader-response theory does not offer us a new way to read texts. Nor does it promote any form of literary criticism that already exists. After all, its point is that no interpretation, and therefore no form of literary criticism, can claim to reveal what's *in* a text. Each interpretation will simply find whatever its interpretive strategies put there. This doesn't mean, however, that we are left with the anarchy of unconstrained interpretation. As Fish notes, interpretations will always be controlled by the relatively limited repertoire of interpretive strategies available at any given point in history. By understanding the principles of social reader-response theory, however, we can become more aware of what it is we're doing when we interpret a text and more aware of what our peers and students are doing as well. Such awareness could be especially useful to teachers by helping them analyze their students' interpretive strategies; helping them decide if and when to try to replace those strategies with others; and helping them take

responsibility for the strategies they choose to teach instead of hiding behind the belief that certain ways of reading are natural or inherently right because they represent what's in the text.

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ASSIGNMENTS

1. Estimate the influence of Roland Barthes' famous essay "The Death of the Author" on Stanley Fish's development of the reader-response theory.

2. What do understand by the phrase "Interpretive Community"?

3. Critically evaluate the process of finding the meaning of a text produced by its context as illustrated by Stanley Fish in his essay.

UNITS: 11-12

"THE READING PROCESS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH"

BY

WOLFGANG ISER

CONTENT STRUCTURE

Assignments

UNIT - 11

UNIT 11 (A): AN INTRODUCTION TO WOLFGANG ISER – LIFE AND WORKS

"If a literary text does something to its readers, it also simultaneously reveals something about them."

Wolfgang Iser, *Prospecting* (1989)

One of the pioneering figures of Reader-Response Criticism, Wolfgang Iser was born on July 22, 1926, at Marienberg in Germany to Paul Iser, a businessman, and Else Iser. As a student, he studied English, German, and Philosophy at the Universities of Leipzig and Tubingen respectively, receiving a doctorate in English literature at the University of Heidelberg in 1950, for his dissertation on the worldview of Henry Fielding (*Die Weltanschauung Henry Fielding*). A year later, he was appointed as an academic instructor at Heidelberg, and in 1952, as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Glasgow. It was there that he started his venture in the pursuit of exploring various facets of contemporary philosophy and literature, which heightened his interest in inter-cultural exchange.

Iser returned to Germany to carry his research forward and made a significant contribution to the foundation of the University of Konstanz in 1966. Together with his colleague and friend Hans Robert Jauss, Iser developed the "Constance School" which looked into the "aesthetics of reception", or which later came to be identified as "Reception Theory". Being a founder member of the "School", Iser focused primarily on the ways in which literary texts are actively constructed by individual readers through the phenomenology of the reading process.

The Constance School draws heavily on the philosophical tradition of aesthetics inaugurated in the eighteenth-century Germany by philosophers like Alexander Baumgarten, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Von Schiller, and it focuses primarily on the affective as well as on the formal dimensions of art. The members of the School are also influenced by the philosophical considerations of hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation, developed by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Heidegger and others. in particular, Iser's work draws on the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer and the phenomenological literary theory of Roman

Ingarden, which examines the process of cognition through which we understand literary works.

The fruits of his research endeavour, his books such as *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1974), *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978), *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (1989), *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (1993), *The Range of Interpretation* (2000) and *How to Do Theory* (2006) established his reputation as one of the influential critics of Reception Theory, a branch of Reader-response criticism.

UNIT 11 (B): RECEPTION THEORY OF WOLFGANG ISER

While addressing the question in the article "Do I Write for an Audience?" (2000), Iser clarifies,

> Reception theory was a reaction to what appeared to be a stalemate in literary studies. Of paramount concern for this theory was the impact a piece of literature has on its readers and the responses it elicits. Instead of asking what the text means, I asked what it does to its potential readers…. The message (of the text) that was no longer to be ascertained triggered interest in what has since been called text processing—what happens to the text in reading (311).

This statement, undoubtedly, marks a decisive shift in the realm of literary theory from meaning to the aesthetic processes which constitute it. He further states,

> Consequently, aesthetic response, as the hallmark of reception theory, is to be conceived in terms of interaction between text and reader. I call it aesthetic response because it stimulates the reader's imagination, which in turn gives life to the intended effects (311).

Borrowing his argument from the phenomenological theory of Roman Ingarden, Iser suggests that in order to have a better understanding of a text, the reader must make active participation in the process of meaning-making, and try to fill in the gaps that are left open, with the given information in the text before him. The whole reading experience thus becomes an evolving process of anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction, and satisfaction.

As the argument implies, the cognitive faculty of a human being plays a crucial role in deciphering the meaning of a text thereby resulting in a series of varied interpretations. As argued by Terence Wright in "Reader-Response under Review: An Art, A Game, or A Science?" (1995), reader-response refers to "a variety of positions held together only by their concern with what goes on in the mind of the reader when he or she picks up and peruses a book." In the essay, "From Iser to Turner and Beyond: Reception Theory Meets Cognitive Criticism" (2002), Prof. Craig A. Hanulton and Ralf Schneider critically reviewed the work of Wolfgang Iser and Mark Turner, two giant pillars of reception theory and cognitive criticism, and discussed the similarities and differences between lser and Turner. They argue that cognitive criticism should not ignore its roots in reception theory and suggest how a cognitive reception theory can be constructed.

UNIT 11 (C): ISER'S CONCEPT OF IMPLIED READER

Across the centuries, theorists and philosophers have made varied distinctions in the category of the reader. For instance, Walker Gibson has provided the model of a "mock reader", Hans Robert Jauss has provided the idea of a "historical reader", Stanley Fish has been instrumental in founding the notion of an "informed reader", whereas Norman Holland has propagated the idea of a "transactive reader". Wolfgang Iser has developed the idea of "implied reader" while foregrounding his theory of reception. In his 1978 book, *The Act of Reading*, Iser defines the implied reader in the following way:

> If, then, we are to try and understand the effects caused and the responses elicited by literary works, we must allow for the reader's presence without in any way predetermining his character or his historical situation. We may call him, for want of a better term, the implied reader. He 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 structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader (34).

In Iser's formulation, an implied reader is defined as both a textual condition and a process of meaning production. "The term incorporates both the restructuring of the potential meaning by the text and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process." The "textual structure" of the implied reader is composed of three basic components: the textual perspectives, their convergent place, and the vantage point of the reader. The convergent place and the vantage point of the reader are to be actualized by the real reader; otherwise, they remain potential in the textual structure. The "structured acts" of the implied reader makes the interpretation fruitful. In Iser's opinion, the text gets its meaning only when it is read; so the literary work becomes meaningful only with the engagement of the reader.

Iser makes a distinction between the implied reader and the actual reader. The implied reader is formed within the text, and he is expected to respond in many specific ways to the "response-inviting structures" of the text. The actual reader, however, with his own personal experiences accumulated little by little, his responses actually are continuously and inevitably changed and reconstructed. Consequently, literary texts always take on a range of possible meanings according to Iser's analysis.

UNIT - 12

UNIT 12 (A): DEFINING PHENOMENOLOGY

Originally derived from the Greek words "*phainómenon*" (meaning, "that which appears") and *lógos* (meaning "study", or "opinion") Phenomenology incorporates a philosophical venture into the structures of experience and consciousness. As a philosophical movement, Phenomenology gained its ground in the early decades of the 20th century by the German philosopher and critic Edmund Husserl and was later expanded to the other parts of the globe. He believed that "The phenomenological reduction is the universal method and radical by

which I grasped as pure ego, the life of pure consciousness of my own, living in and through which the whole objective world exists for me, just like that there for me".

In terms of literature, phenomenology defines reading as an "ontological value" of the literary text. The basic question that the phenomenology of literature asks is: "Does writing require reading?" "Can a literary text as a state of writing exist in its fullness of meaning?" "Is there any difference between an unread and a read text?" and "What does reading do to a literary text that writing cannot do?" In reply to the questions presented above, the Phenomenology of literature posits that there is an absolute and unbridgeable difference between an unread and a read text. It believes that there is an ontological requirement for reading in writing which is built into the mode of existence of writing.

In his 'Preface' to *Surprised by Sin,* Stanley Fish defines Phenomenology and says that "meaning is an event, something that happens not on the page…but in the interaction between the flow of print (or sound) and the actively mediating the reader-hearer." Fish's statement indicates that the subjectivity of the reader continuously shapes his/her mental process. And thus, what begins as the reader's subjective process, ends up in his achieving the objective of the literary text. In Fish's opinion, a work becomes a text only with the reader's experience. The text controls the reader's activity developing process and leads him to the understanding of meaning generated by the author. Fish here is aiming at a particular kind of "informed reader" who can address the linguistic complexities, literary conventions and make his/her own choice regarding the connotations, implications and suggestions, in the course of the reading. Fish's idea bears similarity with Husserl's idea of phenomenology: that the reader or the critic should empty his/her head of all preconceived ideas and respond directly to the text, thereby discovering the mode of consciousness of the author.

UNIT 12 (B): A SYNOPSIS OF WOLFGANG ISER'S "THE READING PROCESS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH"

In a more general sense, Phenomenology is a modern philosophical trend emphasizing the perceiver's central role in determining the meaning. Central to Iser's idea of phenomenology is the concept of the "wandering viewpoint". The "wandering viewpoint" is a means of describing the way in which the reader is present in the text. This presence is at a point where

memory and expectation converge, resulting in a dialectic movement that brings about a continual modification of memory and an increasing complexity of expectation.

Wolfgang Iser's ideas concerning readers' responses to a text were initially presented in a 1970 lecture entitled "The Affective Structure of the text", and then anthologised in two book forms, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1974) and *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978). While examining a number of English novels written across the centuries in *The Implied Reader*, Iser develops his concept of the reader's reception of a text in the final chapter of the book, which he titled "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach".

Iser begins by pointing out that while considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also "the actions involved in responding to that text." He perceived a literary work as having two "poles" - the "artistic" and the "aesthetic". The "artistic" pole constitutes the text created by the author, and the "aesthetic" pole refers to "the realization accomplished by the reader". The literary work lies somewhere between the two poles and comes into being only with the confluence of the text and the reader. What Iser implies is that reading is an active and creative process, which brings the text into life, which reveals "its inherently dynamic character".

Iser argues that a literary text is made up of innumerable "gaps" which invites and encourages the reader's response, thereby giving him/her the opportunity to nurture his intellectual and creative impulses. To elaborate his argument further, Iser draws upon Roman Ingarden's idea of "intentional sentence correlatives," according to which, a series of sentences in a literary work does not refer to any objective reality outside itself. Rather, the complex nature of these sentences gives rise to a "particular world," which correlates with the literary world. The text produced by the reader's response offers a "virtual dimension," which converges the "coming together of text and imagination".

Iser talks about two important characteristics of the reading process: the first of which indicates reading as a temporal activity as opposed to a linear one. The readers' perspective is continuously moving and changing according to the way we make sense of the accumulating fictional material. The second feature points at the "gaps" or unwritten implications in the text, which we attempt to search for consistency. This search for consistency, according to Iser, has a number of implications. First of all, it makes us aware of our own capacity, our own interpretative power; thus, we learn not only about the text but also about ourselves.

Along with it, by making certain semantic decisions and ruling out others, for the sake of consistent reading, we acknowledge the inexhaustibility of the text, its potential to have other meanings that may not quite fit into our own scheme. Indeed, our desire for consistency involves us to some extent in a world of illusion: as we leave behind our own reality somewhat to enter the reality of the text, we build up a textual world whose illusory consistency helps us make sense of unfamiliar elements. The consistency is illusory because we "reduce the polysemantic possibilities to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning".

Following John Dewey's proposition in the *Art as Experience* (1934), Iser argues that in reading a text, the reader undergoes a process of organization similar to that undertaken by the author of the text. In other words, the text must be recreated in order to ascend to the status of being a work of art. This act of aesthetic recreation, says Iser, is not a smooth or linear process, but it actually relies on the continual interruption of the flow of reading. As he states, "We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation".

Iser opines that two factors govern this process of recreation: firstly, a familiar repertoire of literary patterns, themes, and social contexts; secondly, strategies that are used to "set the familiar against the unfamiliar." It is the "defamiliarization" of what the reader thought she knew which creates the tension between her intensified expectations and her distrust of those very expectations. Hence it is the interplay between "illusion-forming and illusion-breaking that makes reading essentially a recreative process".

The bases of the interaction between the text and the reader, according to Iser, are "anticipation" and "retrospection". In the course of reading, the reader possesses some idea about the proceedings and forms certain assumptions which are affirmed by the text, often turns around. To achieve this level of assumption, the reader often identifies himself/herself with the characters of the fictional world. This idea is derived, in part, from an entitled essay "Phenomenology of Reading" (1969) by Georges Poulet. Taking a cue from Poulet's essay, Iser argues that in reading, it is the reader, not the author, who becomes the subject that does the thinking. Even though the text consists of ideas thought out by the author, in reading we must think the thoughts of the author, and we place our consciousness at the disposal of the text. According to Poulet, consciousness is the point at which the author and the reader

converge, and the work itself can be thought of as a consciousness that takes over the mentality of the reader, who is obliged to shut out his individual disposition and character.

Iser then goes on to evaluate the variation of readers, for instance, the concept of "superreader" developed by Michael Riffaterre, the "informed reader" of Stanley Fish, the "intended reader" of Erwin Wolff, and the "psychological reader" of Norman Holland and Simon Lesser. He observes that all these variations are restricted in a way. As opposed to these restrictions, he formulates the concept of an "implied reader". In *The Act of Reading*, Iser further elaborates on the concept of the "implied reader." He argues that when critics talk about literature in terms of its effects, they invoke two broad categories of readers: the "real" reader and the "hypothetical" reader. The former refers to an actual reader whose response is documented, whereas the hypothetical reader is a projection of all possible realizations of the text. The implied reader, Iser feels, is a function not of "an empirical outside reality" but of the text itself. Iser points out that the concept of the implied reader has "his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader." He defines the implied reader as "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him." The implied reader, then, designates "a network of response-inviting structures," which predetermine the role of the reader in the latter's attempt to have a thorough understanding of the text.

Iser's concept of "negativity" is a significant aspect of his analysis of the reading process. He believes that all of the text's formulations, he says, are punctuated by "blanks" and "negations." The former refers to omissions of various elements between the formulated "positions" of a text; "negations" refer to cancelations or modifications or contradictions of positions in the repertoire of the text. These blanks and negations, says Iser, refer to an unformulated background: this fact he calls "negativity." It is the negativity that enables words to transcend their literal meaning and to assume multiple layers of reference. Negativity provides a "basic link between the reader and the text." Iser sees it as characteristic of a work of art that it enables us to transcend our own lives, entangled as they are in the real world. Negativity, then, as a basic element of communication, is an "enabling structure" that gives rise to a fecundity or richness of meaning that is aesthetic in character.

UNIT 12 (C): A COMMENTARY ON ISER'S "THE READING PROCESS"

In the very first chapter of his book *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002), the renowned Professor and critic Peter Barry has proposed that a literary text contains its own meaning within itself. The best way to study the text, Barry argues, is to study the words on the page without any predefined agenda for what one wants to find there. The critics interpret the text by going through the words so that the reader can get more out of the reading text.

The esteemed critic to explore the reader's response in reading a text, Stanley Fish deals with the role of the reader in deciphering meaning out of literature. In his book *Surprised by Sin*, he argues that it is through the act of reading that the literary work becomes real or alive to the critic or to the reader. He uses the term "reception" to identify the process. As the reading occurs through time and ages, the reader's perception and ideas alter, and thus, the meaning does not remain the same. In later decades, the renowned German philosopher and critic Wolfgang Iser has explored the various dimensions of the readers' responses, leading to the development of the branch of 'Reception Theory".

In her "Review of Wolfgang Iser and his Reception Theory" (2013), Dr. Yangling Shi states that "The reception of Wolfgang Iser's work was determined largely by general cultural factors, and to an extent, it parallels the response to Jauss's writings." Being the faculty members of the "Constance School", both Iser and Jauss viewed a literary work as an "event" rather than a fixed object and considered reading as an active and continuous process. However, Iser's ideas differed from that of his colleague and friend Hans Robert Jauss, who dealt with the historical reception of a literary work and how it tempered the reader's expectations and influenced their interpretations. Iser, on the other hand, attempted to focus on the individual process of interaction, the phenomenology, or the cognition of reading, instead of the larger literary-historical concerns of Jauss.

Iser's theory of response or reception differs in degree from that of Stanley Fish, who locates the meaning of a literary text in the rules of "interpretative communities" to which the reader belongs, rather than in the interaction between the text and the reader. Iser adopts a middle position between the formalist theory of literature that assumes a stable object of study and the more radical reader-oriented approaches like that of Stanley Fish. He posits the opinion that a theory of response, "if it is to carry any weight at all, must have its foundations in literary texts." His essay "Interaction Between Text and the Reader" (1980) summarizes

the theoretical argument that he has offered earlier in *The Act of Reading*. Iser stresses upon the fact that interpretation is neither subjective, nor objective, but always a result of the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader. The structure of the literary text guides the reader, but the reader continually modifies his or her viewpoint, connecting new segments of the text and filling in the "gaps" of what the text does not mention. Meaning is constantly revised in a process that Iser compares to a feedback loop in communication theory resembling what philosophers call "the hermeneutic circle."

CONCLUSION

Iser's perception of reader-response criticism, unlike that of Norman N. Holland, does not concern itself with an empirical investigation of the reactions of particular readers to literary texts. For Iser, a given text does not depend entirely upon any particular reader for its meaning but "implies" an ideal reader. Literary meaning, therefore, depends upon a collaboration between the author and the reader.

Iser's attitude is fundamentally phenomenological because it places a reader's reading experience at the centre of the literary process. By resolving the contradictions between the various viewpoints which emerge from the text or by filling the "gaps" between various viewpoints, the readers take the text into their consciousnesses and make it their own experience. Thus, to conclude, one can cite the words of Dr.Yangling Shi that, "Iser's works can serve both as a catalyst for a thoroughgoing analysis of the present state of theory as well as a springboard for an overhaul, long overdue, of the model of the mind that still governs most research paradigms in the humanities today" (2003,986).

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ASSIGNMENTS

1. How would you define the 'Reception Theory' of Wolfgang Iser? Discuss its basic tenets.
2. Briefly comment on the role of Constance School in Germany in the development of Reception Theory.
3. What is Phenomenology? How does Iser adopt a phenomenological approach in examining a literary text and in deciphering meaning?
4. Write a note on Iser's concept of an 'Implied Reader' and differentiate it from Fish's concept of 'Informed Reader'.
5. Comment critically on Iser's perception of reading as a continuous process.
6. Do you think that the role of the reader is central to the reading process? Justify.

BLOCK – IV

UNITS: 13 – 16

ANIA LOOMBA: "INTRODUCTION" & SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM *COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM*

MARCUS E. GREEN: "GRAMSCI CANNOT SPEAK: PRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF GRAMSCI'S CONCEPT OF THE SUBALTERN" FROM *RETHINKING GRAMSCI*

III. ARUN P. MUKHERJEE:

"THE EXCLUSIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE: A CASE STUDY" FROM *POSTCOLONIALISM: MY LIVING*

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

UNIT - 13

UNIT 13 (A): INTRODUCING ANIA LOOMBA'S *COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM*, MARCUS E. GREEN'S "GRAMSCI CANNOT SPEAK", AND ARUN P. MUKHERJEE'S "THE EXCLUSIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY"

Ania Loomba in her sprawling introduction to the concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism, attempts to situate the study of the said concepts by locating them within the tradition of Western critical thought, through Marxist theory, structuralism-poststructuralism and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The section under study here traces the development of the terminology, the historical contexts and the most influential theoretical models in order to present their application in the study of colonial discourse, postcolonial texts and literature. Loomba's work in expansive and attempts to cover a lot of ground. The book was published in 2005 by Routledge and has remained popular as an entry point to the theoretical study of colonialism and postcolonialism, especially by literary scholars.

Marcus E. Green's "Gramsci cannot speak: Presentations and interpretations of Gramsci's concept of the subaltern" is taken from the book Rethinking Gramsci, edited by Marcus E. Green himself and published by Routledge in 2011. In the chapter Green rethinks the concept of the subaltern based on a close reading of Gramsci and critics from the Global South, Ranajit Guha of the Subaltern studies school and Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, who famously reformulated Gramsci's notion of the subaltern. Green shows how for Gramsci socio-historical-analysis becomes the starting point for all theoretical formulations about the subaltern, how he uses his analytical model for the purpose of informing practical political activity, and where Guha and Spivak differ but also align with the Gramscian model.

Arun Prabha Mukherjee is a Canadian scholar who works in the field of Post-colonial and Diaspora theory. In the essay "The Exclusions of Postcolonial Theory and Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable': A Case Study", Mukherjee critiques the homogenising tendencies of postcolonial theory that focuses on creating unitary figures of colonizer and native and locks them into a binary of opposition at cost of ignoring the heterogenous political and social issues present in postcolonial societies and their literary and cultural productions. She argues for the necessity of reading the political unconscious of texts marked as postcolonial and through a reading of Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable shows how such reading unearth myriad

of contradictory and important discursive issues that is relevant for proper understanding and reception of the texts.

UNIT 13 (B): ANIA LOOMBA'S *COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM*: INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATIONAL TERMINOLOGY OF POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Colonialism and imperialism are two terms that are used interchangeably however needs to be distinguished from one another. The etymology of the word colonialism shows that it is an exclusionary concept, the word being derived from the Roman word colonia which meant farm or settlement and referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still retained their citizenship but made no reference to the people who may have been living in places where the Romans established the colonies. The word colonialism is thus cleared of "any implication of an encounter between peoples, or of conquest and domination" (Loomba, 7) while, at the same time, in every part of the world touched by colonialism it forced the original inhabitants of the land into complex and traumatic relationships. This is because the process of forming colonies required "un-forming" and/or "re-forming" the communities already living there and involved a great number of practices such as but not limited to trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions. Hence, colonialism can be defined as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (Loomba, 8).

Colonialism has been a recurrent and widespread feature of human history dating back to the Roman conquests in Europe and Asia, Mongol control of Middle East and China, the control of the Aztec and Inca Empires over various other ethnicities or the Vijaynagara Empire over Southern India and the case of the Ottoman Empire and Chinese Empire. Thus, the question arises as to what are the differences between these colonialisms and the newer European global conquests. Marxist thought provides an answer that while earlier colonialisms were pre-capitalist, modern colonialism was established along with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe. Furthermore, modern capitalism was distinguished by the fact that it went further than to simply extract tributes, wealth and goods from the countries it conquered – it also restricted the entire economies of the colonised countries and established complex chains of flow of human and natural resources between the colonised countries and the colonial countries. Thus, raw cotton went from India to England, where it was manufactured into cloth

that was sold back to India. Slaves were shipped from Africa to West Indian Plantations where they produced sugar for European consumption. These complex chains provided profit to the colonial mother country and provided the necessary economic imbalance for the rise of capitalism and industry in Europe. So, capitalism could not have risen without colonialism.

Keeping this in mind, imperialism is often defined as capitalist colonialism distinguished from pre-capitalist colonialism. However, Loomba notes that imperialism like capitalism also stretches back to a pre-capitalist past, for example Imperial Russia or Imperial Spain. The key point is not to look at a single semantic meaning of the word imperialism but look at its shifting meaning based on historical processes. In its early usage imperial meant command or superior power and imperial was closely related to royal authority with Oxford English Dictionary defining it as rule of an emperor. "Imperialism" as a concept received fresh meaning when writers like Kautsky and Lenin linked imperialism with a particular stage on the development of capitalism. Lenin argued in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1947), that "the growth of 'finance-capitalism' and industry in the Western countries had created 'an enormous superabundance of capital'. This money could not be profitably invested at home where labour was limited. The colonies lacked capital but were abundant in labour and human resources. Therefore, it needed to move out and subordinate non-industrialised countries to sustain its own growth…This global system was called 'imperialism' and constituted a particular stage of capitalist development—the 'highest'" (Loomba 10-11). Lenin's thought paved the way for the argument that capitalism is the distinguishing feature between colonialism and imperialism.

Ania Loomba further identifies distinguishing features of imperialism:

i. Direct colonial rule is unnecessary for imperialism as it is dependent on economic and social control of captive labour markets (with/without political control) or forced dependency of the markets on the imperial nation.
   Often neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism is also used to describe these conditions.
ii. As colonialism funded the growth of finance-capital, imperialism, seen in this light is the highest stage of colonialism.
iii. Thus colonialism can be explained as the occupation of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and

cultural structures of another territory or nation. While imperialism is a global system.

iv. However, while a global system of dominance remains ambiguous whether imperialism is primarily political in nature or economic. Because as a political system of dominance, it should end with the political independence of the countries under control, however, imperialism is also an economic system of control of markets that remains unaffected by political changes. For example, while American imperialism is based on economic might, Soviet imperialism was primarily political in nature.

v. And finally, apart from these temporal and historical differences, the difference between imperialism and postcolonialism can also be organised in spatial terms: imperialism is a "phenomenon that originates in the metropolis, the process which leads to domination and control"; whereas "what happens in the colonies as a consequence of imperial domination, is colonialism or neo colonialism". In this differentiation imperialism can function without direct control of colonies but colonialism cannot.

Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism

The term "post colonialism" is contested and subject of ongoing debate. The prefix "post" complicates the term because it can refer to both temporality as in coming after colonialism, and ideological, in that it is supplanting/replacing the colonial. The second sense is fiercely contested among critics, since it seems premature to state the end of colonialism before all of the inequities created by colonialism comes to end. And the problem with thinking that postcolonial comes after colonial is that a country can be postcolonial, as in formally independent and neocolonial, that is dependant economically and culturally at the same time. In fact, the inequities of colonialism are perpetuated in the contemporary world division between the "first" world and "third" world nations. Furthermore, as McClintock observes the current world order does allow the economic, cultural and to varying degrees of political penetration of some countries by others. So, the question is, when exactly does postcolonial begin?

Furthermore, the term postcolonial is not adequate enough to define the complex contemporary realities of once colonised countries. For example, Latin America, Settler

colonies as well as India. These countries are marked by their own internal hierarchies, social and racial differences and the experience of colonialism by the people was dependent upon one's position within the colonial hierarchy. For example, the Spanish colonies of Latin America were mixed colonies where local born whites or creoles and hybrids or mestizaje dominated over the native population and attempted to create a decolonised American society which nonetheless retained European values and white supremacy. In white settler colonies white populations despite difference with mother country was not subject to genocide, economic exploitation, cultural destruction and political exclusion to the extent of the indigenous population and yet in the instance of South Africa white Afrikaners used their imagined victim status to justify the maintenance of apartheid. Similarly, in countries like India the internal hierarchies and ruptures are based on ethnicity and class but also caste and gender.

The above issues serves as a reminder that anti-colonial movements did not represent the interests of all peoples of a colonised country. This is the problem with anti-colonial movements that continue within the postcolonial nation states. The newly independent nation states did not immediately bring with them improvement in the status and condition of women, the working classes or the peasantry. Thus, disillusionment with the nation state can be seen in Indian and African literature after the 1960s. Most unfortunately, colonialism does not always happen from outside the country but a version of it can be duplicated within a country.

Thus, what would be an acceptable definition of postcolonialism? Postcolonialism may be defined as not that which comes after colonialism and signifies its end but that which contests colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism.

Such a position would allow a broader and more flexible definition of postcolonialism and allow:

1. The inclusion of African Americans or Asian and Caribbean people living in Britain as postcolonial subjects even when they are spatially located within the metropolis and not the colonies.
2. The history of anticolonial resistance within contemporary resistances to imperialism and Western cultural dominance.

Thus, as Jorge de Alva suggests postcoloniality should signify the subjectivity of oppositionality to imperialism/colonialism and not the subjectivity that comes after the

colonial experience. This would also remove the dependence of postcoloniality on antecedent colonial condition and incorporate poststructuralist viewpoints that problematize linear progression of history. Although people living in once colonial countries are still subject to oppressions put in force by colonialism, De Alva still insists on de-linking postcoloniality from formal decolonisation as he suggests that lives of oppressed people can only be uncovered through multiplicity of histories and not a single history. Thus, he intends to gain by working more closely with poststructuralist theories of history. Ania Loomba adds a comment that it was not only poststructuralist historians who proposed multiple approaches to history but feminists and anti-colonial intellectuals as well.

On the other hand, many critics of postcolonial theory has criticised postcolonial theory for its dependence upon post-structuralist and/or post-modern perspectives. This opposing view states that excessive insistence on multiplicities of history can and does obscure the ways "in which these histories are being connected anew by the international workings of multinational capital. Without this focus, the global imbalances of power are glossed over, and the world rendered 'seemingly shapeless'." (Loomba, 17)

Many Colonialisms and its Critique

Now, according to Loomba, postcolonial and thereby anti-colonial positions depend on two factors:

i. Spatial location of the postcolonial peoples

'Minority' peoples living in the west share history of colonial exploitation with peoples of the so called 'third world', they may also share cultural roots and opposition to colonial legacies however even then their histories and present concerns cannot be merged.

ii. Nature of colonial rule

Nationalist struggles in Algeria against the French were different from Indian resistance to the British and both were very different from Vietnamese resistance to American imperialism.

However, Loomba notes that although postcolonialism emphasises on concepts such as hybridity, fragmentation and diversity, it still homogenises people, places and situations,

for example it is quite commonplace to talk of the postcolonial subject, the postcolonial condition or the postcolonial woman. And such terms do not allow space for distinction between the class, gender, race, location or caste and ideology among the colonial subjects whose lives were affected and restructured by the colonial experience. Additionally, it seems to imply that European colonialism was a monolithic operational force which did not employ very diverse methods of control and representation.

Contemporary scholars emphasise on the fact that particular locations become the privileged model for the colonised world for example, nineteenth century Bengal as Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak points out. Laura Chrisman notes how continents and colonies that cannot be contained within the West/East or the Occident/Orient binary are nonetheless collapsed into it, erasing the specificity of their situations. Thus, it is important to note that "the legacies of colonialism are thus varied and multiple even as they obviously share important features." (Loomba, 20)

Furthermore, postcolonial even when thought of as an oppositional stance still collapses various specificities into one. With its dependence on post-structuralism and literary and cultural criticism, postcolonial theory shifts the focus from locations and institutions to individuals and subjectivities. This is problematic as postcoloniality becomes a vague condition of people anywhere and everywhere and the specificities of location do not matter. This is especially a problem if the term post-colonial is sought to be used to signify a political position.

The problems with the use of the pre-fix "post" in postcolonial has already been discussed, contemporary scholars also problematize the use of colonial in the term. Postcolonial analysis of societies often seems to assume that colonialism is the only history of these societies when colonialism never inscribed on empty spaces. These spaces and societies had long histories behind them before the colonial encounter and thus colonialism cannot account for everything that exists in 'postcolonial' societies. Yet recovery of these pre-colonial aspects of culture is never easy. Spivak points out that the pre-colonial is always reworked by colonialism and thus cannot be distilled away from it in its pristine form. The problem is complex. On one hand scholars like Kwame Anthony Appiah has cautioned against the tendency especially by first world scholars to eulogise the pre-colonial past or romanticise native culture, on the other hand this leads to the

entire third world to be viewed in relation to colonialism, thereby, flattening their histories.

Concluding Remarks on Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism, then, is a term that can be used generally only to refer to the "*process* of disengagement from the whole colonial system" and never as a descriptive or an evaluative term. The colonial process affected a large portion of the globe, effectively restructuring both the colonies and metropolis. It is helpful to think of postcoloniality as similar to patriarchy which always works alongside other social structures and thus is articulated alongside other economic, social, cultural, and historical factors. Hence, postcolonialism expresses differently in different part of the world, the meaning of the term shifts across different locations and this diversity must be recognised if postcoloniality is to be meaningfully investigated.

UNIT 13 (C): INTRODUCING AND SITUATING COLONIAL DISCOURSE: DEFINING 'DISCOURSE'

Situating postcolonial studies requires a two-prong contextual approach: The first context is the history of decolonisation, vis a vis the study of intellectuals and activists who fought against colonial rule and the those who engage with the continuing legacy of colonisation. The second context is the revolution in the intellectual traditions from the West, the development in thought that study how language articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed and what is culture. These intellectual developments have intersected with anti-colonial thought and practices. Loomba thus devotes a section to tracing these Western intellectual traditions.

First among these, Marxist: European colonialism has not only been linked to the rise of capitalism but has been seen as an integral part of capitalist development. Marxist thinkers have thus seen colonialism as the see capitalism, an exploitative but necessary phase of human social development that will ultimately lead to communism, since both socialist and capitalist thought share the notion of progress as linked to the high level of industrialisation, rule of man over nature, and the post enlightenment view of science and technology. In fact,

many nineteenth and twentieth century writers and thinkers, both European as well as from the colonies (such as Raja Rammohan Roy) regarded favourably European technology and learning. A justification of colonisation was also found in the view that the advancement of European colonisation was the triumph of science and reason over superstition and would lead to process and development of the colonies.

At the same time, Marxist view of colonialism as capitalism also provided inspiration for many anti-colonial struggles. Aime Cesaire in Discourse on Colonialism claims that just as Marx discussed that under capitalism money and commodities stand in for human relations and human beings, objectifying them and robbing them of human essence, colonialism not only exploits but also dehumanises and objectfies the colonised subject; it simultaneously degrades the coloniser himself. Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth*, takes the Marxist understanding of class struggle but revises it to show that in the colonial context the struggle between those that have control over resources and those that don't was based on race difference not class. Fanon is able to thus map race and class divisions onto one another. While in European countries class hierarchies were operational, colonial hierarchies was created by racial consciousness. A white working class man belonged to the artistocracy of colour in the colonies. Cesaire, also one of the founders of the Negritude movement proposed a binary between Africa and Europe, where non-European civilizations were claimed to be "communal", "anti-capitalist", "democratic", "co-operative" and "federal" before they were invaded by European colonialism, capitalism and imperialism.

Extending the argument further, Fanon in Black Skin, White Mask, emphasised on the dehumanising features of colonialism like Cesaire, thus aligning postcolonial analysis with analysis of psyche and subjectivities. He identifies that colonialism simultaneously instills a inferiority complex in the colonized people through its destruction of local culture while it appropriates their labour power. Such analysis can be placed analogous to developments in feminism which focussed on the intersection of class and gender instead of class and race. Women's oppression was traditionally seen as a cultural thing, and traditional Marxism with its gender blind economic analysis could not properly theorise the exploitation of women's labour. Feminists interrelated the economic and ideological aspects of women's oppression. Similarly, the analysis of colonialism required re-evaluation of categories used to analyse capitalism, such as class and a rethinking of the relationship between culture or ideology and economics or material reality.

Ideology as a concept is often thought of as political ideas alone but it includes all mental frameworks, beliefs, concepts and ways of expressing our relationship to the world. Marx and Engles in *The German Ideology* (1846) had proposed that ideology is distorted or false consciousness of the world which hides people's real relationship to their world. This is possible because ideologies that circulate the most reflect and reproduce the interest s of the dominant social classes. While explaining the concept of ideology, Marx and Engles used the metaphor of the camera obscura to present the processes of misrepresentation and deliberate confusion. Just as realisations appear upside down in a camera obscura, the same happens to people in ideology. This is the result of historical life-processes and thus Marx and Engles' other important emphasis that consciousness is determined by life and not the other way. Marxist dialectics state that all our ideas including self-concept spring from the world in which we live and under capitalism this itself creates a series of illusions whereby money and those who have money distort reality.

Hungarian Theorist Georg Lukas proposed another view of ideology whereby ideology is not always false consciousness rather its validity or falsity depends upon the class situation of the collective subject whose view it represents. Thus, bourgeois ideology expresses the distorted nature of capitalism, whereas the proletariat is capable of a more scientific/real view. The problem with this is that one, it just asserts the cognitive superiority of the proletarian view without showing how and two, it assumes a uniform ideology of the working class. The working class is also necessarily split in the lines of gender, race and other divides that also condition the relationship to production process and other aspects of reality.

Italian communist Antonio Gramsci's rethinking of ideology allowed the same class to have many even contradictory ideology while showing how ideology cut across different classes. Gramsci suggested that while ideology in general works to maintain social cohesion and express dominant interest, the proletariat and other oppressed groups possess a dual consciousness: one that makes them complicit with the will of their rulers and another that is capable of developing into resistance. Since ideology governs human beings understanding of social realities including social conflict, ideology also becomes the site of social struggle. Gramsci also identified the two levels on which ideology operates: philosophy and common sense.

However, despite the proposition that ideologies do not neatly fit into classes divisions, it is seen that the ideas of the ruling classes is often the dominant idea. Hence the focus shifts

from the truth or falsity of ideology to the process through which people come to believe in ideologies. Gramsci formulated an idea of hegemony to explain this process. Hegemony is what allows power to hold through a combination of force and consent. Consent, where subjects willingly submit to being ruled over is achieved through ideology. Ideology is the medium through which certain ideas are transmitted and held true. It plays upon the common sense of the people. Loomba writes that for Gramsci ideologies are "more than just reflection of material reality. Rather, ideologies are conceptions of life that are manifest in all aspects of individual and collective existence." (Loomba, 30-31).

Stuart Hall, the critic foundational to the cultural turn, used Gramsci's formulations to point out that capitalism works *through* other social structures. Because labour is not a homogenous category and class and race are mutually constructive shaping forces because of 'the culturally specific character of labour power'. Hence racism is something that is not the effect of capitalism but works in combination with capitalism, Gramsci's ideas, particularly the notion of hegemony, have been central to the analysis of colonial regimes. Historians have tried to more and more investigate how colonial regimes achieved domination through creating partial consent and involving the colonized people in creating states and regimes that oppressed them. Colonial regimes tried to gain consent of some native groups while excluding others from civil society. Additionally, Gramsci's formulation that subjectivity and ideology are absolutely central to the process of domination has opened avenues for postcolonial studies.

French communist theorist Louis Althusser forwarded the argument by explaining how ideologies are internalized and thus how human beings make dominant ideas their own and express socially conditioned views spontaneously. Althusser went as far to suggest that subjectivity or personhood itself is formed through ideology. He leaned on Lacaninan psychoanalysis, especially the notion that there is no essential self except the imaginary misrecognition of the ego which is the ideological formulations through which the human recognizes itself. While Gramsci had suggested that hegemony is achieved via a combination of force and consent, Althusser suggests that in modern capitalist societies force is achieved through repressive state apparatuses and consent through ideological state apparatuses such as schools, church, family, media and political systems. Literary texts also fall within the number of ideological state apparatuses. These ideological apparatuses reproduce dominant systems by creating subjects who are ideologically conditioned to accept the values of the system. Althusser argued that ideology has material existence in that ideology always exists

in an apparatus and its practices. This formulation has been very important for postcolonial theory.

When Foucault dismissed the notion of ideology, he rejected the distinction between ideas and material existence even as he tried to probe how the human subject is not an autonomous, free entity. For Foucault, all human ideas and fields of knowledge are structured and determined by "the laws of certain code of knowledge" (Loomba, 35). No subject is free and no utterance is autonomous, always determined by this order or code. This had widespread ramifications for postcolonial theory. Such discourse analysis was built on the tripod made by Althusserian Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Saussurean linguistics.

Ferdinand de Saussure in presenting his conception of language had made some key points. One, that the relationship between the signifier (sound image) and signified (concept) is arbitrary and not the result of any natural association, and two, that associations work through the principle of exclusion, thus sign achieves meaning diacritically or through a system of differentiation from other signs. Hence, he points out that language is not nomenclature but a system of signs whose meaning is relational. Thus, it is possible to think of language as ideological rather than as objective. Levi-Strauss developed on Saussure's ideas to underline general laws that governed how signs worked although such structuralist thought was attacked from various directions. Pierre Macherey said that no single system of meaning can work in every place and at every time and that texts can be understood only in the context of their utterance as a literary text is produced under determinate conditions. Jacques Derrida opined that Levi-Strauss had not considered the implications of the instability of the sign. Derrida's radical reading of Saussure suggested that no sign is identical with what it signifies, there is always a gap between the two. The slippage between words or signs is evident in every representation and utterance and texts can be read closely, that is, deconstructed to reveal their instability and contradictions. Meaning, for Derrida, is thus the result of this gap or slippage, Derrida called difference, and thus meaning is not self-present in the sign or text.

Ania Loomba arrives at the common ground between the above-mentioned critical theory perspectives:

1. "All of them question the humanist assumption that individuals are the sole source of meaning or action."

2. “Language emerges not as the creation of the speaking subject”; rather the subject emerges only by molding his speech to some socially determined linguistic prescriptions. Thus, language gets primacy over subject, constructing the subject.
3. “No human utterance could be seen innocent”, as there is “not just an individual consciousness but a historical consciousness at work” and words and images become fundamental to the analysis of historical processes such as colonialism.
4. Together, “various radical ways of thinking challenge any rigid demarcation of event and representation or history and text.” (Loomba 36-37)

Loomba turns to Foucault who made such a demarcation impossible as he collapsed ideology for the idea that all thoughts and ideas are ordered by some material medium and that this ordering imposes a pattern on them called discourse. The notion of discourse has been central to critical theory and postcolonial criticism and influenced the seminal work of Edward Said, that is *Orientalism*.

Defining ‘Discourse’

Discourse is the whole field of domain within which language is used in particular ways. Order of discourse is the entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is formed and includes what is said and what is not. These conceptual categories arising out of Foucaut’s study on madness, rooted discourse as a domain in human practices, institutions and actions. Since discursive practices make it difficult for humans to think outside of them, they are also closely integrated with power and control. At the same time, they are not static and contain within them contradictions that allow for their overturning. Literature is a field where discourses are heard but so is history. Both historians and critics are part of the discursive order and thus the concept of discourse extends the notion of a historically and ideologically influenced linguistic field: no utterance is innocent and when it tells us about the world, that is comprehensible only through discursive representations.

Every utterance tells us something about the world we live in… For historical study [this view] meant that claims to objectivity and truth would have to be tempered…both feminist and anti-colonial movements needed to challenge dominant ideas of history, culture and representation. They too questioned objectivity in dominant historiography… they too broke with dominant Western, patriarchal, philosophies… Anti-colonial or feminist struggles

emphasised culture as a site of conflict between the oppressors and the oppressed. The decentring of the human subject was important to them because such a subject had been dominantly theorised by European imperialist discourses as male and white. They also paid attention to language as a tool of domination and as a means of constructing identity" (Loomba 40).

Colonial Discourse

Foucault's insight that knowledge is not innocent but integrally connected to operations of power and that power is everywhere and comes from everywhere was used by Edward Said for his analysis in *Orientalism*. Loomba shows how ideas about "colonial discourse" informed Edward Said's *Orientalism* which, along with Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, is one of the seminal works of postcolonialism. "Said's project is to show how 'knowledge' about non-Europeans was part of the process of maintaining power over them; thus, the status of 'knowledge' is demystified, and the lines between the ideological and objective blurred" (p. 43). "Said argued that knowledge of the East could never be innocent or 'objective' because it was produced by human beings who were necessarily embedded in colonial history and relationships" (p. 44). Fanon had stated to this end that Europe was the creation of the Third World, the material wealth, labour and blood of the colonies. And intellectuals like Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt had connected the intellectual production of the colonial world with its global domination. Said invoked Foucault's thought to connect the production of knowledge and the exercise of power, while using literary materials to discuss historical and epistemological processes.

The notion of discourse is thus helpful to form linkages between dominant and marginalized institutions, as well as to see how power works through language, literature, institutions and culture to regulate everyday lives. Thus, Said was able to produce a discourse of the orient, a much more expansive notion that simple colonial authority. Orientalism stood on an oppositional binary between East and West, which was integral to European self-conceptualization. While Said seems to limit this skepticism to the "human and social sciences" (p. 45-46), others take it much farther. Martin Bernal, for instance, "questions the objectivity of not just the writing of history but of all knowledge produced in Europe during the colonial era" (p. 78).

Orientalism evoked much hostility as well as criticism, especially from Orientalists themselves, but also from others fundamentally sympathetic to Said's project. One recurring critique is that Orientalism suggests that a binary opposition between East and West has been a more or less static feature of Western discourses from classical Greece to the present day. Critics have pointed out too that Said's analysis concentrates, almost exclusively, on canonical Western literary texts. Said ignores the self-representations of the colonised and focuses on the imposition of colonial power rather than on the resistances to it. By doing so, he promotes a static model of colonial relations in which colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser and therefore there is no room for negotiation or change.

Foucault, had argued that power does not manifest itself in a downward flow from the top of the social hierarchy to those below but extends itself laterally in a capillary fashion it is part of daily action, speech and everyday life. Is such a notion of power useful for re-conceptualising social domination, or does it render it all pervasive and therefore difficult to challenge? Edward Said suggested that such an understanding of power was disabling for politically engaged criticism. While Orientalism is primarily concerned with how the Orient was 'constructed' by Western literature, travel writing and systems of studying the East, and not with how such a construction was received or dismantled by colonial subjects. However, it would be unfair to conclude that just because Said does not venture into the latter territory he necessarily suggests that the colonialist's discourse is all pervasive.

Colonial discourse studies today are not restricted to delineating the workings of power they have tried to locate and theorise oppositions, resistances and revolts on the part of the colonised. Colonial discourse studies are indebted to the Foucauldian concept of discourse even though Foucault has been repeatedly criticised for not paying any attention to colonial expansion as a feature of the European civil society or to how colonialism may have affected the power/knowledge systems of the modern European state. Foucault analysis of power is predicated upon a specifically European modernity wherein physical punishment and torture lose their spectacular forms and the state's power over the human body operates far more obliquely through the prison or the asylum.

Vaughan argues that whereas Foucault talks about the productive as opposed to repressive power of the modern state, colonial states were hardly modern in the European sense, and relied on a large measure of repressive power. Secondly, whereas Foucault outlines how modern European states created normative as well as 'abnormal' subjects in order to police both, the need to objectify and distance the Other in the form of the madman or the leper was less urgent in a situation in which every colonial person was in some sense, already Other. Colonial medical discourse conceptualised Africans as members of groups and it was these groups, rather than individuals, who were said to possess distinctive psychologies and bodies. In contrast to the European developments described by Foucault, in colonial Africa group classification was a far more important construction than individualization. Vaughan concludes that colonial power was different from its European counterpart because of the uneven development of capitalism in Africa and its relation to discourses on 'the African.

Colonial discourse then, is not just a fancy new term for colonialism; it indicates a new way of conceptualising the interaction of cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling of colonialism. It seeks to widen the scope of studies of colonialism by examining the intersection of ideas and institutions, knowledge and power. It has been often noted that colonial discourse studies present a distorted picture of colonial rule in which cultural effects are inflated at the expense of economic and political institutions. They claim that discourse in practice comes to mean literary texts and other cultural representations. In other words, colonial discourse studies erase any distinction between the material and the ideological because they simply concentrate on the latter.

The concept of 'discourse', as we saw earlier, was meant to uncover the interrelation between the ideological and the material rather than to collapse them into each other. But of course in practice, this ideal does not always work, perhaps because so many of those who work in this area have been trained in fields where representation is privileged such as literary studies, art history, film, and media and cultural studies. Even though disciplinary boundaries have been disintegrating, andc olonial discourse studies, like feminist studies, are astonishingly inter-disciplinary, the areas from which they have sprung exert their own bias, and mould them in ways that is examined in subsequent sections.

UNIT 13 (D): COLONIALISM AND KNOWLEDGE

Colonialism reshaped existing structures of human knowledge. No branch of learning was left untouched by the colonial experience. A crucial aspect of this process was the gathering and ordering of information about the lands and peoples visited by, and later subject to, the colonial powers. Travel writing was an important means of producing 'Europe's differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call "the rest of the world". The definition of civilisation and barbarism rests on the production of an irreconcilable difference between black and white, self and other. The late medieval European figure of the wild man who lived in forests, on the outer edges of civilisation, and was hairy, nude, violent. It is important to remember that images of Africans, Turks, Muslims, barbarians, anthropophagi, 'men of Indie' and other outsiders had circulated within Europe for a long time before colonialism. These images often appear to coincide with the constructions of the 'other' in colonialist discourse.

Colonialism was perhaps the most important crucible for their affirmation as well as reconstruction. Colonialism expanded the contact between Europeans and non-Europeans, generating a flood of images and ideas on an unprecedented scale. Previously held notions about the inferiority of non-Europeans provided a justification for European settlements, trading practices, religious missions and military activities; but they were also reshaped in accordance with specific colonial practices. These differences are important for understanding the production of colonial stereotypes. Stereotyping involves a reduction of images and ideas to a simple and manageable form; rather than simple ignorance or lack of 'real' knowledge, it is a method of processing information. The function of stereotypes is to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between self and other. In the case of de Bry's pictures in America, the figure of a man whose head is painted between his shoulders as one of the residents of the new continent. Exactly this image is recalled by Othello in Shakespeare's play on his travels, he says, he has seen 'men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders'. While, in Othello, this image may be considered as the work of a fictional imagination, in de Bry it passes for observed fact. The point is that both images posited an irreducible difference between Americans and Europeans, and that this difference

was reproduced in a wide range of materials, some obviously fictional and some passing as fact.

It is easier to accept such blurring of ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ in older texts, but we often assume that with scientific advances, misrepresentation decreases. As a matter of fact, far from being an objective, ideology-free domain, modern Western science was deeply implicated in the construction of racist ways of thinking about human beings and the differences between them. Western science, it points out, developed both as an impulse to master the globe, and by incorporating, learning from, as well as aggressively displacing other knowledge systems. Through the ‘objectivity’ of observation and science, European penetration into other lands is legitimised. Natural history is thus as much a form of writing and representation as it is a discovery of something already there in the natural world.

Thus, science and prejudice are not necessarily counter-posed to one another. On the contrary, the modern discourse of race was the product of Western science in thee eighteenth century. The nature of and reason for differences in skin colour had been debated for centuries within Europe. Scientific discourse suggested that since the skin colour of specific races did not change when their members moved to a new location therefore it was a biological and natural difference. Thus, races were now seen to be the expression of a biological hierarchy. The important point is that science did not shed any ofthe earlier suppositions about inferior races: thus, race explained not simply people’s skin colour, but also their civilisational and cultural attributes. Overtime, colour, hair type, skull shape and size, facial angles, or brain size were variously taken up by scientific discourses as the most accurate index of racial differences.

Dominant scientific ideologies about race and gender have historically propped up each other. In the mid-nineteenth century, the new science of anthropometry pronounced Caucasian women to be closer to Africans than white men were, and supposedly female traits were used to describe ‘the lower races’. Accordingly African women occupied the lowest rung of the racial ladder. When African men began to be treated for schizophrenia andc onfined to lunatic asylums. The connections between economic processes, social processes and the reordering of knowledge can be both obvious and oblique. The development or reproduction of even those knowledge systems that appear to be too abstract to have an ideological inflection, such as mathematics, can also be connected to the imperialist project. To that extent, we may say that all discourses are colonialist discourses.

It is important to remember that the colonialist production of knowledge was not a simple process. It included a clash with and a marginalisation of the knowledge and belief systems of those who were conquered. Colonialist knowledges involved a constant negotiation with or an incorporation of indigenous ideas. British engineers in India could only complete their bridges and dams by consulting local experts. The profound dependence of Western ideas about the natural world upon the knowledges of peoples living in the colonial periphery, showing especially how 'the seeds of modern conservation developed as an integral part of the European encounter with the tropics and with local classifications and interpretations of the natural world and its symbolism'.

Even colonial stereotyping was often based on native images. For example, Mary Louise Pratt tells us that the primal America projected by European travellers such as Alexander von Humboldt was not a pure invention, although it fits in so well with the nature/culture, primeval/developed binaries of colonialist discourses. Pratt's use of the word 'transculturated' here is important. 'Transculturation' was a term coined in 1947 by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz to describe the mixing of different groups in Cuba. The result of such transculturation was a mixing, a hybridity, which has become an important issue in colonial discourse theories, and one to which we will return later. Pratt also employs the idea of 'transculturation' to indicate inter-cultural negotiation that is a constant feature of what she calls 'the contact zone'.

UNIT 13 (E): COLONIALISM AND LITERATURE

Recent attention to the relationship between literature and colonialism has provoked serious reconsiderations of each of these terms. First, literature's pivotal role in both colonial and anti-colonial discourses has begun to be explored. Ever since Plato, it has been acknowledged that literature mediates between the real and the imaginary. Literary texts circulate in society not just because of their intrinsic merit, but because they are part of other institutions such as the market, or the education system. Via these institutions, they play a crucial role constructing a cultural authority for the colonisers, both in the metropolis and in the colonies. However, literary texts do not simply reflect dominant ideologies, but encode the tensions, complexities and nuances within

colonial cultures. Literature is a place where 'transculturation' takes place in all its complexity. Literature written on both sides of the colonial divide often absorbs, appropriates and inscribes aspects of the 'other' culture, creating new genres, ideas and identities in the process. Finally, literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies.

Loomba examines some of these interactions between literature and colonialism. The lovers in John Donne's poems, for example, explicitly demarcate their private space from the fast-expanding outer world. The lovers' relationship is worked out in terms of the colonialists' interaction with the lands they 'discover. The colonial contact is not just 'reflected' in the language or imagery of literary texts, it is not just a backdrop or 'context' against which human dramas are enacted, but a central aspect of what these texts have to say about identity, relationships and culture. Literature, in such a reading, both reflects and creates ways of seeing and modes of articulation that are central to the colonial process.

But literary texts can also militate against dominant ideologies, or contain elements which cannot be reconciled to them. Such complexity is not necessarily a matter of authorial intention. The syncretic nature of literary texts or their ideological complexities should not lead to the conclusion that they are somehow above historical and political processes. Rather, we can see how literary texts, both through what they say, and in the process of their writing, are central to colonial history, and in fact can help us towards a nuanced analysis of that history. Even a discipline like comparative literature which acknowledged the profound interaction of various literatures and cultures, was hierarchically organised, and its central assumption was that 'Europe and the United States together were the centre of the world, not simply by virtue of their political positions, but also because their literatures were the ones most worth studying'.

Such interrelatedness of literary with non-literary texts, and the relation of both to colonial discourses and practices, can be unravelled in later periods too, often even more sharply. We have seen how a wide spectrum of representations encode the rape and plunder of colonised countries by figuring the latter as naked women and placing colonisers as masters/rapists. But the threat of native rebellion produces a very different kind of colonial stereotype which represents the colonised as a (usually dark-skinned) rapist who in turn comes to ravish the white woman. In the very different context of nineteenth-century colonial India, Jenny Sharpe (1993)

demonstrates that the dark-skinned rapist is not an essential feature at all but discursively produced within a set of historically specific conditions. Sharpe shows that such a figure comes to be a common place during and after what the British called ‘The Mutiny’ of 1857.

Today, even those works where the imperial theme appears to be marginal are being reinterpreted in the context of European expansion. As Spivak pointed out in an early essay, ‘It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism understood as England’s social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English’. Thus, no work of fiction written during that period, no matter how inward-looking, esoteric or apolitical, can remain uninflected by colonial cadences. Discussions of Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre’s alters the understanding of European literature and culture. Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton read Jane’s passage from an impoverished orphan and governess to the wife of wealthy Mr Rochester in terms of social mobility and the ambiguous class position of the governess; feminist critics such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar appropriated the novel as a landmark text about the birth of a female individualism and the rise of the female subject in English fiction. But this reading had already been disturbed in 1966 by Jean Rhys’s novel Wide Sargasso Sea, which amplified a figure that is hauntingly marginal to Jane Eyre—that of Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester’s ‘mad’ first wife who is burnt to death, clearing the way for Jane’s marriage to Mr Rochester. Rhys rewrote Bertha’s ‘madness’ as the misery and oppression of a white Creole woman married for her plantation wealth, then dislocated from her island home in the Caribbean and locked up in an English manor. Going back to Rhys, Gayatri Spivak (1985a) criticised feminist critics ‘Bertha Mason only in psychological terms, as Jane’s dark double’; she suggested instead that nineteenth-century feminist individualism was necessarily inflected by the drama of imperialism, and that it marginalised and dehumanised the native woman even as it strove to assert the white woman as speaking and acting subject. This position was criticised by Benita Parry (1987), who pointed out that Bertha Mason, tormented Caribbean woman as she is, is not the real ‘woman from the colonies’ in Rhys’s novel. Bertha, first called Antoinette, is the white mistress of Christophine, a black plantation slave who is exploited but not silenced or reduced to the margins as she articulates her critique of Rochester, and of race and class relations on the island. Christophine is not present in Jane Eyre, but we can see how the world she occupies is necessary to the construction of English domestic peace and prosperity in that novel.

CONCLUSION

To end this section, one has to take a look yet another aspect of the relation between literature and colonialism as discussed by Loomba: the meanings that are given to texts by dominant critical views, which are then enshrined within educational systems. Take, for example Shakespeare's Othello, a standard text in schools and colleges in many parts of the world. For years critics refused to address the implications of Othello's blackness. The play was read as making a statement about masculine jealousy, understood as a 'universal' attribute that is provoked by the real or potential transgression of women. If Othello's blackness was ever acknowledged, it was only in order to suggest that his 'race' somehow explained his jealousy and his irrationality. Even those literary texts that are, arguably, distant from or even critical of colonial ideologies can be made to serve colonial interests through educational systems that devalue native literatures, and by Euro-centric critical practices which insist on certain Western texts being the markers of superior culture and value.

The rise of literary studies as a 'discipline' of study in British universities was in fact linked to the perceived needs of colonial administrators: English literature was instituted as a formal discipline in London and Oxford only after the Indian Civil Service examination began to include a 1000-mark paper in it, on the assumption that knowledge of English literature was necessary for those who would be administering British interests. Soon after, it was also deemed important that the natives themselves be instructed in Western literatures. The study of colonialism in relation to literature and of literature in relation to colonialism has thus opened up important new ways of looking at both. Even more important perhaps is the way in which recent literary and critical theory has influenced social analysis. They have not only demanded that literary texts be read in fuller, more contextualised ways, but have also suggested that social and historical processes are textual in the sense that they are made available to us via their representations.

These representations involve ideological and rhetorical strategies as much as do fictional texts. The analogy of text and textile may be useful here: critical analysis teases out the warp and woof of any text, literary or historical, in order to see how it was put together in the first place. Colonialism, according to these ways of reading, should

be analysed as if it were a text, composed of representational as well as material practices and available to us via a range of discourses such as scientific, economic, literary and historical writings, official papers, art and music, cultural traditions, popular narratives, and even rumours.

In Homi Bhabha's view, highlighting the formation of colonial subjectivities as a process that is never fully or perfectly achieved helps us in correcting Said's emphasis on domination, and in focusing on the agency of the colonised. Drawing upon both psychoanalytical and poststructuralist notions of subjectivity and language, Homi Bhabha suggests that colonial discourses cannot smoothly work, as *Orientalism* might seem to suggest. In the very processes of their delivery, they are diluted and hybridised, so that the fixed identities that colonialism seeks to impose upon both the masters and the laves are in fact rendered unstable. There is no neat binary opposition between the coloniser and the colonised both are caught up in a complex reciprocity and colonial subjects can negotiate the cracks of dominant discourses in a variety of ways. Other critics, however, suggest that it is the post-structuralist, psychoanalytic and deconstructive perspectives within Said's work and that of subsequent postcolonial critics which are to blame for their inability to account for oppositional voices. Human identities and subjectivities are shifting and fragmentary. In 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985b), Spivak suggests that it is impossible for us to recover the voice of the 'subaltern' or oppressed colonial subjects. The debate thus rages on, making postcolonial studies a lively field and a field in flux.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay-type Questions

1. Critically discuss the etymology of the term postcolonial and its associated terminology.
2. How does Marxist theory inform postcolonial thinking? Discuss
3. Critically analyse how notions of ideology is employed for postcolonial analysis.
4. What is postcolonial discourse? Discuss with reference to Foucault and Edward Said.
5. Discourse analysis was built on the tripod made by Althusserian Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Saussurean linguistics. Discuss

6. Colonial Discourse is a new way of conceptualising the interaction of cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling of colonialism. Discuss.
7. Critically analyse the linkages between literature and colonialism.
8. Scientific ideologies about race and gender have historically never been objective, despite, professing to be so. Discuss.

Short-Answer type Questions

1. Distinguish between the terms imperialism and colonialism.
2. What meanings can we ascribe to the term "postcolonialism"?
3. Is anti-colonialism the same as postcolonialism? Discuss.
4. Mention the common-ground Ania Loomba arrives at from her discussion of Western critical theories.
5. Write short notes on two classical texts where colonialism is a central issue as discussed by Loomba.
6. Write a short note on the analogy of text and textile.
7. What does Loomba mean when she says natural history is thus as much a form of writing and representation as it is a discovery of something already there in the natural world.
8. Write a short note on Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity.

UNITS: 14 - 15

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

UNIT – 14

UNIT 14 (A): AN INTRODUCTION TO MARCUS E GREEN'S "GRAMSCI CANNOT SPEAK: PRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF GRAMSCI'S CONCEPT OF THE SUBALTERN"

Marcus E. Green opens with the declaration that Gramsci's concept of the subaltern is misunderstood and misappropriated, especially since English-reading scholars have relied on translation of Gramsci's, "Selections from the Prison Notebooks" by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell which only feature very few of Gramsci's notes on the subaltern, whereas, Gramsci's interest in the subaltern is central to his inquiry into Italian history, politics, culture and the relation between state and civil society.

Green suggests that Gramsci develops the concept of subaltern over time. In the first notebook Gramsci used subaltern in the literal meaning referring to noncommissioned military troops subordinate to officers, however in later notes he uses the term to refer to non military positions of subordination or lower status. It is in notebook 3, that Gramsci first uses the term in regard to social class, writing that subaltern classes are subject to the initiatives of the dominant class and in a state of anxious defense even when they rebel, thus suggesting that "subaltern" is a social group subordinate to a ruling group's prerogatives.

In 1935, Gramsci started writing a notebook dedicated to the subaltern titled "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups) and in it he revised and expanded his earlier notes on the subject. "Gramsci identifies slaves, peasants, religious groups, women, different races and the proletariat as subaltern social groups" (Green, 69) He focuses on the history of ancient Rome, the medieval communes, and the modern state as well as discussion of the bourgeoisie as a subaltern group that transformed it's socio-political position in Italy. However, since Gramsci's notes are fragmentary and not complete, one has to understand the concept of the subaltern within the totality of the prison notebooks and Gramsci's trajectory of thought.

Green notes that Gramsci's interest in the subaltern was threefold: a methodology of subaltern historiography, a history of the subaltern classes and a political strategy of transformation. In his notes Gramsci is interested in investigating how the subaltern came into being, the socio-political relations of formation, the political power they hold, their representation in history and literature and seeking how they can transform their consciousness and in turn their living conditions.

UNIT 14 (B): SUBALTERN IN GRAMSCI'S PRE-PRISON WRITINGS

Although Gramsci did not directly deal with the concept of subalternity until he was in prison, his interest is apparent in earlier writings. In "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" (1978) Gramsci analyses the social and class structure of the Italian South with focus on the role Southern intellectuals fulfill in perpetuating the interests of the dominant social groups. He expands on this investigation in the prison notebook where he redefined his conceptions of state and civil society as "integral state". It is through the analysis of integral state that the key concepts of hegemony and subalternity arises.

In “Southern Question” Gramsci theorises that although the Southern peasants are in perpetual ferment they are incapable of giving a centralized expression to their desires because they are politically linked to big landowners through the mediation of intellectuals. An example of this would be how Fortunate and Croce calmed down radical tendencies in the South so that they did not turn revolutionary. They influenced Southern intellectuals towards a path of classical serenity of thought and action, thereby, forcing them to take part in national and European culture and be absorbed by the National bourgeoisie and the agrarian bloc. Thus, Gramsci’s analysis stresses on the integral function that intellectuals play in political leadership, that they provide a noncoercive element of consent in political domination that the state cannot fulfill on its own. Hence he expands his earlier notion of the state as limited and instrumentalist. Green notes that in “Some Aspects of the Southern Question” Gramsci moves away from the view that power is concentrated in the state and the goal of revolution is to capture state power. This marks a change from his earlier view that state is the “protagonist of history”, the realm in which ruling or dominant groups are coercive leaders who maintain power over society. This allowed Gramsci to later develop his notion of hegemony.

UNIT 14 (C): INTEGRAL STATE WHERE CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL SOCIETY COEXIST

Within a few years Gramsci arrives at an expanded notion of the state, which includes both political society and civil society. He revises his position of state as political society and reframes it as a balance between political society and civil society. By civil society he refers to private organisations such as church, unions, schools and is the realm within which intellectuals operate. He accords the failure of medieval communes to the fact that the government as an economic class was unable to create it’s own category of intellectuals and thus exercise hegemony and not simple dictatorship. The communes were thus syndicalist and not integral.

Green reiterates that for Gramsci the state in its expanded integral meaning, consists of both political and civil society. Political society is the idea of a juridical-administrative state: government, the military, the police, the judiciary and so on. Civil society constitutes the

voluntary organisations such as trade unions, churches, cultural clubs but also newspapers, publishers and the like. Gramsci suggests the economic structure underlies both political and civil society. Economic relations are structural and political, and civil society is superstructural but superstructure is determined by both economic and political forces. They are not two separate spheres: they comprise an organic unity, for they are both elements of modern society. The distinction is purely methodological.

Gramsci in his analysis suggests that the state remains an instrument of class domination even if is expanded integral meaning. However, the nature of domination is not purely juridical or political, as it is not sufficient to maintain power by ruling groups, they must also exercise hegemony in civil society in order for subaltern groups to consent to their own subordinate position and to the authority of the ruling groups. Civil society is instrumental for manufacturing consent by promoting hegemony, that is, their ideology, philosophy, ways of life, and so forth. Thus for Gramsci, the notion of civil society differs from the liberal viewpoint, it is not the domain of free expression or organization, but contains cultural elements of conformity where the dominant groups values and ideology becomes the predominant values throughout society. So civil society is just as political as political society.

Civil society and political society have a reciprocal relationship, they support and reinforce each other. “The hegemony within civil society supports the leading group’s authority over political society, and the juridical apparatuses of political society protect the dominant group’s hegemony within civil society through coercive measures” (Green, 73). Under this conceptualization, law is a coercive instrument of power used to create social conformism and follow through the ruling group’s line of development. Gramsci had a personal experience with the measures ruling groups can take in order to protect its authority and hegemony as he was imprisoned by Mussolini’s Fascist government.

To summarize then, Gramsci’s developed his notion of the integral state as an extension of earlier analysis. He viewed the state as the protagonist of history and the instrument of class struggle, in which ruling groups form a unity and maintain their power and supremacy through coercive organs of the state and civil society helps maintain that power through hegemony and consensus.

UNIT 14 (D): GRAMSCI'S METHOD OF SUBALTERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Gramsci analyses the subaltern in their particular historical contexts. Green quotes from the introduction to the Prison Notebooks by Joseph A. Buttigieg, to demonstrate Gramsci's method: "Gramsci incorporates particular events, pieces of information, and observations, throughout the notebooks, in order to support and formulate general conclusions and theories (Green 74). This is particularly because Gramsci believed that the theoretician's task is to incorporate evidence in their theory and is evidence does not conform with theory, then to alter the theory because reality never conforms to an abstract scheme. Additionally Gramsci called for a theoretical language that is founded upon historically determined categories that are formulated from concrete historical development. This language can account for actual social practice rather than arbitrary or abstract schemes.

Green writes that Gramsci's methodological approach is open-ended. His study of the subaltern is similarly historically determined and Gramsci's subaltern exists within particular historical, economic, political, social and cultural contexts. He attempted to trace how subalterns came into existence, how some survived at the margins and some succeeded in their ascent from subordinate to dominant social positions.

Much of Gramsci's thoughts on the subaltern appear in his idea of integral history as interwoven with his method of historical analysis. The integral historian not just documents historical developments but is capable of linking them with the socio-economic, political and cultural undercurrents leading to the developments thus providing essential relationship of historical development to broader socio-political contexts. The integral historian in this way is able to relate historical development with people's lived experiences. Gramsci lays out his "methodological criteria" for the historical research of the subaltern in six steps or phases, each step referring to an area in which the integral historian should study the subaltern.

The six steps as described by Marcus Green are as follows:

> First, there is a change in the economic sphere, such as a change in property relations, which alters the organization of society, relegating a social group to a subordinate social position. Second, the subaltern group either adheres (passively or actively) to the new dominant political formations or the group attempts to influence the new

> formations with its own demands. Third, the dominant social group creates new parties or government programs to maintain control of the subaltern groups. Fourth, the subaltern group realizes that the new social formations, parties, and institutions do not account for its needs so it forms its own organizations, such as trade unions. Fifth, the subaltern group organizes a political formation that represents its concerns, expresses its autonomy and its will to participate in the established political framework. Sixth, the subaltern group realizes its interests will not be met within the current sociopolitical system so it organizes its own social and political formation that will eventually replace the existing one. (Green, 76)

That subalternity exists in degrees or levels of development, is an important notion put forth by Gramsci. Thus, some groups maintain higher levels of political consciousness and organization than others and some groups have more autonomy and are able to take initiatives more than others. Thereby, these groups are easier to research because is more probable that historical records will exist about them than as they have organized political parties or other institutions represent their views. On the other end are groups that are undeveloped or unorganized socially or politically. For example group of farmers. These groups usually unorganized are more difficult to trace than urban proletariats. Gramsci's terminology also reflects the idea of subalternity in degree: he uses "marginal" or "peripheral" for elements of subaltern that are not developed and have not achieved political consciousness. Variation of degree in subaltern development also is evident from that fact that the most advanced subaltern classes can come to power through 'spontaneous' movement. For example the bourgeoisie.

UNIT – 15

UNIT 15 (A): TRACING SUBALTERN DEVELOPMENT

Thus tracing the historical development of subalterns is fraught with difficulty as Gramsci notes in "History of the Subaltern Classes: Methodological Criteria" as subaltern development is fragmented and episodic. Thus Gramsci turns to monographs in an attempt to

trace the history of the subalterns. In a number of his notes on the subaltern Gramsci's sites bibliographic information from books and articles which contained traces of subaltern existence. These traces he believed was important for the integral historian. In some of the other notes Gramsci cites entire paragraphs and other detailed information from the books and articles. Green takes up the example of Gramsci's notes on the development of medieval communes where Gramsci refers to an article by Ettore Ciccotti. Gramsci used the article to provide an historical case study of how a subaltern group can become a dominant one: in the thirteenth century the common people in the communes of Siena and Bologna gained enough political power to overcome the power of the nobility. This development is consistent with Gramsci's six phases of development. Because the common people served in the military forces they became aware of their strength and unified created councils and appointed officers corresponding to the fourth phase of Gramsci's development model. Since the common people held most of the power in the military, the military originally intended to protect the commune from external forces but also began to grow and include the protection of people from the nobles. Thus people entered the fifth phase of development in which they demanded emancipation and participation in major public offices and formed a real political party. The people then came to dominate the commune overwhelming the previous ruling class. Green notes how from Gramsci's perspective this is an example of how a subaltern group that was originally subordinated to a dominant group gained power and eventually became the new dominant group.

Another instance of subaltern history that Gramsci writes of is the unique case of Lazaretti's political movement. Gramsci writes not only about Lazzaretti but also the intellectuals who wrote about the political movement. Lazzaretti was originally a commoner who believed himself to be the descendant of a French king and a prophet that would liberate people from the misery of their conditions. He ultimately depicted himself as the Messiah, who offered a new moral and civil order. He proclaimed he was going to establish a Republic of God that included land and crop redistribution however he was shot and killed by the military police. According to Gramsci Lazzaretti's movement represented an attempt by a subaltern group to establish a new state based upon various religious political and economic principles however a movement that failed due to the power of the state.

However Italian intellectuals viewed Lazzaretti's movement as purely religious and not political and labeled him a madman. This Gramsci sees as symptomatic of the tendency of Italian intellectuals to neglect historical origins of an event and provide narrow explanations.

Gramsci's analysis of authors who wrote on Lazzaretti demonstrates the difficulty in tracing the subaltern because even when the subaltern exists in historical records the interpretations and representations of the subaltern is misinformed or ideologically influenced. This creates an additional layer of difficulty in producing subaltern history for the integral historian.

The third example that Green provides of Gramsci's attempt to write subaltern history was tied to Gramsci's analysis of popular literature especially the work of Alessandro Manzoni. Manzoni, Gramsci showed was interested in creating a portrait of the common people which in Gramscian terms was the subaltern classes. Gramsci sees Manzoni's work as comparable to Shakespeare in that Shakespeare sides with the upper classes and presents the common people in a scornful manner. Gramsci also charged the Italian intellectuals as portraying the people as humble and nobles as enlightened and it was in this sense that Gramsci was concerned with how literary representations of the subaltern reinforced the subaltern's subordinated position. And thus, the masses do not question their position and accept it as fact rather than the opinion of certain people. The subaltern or integral historian thus not only has to analyze the historical events but also the historical processes in which the subaltern are perceived presented and depicted in literary and historical documents.

To conclude this section, Gramsci believed it was possible to produce a history of the subaltern classes even if it was difficult. He argued that subaltern groups developed in various degrees or phases that correspond to levels of political organization. Subaltern groups are subject to various political social cultural and economic relations that produce marginalization and prevent group autonomy and yet subaltern groups have the ability to transform their subordinate social positions. In fact the sub transformation of subaltern subordinate social position was Gramsci's ultimate goal and through his analysis he formed a political strategy for such a transformation.

UNIT 15 (B): RECENT INTERPRETATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS OF THE SUBALTERN

Subaltern studies has become very popular in recent times particularly owing to the analysis of Ranajit Guha's subaltern studies collective and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak essay "Can the subaltern speak". Spivak's famous essay critiques the method and focus of subaltern studies. But it also critiques the notion of Europe as a subject and political representation in the works

of Michel foucault and Gilles Deleuze. However Marcus Green notes all of these studies are somewhat limited in scope due to their heavy dependence on the notes included in “Selections from the Prison Notebooks”.

Green notes that in the preface to Subaltern Studies 1, Ranajit Guha stated that the point of the subaltern collective is to challenge elitist historiography and to illuminate aspects of subaltern history as they relate to class, caste, age, gender and so forth. Guha also states that he wanted the series to match the six point project envisaged by Antonio Gramsci in his notes on Italian history. However Green declares what was not clear was how Gramsci’s six point project was to be used. In contrast to Gramsci’s definition Guha defines subaltern groups as the people or non elite which is more reminiscent of Max Weber. Guha categorizes elite into three categories: dominant foreign groups dominant indigenous groups and regional and local groups that act on the behalf of the other two groups and states that the role of the researcher is to measure the degree of deviation of these elements from the ideal and situate it historically. Spivak critiques Guha's approach to rewriting Indian colonial history from a subaltern perspective by stating that the idea of defining the subaltern as different from the elite and then attempting to investigate that specific group is essentialist and taxonomic. The main problem with this project according to Spivak is that it requires to not only know the consciousness and position of the subaltern but also to represent that consciousness while subalternists rely on British nationalist or colonialist records to research that work. In Spivak’s view the subaltern leaves no traces of their existence within elite colonial documents and if the subaltern is represented at all they are represented as the other within the dominant elite ideology. In this sense the subaltern cannot speak according to speak because representations of the subaltern are embedded within the dominant discourse.

The issue that Spivak raises with representation in the work of Foucault and Delueze also informs her understanding of Gramsci’s conception of the subaltern. Spivak points out that there are two types of representation: Representation as speaking for as in politics and representation as in art or philosophy. Spivak concludes that Foucault and Deleuze confuse these two types of representation with the notion of a unified European subject while in Marx this distinction is apparent in his concept of class. This distinction according to Spivak is imperative in order to understand how macro logical representations affect political representations. When Spivak discusses Gramsci she notes that Gramsci criticises the vanguardist position of the Leninist intellectual as he is concerned with the intellectual's role in the subaltern’s cultural and political movement into hegemony. This movement must be

made to determine the production of history as narrative of truth. However she criticizes Gramsci's account of the six phase development of subaltern. Green in turn notes that Spivak is only considering Gramsci's notion of the subaltern with regard to the proletariat and peasants. Spivak thinks that 'Gramsci's focus on the subaltern is too macro logical because he situates the subaltern within an ensemble of social relations: relations of production, "legal and disciplinary" functions of the state and relations of hegemony within civil society.' (Green, 83) She defines the subaltern differently than both Gramsci and Guha. For her the subaltern are not merely the non elite, they are " the paradigmatic victims" of the international division of labour – namely, "the women of the urban sub proletariat and of organized peasant labour". For Spivak the subaltern are so oppressed and displaced that they lack political organization and representation and therefore the proletariat is not a subaltern group because it is organised in most instances. This conception is different from Gramsci's in that it lacks specificity. Spivak had also suggested that Gramsci used the word subaltern out of the necessity to censor himself from using the word proletariat. This is a position that Green does not agree with. He instead notes that Spivak's analysis of subaltern representation is consistent with Gramsci's approach. In contrast, Spivak's definition of the subaltern are at odds with Gramsci's conception. For Spivak the subaltern are unorganized and do not often speak, politically or textually. For her representation and organization are key to subalternity and once they are achieved the subaltern ceases to be subaltern. Spivak develops this further in her recent works where she talks of the requirements of a line of communication between subaltern groups and circuits of citizenship or institutionality, leading to the long road of hegemony. Green's concluding comment on Spivak, brings her theory into Gramscian terms, by suggesting that all of these require political struggle. Subaltern groups have to become conscious of their social position, organize, and struggle to transform their social position since organization and representation alone will not transform the relations of subordination. This ultimately brings green back to the Gramscian idea of phased development.

UNIT 15 (C): CONCLUDING COMMENTARY: GRAMSCI REVOLUTIONARY PROJECT FOR SUBALTERN LIBERATION

In his concluding section Green summarizes that "Gramsci's interest in the subaltern is threefold: he is interested in creating a methodology of subaltern historical analysis, and

actual history of subaltern social groups, and from these two projects he is interested in formulating a revolutionary and practical political strategy that will liberate subaltern groups from their subordinated existence." (Green, 85). In this Gramsci is consistent with the doctrines of historical materialism as his historical analysis informs theory and theory informs practice thus Gramsci's is a philosophy of praxis.

This is largely because Gramsci viewed socio historical cultural analysis as partial ends in themselves but ultimately aiming at practical political activity to justify particular actions initiatives and tactics. And the task of the integral historian or subaltern intellectual is to contribute to the development of concrete political strategies founded upon these socio historical analysis.

From Gramsci's own historical analysis, he concluded that the liberation of subaltern groups requires a transformation of the state and its oppressive social relations since subaltern groups can only cease being subaltern once they have transformed the relations of subordination that causes their marginalization. Dominant social group maintain control of the state through a hegemonic hold over civil society, they maintain their hegemony over civil society through the promotion of their ideology, cultural values, social practices, morality, ways of thinking, religion, customs and so on. So the new state based upon egalitarian social relations can only be achieved through a broad alliance of subaltern social groups who have the capacity to win the struggle for hegemony. Since subaltern groups exist in varying degrees of political organization, the more organized groups have to become the intellectual and moral leaders and attempt to create a subaltern class alliance that would represent new set of cultural values, social relations, and a new conception of the state. Green notes that it is therefore that Gramsci insists that subaltern groups engage in a war of position in which the subaltern will promote a new set of social values as a counterforce to the dominant group's values in an attempt to take control of civil society and promote new conceptions. The war of position is thus struggle for hegemony. However it is also important to note that this subaltern war of position is not merely an ideological struggle but also a practical political struggle in which the subaltern organizes political formations that represents their views, promote their conception of the world, and assert subaltern autonomy and political power. For Gramsci a subalterbln political party is the practical political organization that can provide intellectual and moral leadership for the subaltern and act as the embryo that will develop into a state. This is illustrated in the 5^{th} and 6^{th} phases of subaltern development. Once the hegemonic struggle is won, the war of movement or the sixth phase of development begins in which the

members of the party who are the personnel of the old state become the personnel and leaders of the new state.

As in the Gramscian strategy, subaltern groups do not merely seek legal protections from the state in order to overcome their subordination, they become the cultural leaders of society, organize a political party, become the new dominant social group, and eventually become the state. The state Gramsci has in mind is an ethical state a state that can transform the oppressive state and transform the relations of subordination that create group marginalization. Ideally, Green notes, what Gramsci has in mind is a post-subaltern state, a democratic state that disallows the domination of one group by another.

To conclude then, Gramsci study and conception of the subaltern are transformative. Gramsci is interested in a historical, political, social, and cultural transformation that will produce human liberation, and he sees this transformation occurring from below. Because political power rests within the state but is reinforced within social and cultural practices, Gramscu views the struggle for subaltern transformation occurring in a hegemonic fashion, in which a new conception of society is not only presented in politics but throughout the superstructural realms of ideology, culture, philosophy, literature, and so on. Thus, in Gramsci's analysis he attempts to capture the totality of subaltern existence. Thus Gramsci's concept of the subaltern creates not only a new terrain of struggle but a methodological criterion for formulating such a struggle founded upon the integral analysis of the economic, historical, cultural, and ideological roots of everyday life.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss the idea of "integral state" with focus on the concept of hegemony.
2. Discuss Gramsci's open-ended method of subaltern historiography and the role of the integral historian
3. Trace Gramsci's method of subaltern development with an historical case study as mentioned by Marcus Green.
4. Discuss some of the difficulties one encounters when writing subaltern historiography.

5. With reference to Manzoni and Shakespeare, how does Gramsci charge literary representation as reinforcing subaltern subordination?
6. Critically discuss the notion of 'subalternity' as proposed by Gramsci, Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak with focus on their similarity and differences.

Short-Answer Type Questions

1. Trace the evolution of the meaning ascribed to the term subaltern.
2. Write a short note on Gramsci's three fold interest in the subaltern.
3. How does Gramsci's notion of civil society differ from the liberal viewpoint?
4. Write a note on the role of intellectuals in perpetuating the rule of dominant classes.
5. What does Gramsci mean when he proposes that subalternity exists in degrees?
6. Write a short note on Gramsci's interest in the "madman" Lazzaretti.
7. Name the categories of elite groups formulated by Ranajit Guha
8. Write a note on Spivak's critique of Ranajit Guha's approach to rewriting Indian history from subaltern perspective.

UNIT – 16

CONTENT STRUCTURE:

UNIT 16 (A): INTRODUCTION TO ARUN P. MUKHERJEE'S "THE EXCLUSIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND MULK RAJ ANAND'S 'UNTOUCHABLE': A CASE STUDY"

Arun P Mukherjee opens with the important declaration that "postcolonial literature**",** "postcolonialism", and "postcolonial theory" have become ubiquitous terms in usage in contemporary times, so much so, that the meaning of these terms have assumed the status of self-evident truth. These terms have led to new ways of categorising textual interpretation and have had wide-ranging discursive effects that have led to major shifts in the way third world produces texts and in the way literatures are received in the first world. And yet these discursive effects have gone unacknowledged by those who have named themselves post colonial critics. Thus, it has become imperative that this emergent critical practise be made visible.

The thesis that Mukherjee presents through her reading of Mulk Raj Anand's untouchable is that the categories constituted by post colonial theory homogenise the figure of the native

who is presented as an essentialized character devoid of race, gender, class, caste, ethnic and religious markers. Additionally post colonial theory's exclusive concern with this essentialized native's resistance to the coloniser (another essentialized construction) is politically retrogressive: on one hand it masks the resisting native's own ideological agendas, and on the other hand, masks the heterogeneity of voices in post colonial societies.

UNIT 16 (B): THE PROBLEMS IN POST-COLONIAL THEORY AND IT'S ANALYTICAL METHODS

While postcolonial studies have claimed to have radicalised the apolitical discipline called Commonwealth literature, the critical tradition of post colonial studies itself has come under attack for its over totalizing tendencies. Mukherjee notes that in the article "Social Text", Aijaz Ahmad accuses Frederick Jameson of creating "a meta narrative that encompasses all of the fecundity of real narratives in the so-called third world." (Mukherjee, 28). When Jameson proposes a theory of cognitive aesthetics of the third world, Ahmad charges him with producing a unitary subject and homogeneous organisation that sub merges the cultural heterogeneity of the third world. Mukherjee also notes that the authors of the seminal book *Empire Writes Back*, while claiming to have created a theory that is applicable globally actually create an even larger unitary subject through post colonial literature and criticism. One must remember that postcolonialism from its elementary level had sort to critique the universalism of colonial discourses. Thus, Mukherjee writes "we come back full circle to the 'universalist aesthetics', albeit from the left this time" (Mukherjee, 29). Jameson talks about the commonality of third world cultural productions and d Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffany declare that the term postcolonial covers all cultures affected by the imperial process across time. Other post colonial theorists ground their use of the term postcolonial in the essence that is supposedly shared by geographically dispersed and historically, culturally, linguistically, politically, and racially different societies and the texts produced by them.

This commonality across cultures is based on their supposed shared experience of imperialism. The colonial encounter is supposed to have provided a shared matrix of reference and shared set of problems for post colonial cultures. The shared concerns are identified as: 1. Discursive resistance to colonial powers and 2. Retrieval or creation of an independent identity. These concerns underlie and inform other sub-categories such as

subversion of imperial myths, imperialist texts and history, appropriation of Western literary forms, search for pre-colonial cultural wholeness and recovery and rewriting of history.

Such a framework, writes Mukherjee drawing from Ahmad, makes it difficult to speak of any fundamental differences between national formations or fundamental differences within particular national formations- such as that of class and gender. It attempts to minimise differences and collapse everything into the vocabulary drawn from anti-colonial nationalism or binary difference between East and West. The theory locks us into the binary oppositions of colonized/colonized, domination/resistance. Postcolonial theory create a unitary discourse that stands in the place of socio-cultural-discursive heterogeneity and thus the specific literature produced by specific cultural locales all come under one unitary named assigned to them, that is postcolonial literature. At the same time at the level of interpretive discourse, postcolonial theory once again homogenises and standardises this diverse literature, working under the assumption the post colonial states are endlessly substitutable and comparable.

Mukherjee harks back to Foucault's cautionary words about founding concepts as "ready-made synthesis" whose groupings is accepted before any examination, and suggests that one needs to examine the grounding exemptions before one begins to build on it. Mukherjee insists on the need to examine the grouping of postcolonial literatures based on the commonality of its subversive resistance to the colonizer. He points out that the experience of colonialism is not similar as the binary oppositions of postcolonial theory claim. Instead ideologies of colonialism were employed differently to suit local exigencies and therefore were differently experienced by people living in various parts of the globe. For example Africans, Australians or indigenous people of the Americas were treated as savages who needed to be civilized or exterminated, whereas the imperial ideologies around India were ambivalent. India's ancient civilization and spirituality where applauded while it was also argued that Indian civilization had become stagnant because of its age and needed the infusion of the virility and worldliness from the Anglo Saxons. Additionally in the Indian context, the colonialist discourse were not the product of British colonizers alone but was produced jointly by the British colonizers and the Indian bourgeoisie. This led to the preservation of indigenous elite's cultural, legal and religious beliefs through codification and legal authorization, which in turn guarded the privileged status of the Indian ruling class.

Thus, while indigenous culture was brutally suppressed in Africa and the Americas, India experienced a different form of colonialism. Indian historians have shown how the policy of

non interference in indigenous matters on part of the British government actually led to ossification in Indian society. The patchwork of educational systems that was deliberately maintained and the refusal to address demands for legislation to end untouchability, child marriage, dowry, and reform property rights, actually exacerbated divisions along the lines of caste, gender, religion and class. Hence, when Jan Mohammad talks about the destruction of native economy and culture, it is not applicable to India's experience of colonialism. Peter Worsley stresses on the need to remember the differences which have emerged from our different historical circumstances; "Despite the political power of the conqueror, each colony was the product of a dialectic, a synthesis, not just a simple imposition, in which the social institution And cultural values of the conquered was one of the terms of the dialectic." While the homogenized theory of postcolonial analysis reads India's literary texts only in terms of search for identity and resistance to the colonizer, entirely overlooking collaboration. And what does not fit is passed over. Hence, some writers whose writing fit the narrative of resistance to imperialists, like Rushdie and Narayan receive attention from postcolonial critics while writers like Nayantara Sahgal or Shashi Deshpande dealing with matters such as gender and class in Indian society receive little attention. This binary opposition of postcolonial theory insists on the connection of the subjectivity of postcolonial cultures to their erstwhile occupiers and seem to insist that postcolonial societies do nothing but search for or mourn the loss of pre-colonial identities and resist colonizers. It is almost as if postcolonial societies do not write out of their own needs emerging from particular space-time but only write back to the empire.

Mukherjee argues that this binary framing is reductive and disparaging. Using Aijaz Ahmad, he argues that the category postcolonial is over determined and does not account for the fact that cultural productions arise out of the desire to interrogate the native society's own ideologies, class structures, familial ideologies, body and sexuality. Hence, Mukherjee stresses on the need to get out of this binary set by postcolonial criticism.

Mukherjee uses Bhaktin to further her argument. Taking up Indian literature as a particular example of post colonial literature, he states that literature is in a "dialogic" relation with other social discourses that circulate in a society. Postcolonialism is just one of the several dialogic stances. To ignore the rest is to ignore the cultural and ideological work done by literary texts in their place of their production. When postcolonial theory focuses just on the aspects of the text that subvert or resist the colonizer, its unitary subject, it erases the Bhakhtian heteroglossia of social discourses in post colonial societies that arises from

conflicts of race, class, gender, language, religion, and ethnicity which according to Jameson forms the social ground of a text. Mukherjee states that postcolonial writers and their texts also possess a political unconscious (deliberately using the title of Jameson's seminal book) although Jameson forgets about social divisions when it comes to third world literature and declares that it is about "the experience of collectivity itself".

Mukherjee also stresses on the problems of the assumption in post colonial theory of the transparency of meaning in postcolonial texts and overt nature of their allegories. This on one hand gives too much interpretative power to the writer which should belong to the literary critic, and on the other, overlooks the communication problems that arise when texts of one culture is read by readers from another culture, as well as, " the mediations that take place between the writer's intention and the finished literary text." (Mukherjee, 35). This in turn leads to the scarcity of critical readings of postcolonial texts for their political unconscious, for their "strategies of contentment", "repressions", "ideological closure", "absences", "omissions" and "silences". Mukherjee in the rest of the essay attempts to present the ideological implications of such critical readings by analyzing Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* in terms of its "absences" and "strategies of containment".

UNIT 16 (C): Interrogating the "socio-ideological" imperatives of Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable

Published in 1935, *Untouchable* is a canonical text of Indian writing in English and has been lauded since it's publication for giving voice to the downtrodden sections of the Indian demographic, often referred to as "the untouchables". Infact, Anand himself stated that his purpose in writing the novel was to arouse *Karuna* or compassion for fellow beings and thereby bring social change. However, Mukherjee interjects that it is ultimately the representation of untouchables by an upper class, upper caste kshatriya Hindu, no matter, a Marxist, hence represents this gaze. Thus the novel erases " the voice of the untouchable community as a dissonant discourse in the Indian social fabric." (Mukherjee, 36) This absence is substituted by the voice of the nationalist bourgeoisie "speaking for" the untouchables and it is these displacements and substitutions that constitute "the political unconscious" of the text. Such erasure is true of the work of Marxist writers as well because radical geopolitics do not translate to radical texts and often despite the political intention,

end up subordinating the culture and politics of the people they seek to represent. Untouchable is one such text. Mukherjee does a comparative study of Anand's *Untouchable* with texts written by Dalit contemporaries of Anand to make it clear that no Dalit could have written this book. The hero in the novel is incapable of thinking his own thoughts and making his own decisions. The text presents the protagonist Bakha, as a mere recipient of others actions and discourses. The novel uses such words for him as "naive", "servile", "humble", "resigned" etcetera and frequently compares him to animals such as an Arab horse or a black bear. He is represented as being devoid of the superior instinct of a self-conscious man. Although he is frequently associated with fire, the text douses that fire in him. Furthermore, the novel suggests that the solutions to Bakha's misery can only come through a change of heart among the upper caste Hindus l, through the work of individuals like Mahatma Gandhi or through the magic of technology and not through strategic action on part of Bakha and others like him. Therefore the textual discourse can be called patronizing and recalls back to Spivak's observation that bourgeois discourse presents the subaltern as an object of knowledge.

Mukherjee states that it is this refusal on part of the text to consider the possibility of strategic action on Bakha's part that one must look for the repressions and omissions of the text. The dousing of the spirit of fire in Bakha should be read as the "symbolic containment of a deep fear of violent destruction of the status quo through the hands of India's untouchable minorities who constituted one fifth of India's population at the historical juncture the text describes" (Mukherjee, 38). The contradiction in the text is the denial of power and agency to backup and this absence at the centre of the text recalls Jamesn's notion of "absent cause" and Macherey's idea of the play of history beyond its edges, encroaching on those edges.

In fact Mukherjee suggests that what the text tries to replace, repress and deny are the actions and discourses of the "untouchables" themselves at a crucial period in India's freedom struggle. In doing this the novel closely aligns itself with the version of nationalist historiography. Ranajit Guha had noted Indian nationalism's narrativization of history was a spiritual biography of the Indian elite, where the elite were seen as the promoters of the cause of the people and not as exploiters and oppressors. Thus this version of history ignored the virulent critique of Gandhi and other leaders of the Indian National Congress made by Dalits such as Dr BR ambedkar and BC Mandal. The novel also provides the Gandhian version of the narrative of his fast unto death in September 1932: to protest against separate electorates in the councils for depressed classes under the new constitution. However what is not

mentioned in Gandhi or in the novel is that the depressed classes themselves had asked for these separate councils and no less than 16 deputations were made to the Simon Commission that came to India in 1928. Thus this reality is different from the claims of Gandhi and the National Congress party about working in the best interests of the "untouchables". In fact Gandhi's fast was seen as a political blackmail by the Dalit leadership and ultimately Gandhi and the Dalit leadership reached a agreement and signed the Poona pact. All of these events are left out of nationalist historiography as well as Anand novel.

Mukherjee notes nationalist history, Gandhi and Anand all represent the "untouchables" as mute passive figures whose problems are solved by the generosity of others. Although the novel seems to also undercut Gandhi's perspective by putting in the perspective of two other people, a Muslim lawyer and a Hindu journalist, Gandhi's version of the motivation of his fast is nonetheless allowed to stand. in any case the heteroglossia of the novel consists of middle class voices alone. This is a historical omission that Mukherjee explores in depth. The novel appropriates Bakha's subjectivity to suit the dominant discourse. Bakha hears of Gandhi fasting for the sake of the Bhangis and Chamars. However the real motivation as Ambhedkar and other Dalit leadership noted at the time was to force a helpless group of people to give up their constitutional safeguards. The untouchable leadership at that time protested by public acts of defiance such as burning of the manusmriti, mass scale conversions, publicized drawings and drinking of water from caste wells, and petitioning for admission of their children to public funded educational institutions. However Bakha does not hear of these things in the novel while managing to hear so much about Gandhi.

On similar note, Bakha's rejection of the option to convert to Christianity is also read by Mukherjee as an act of exorcism on part of the author especially since this too is historically incorrect. There were several mass conversions of untouchables at this time and many used the threat of conversion to get better treatment from upper caste Hindus. The novel overlooks this to present Colonel Hutchinson, the chief of the local Salvation Army as a sort of useless comedic figure. Although the historical documents of the time testify to the political astuteness of the "untouchables" Anand's novel completely omits such oppositional activity of the period. Bakha's refusal to convert to christianity also refuses the possibility of him joining the political organizations of the untouchables. Furthermore just as the text does not provide space for the possibility of organized political action the text also removes possibility of revolutionary violence although it was very much the reality of contemporary politics.

Hence, Mukherjee concludes that "the text successfully contains the realities of the volatile social order of this period of Indian history. It reassures its bourgeois readers, both in India and in Britain where it was originally published, that the simmering unrest among the untouchables would not lead to a violent destabilization of the status quo. oh" (Mukherjee, 42). The untouchable remains mute, an object of bourgeois discourses about him. Thus in the end of the novel Bakha decides to obey Gandhi at least until the flush toilet comes to his rescue. Thus, either the Mahatma or the machine can lift him from his state of subjection. This ending is extremely convenient because on one hand one can rest assured that Bakha will not go on cleaning the latrines and taking abuse from upper caste Hindus, while at the same time the narrative ends his disruptive potentiality and the reality of protest undertaken by many like him.

Mukherjee ends by detailing out instances of continued militant style protest by "untouchables" well into the middle-late twentieth century, saying that the "untouchables" battles for justice and equality continues in India. Dalits protested against the upper caste Hindu version of Ramayana as telecast on the Indian television by going on strike in several cities of northern India, they staged a massive rally in Bombay when high cast Hindus tried to force a ban on doctor BR Ambedkar's highly critical book on Hinduism, and the fact that they have organized themselves under the banner of Dalit Panthers a name itself that symbolizes their mood of militancy .Mukherjee writing when the term Dalit was just gaining currency in critical and political discourses explains it as "ground down". (Mukherjee, 43).

The text *Untouchable* remains a nationalist bourgeois text that erases the active agency of the marginalized people, Hence it is imperative to study the text by comparing it with those provided by Dalits themselves. It must be noted that the Indian freedom movement and its discourse of struggle against the colonizer celebrated by post colonial theory was itself also seen as oppressive and exclusionary by many segments of Indian society. Ambedkar describe the Indian freedom movement as the movement of "capitalists, landlords, money lenders and reactionaries".

CONCLUSION

The main critiques of postcolonial theory are summarised by Mukherjee in her concluding section. They are as follows: when postcolonial theory constructs a unitary colonized consciousness it does so on the basis of literary productions of the nationalist bourgeoisie and ignores the complicity of these productions in hegemonic discourses. In the case of India the discourse of resistance to the colonizer hides its own privileged position by writing out or misrepresenting those resisting its claim to glory as Mukherjee has tried to show through her reading of the text *Untouchable*. So if post colonial critics intend to create a critical practice that can speak directly to the geographically, culturally and economically marginalized peoples themselves they will have to pay attention to the political unconscious of the texts they study. Particularly attention needs to be paid to the class, taste, race, gender and ethnic affiliations of postcolonial writers themselves and how these are mediated into their texts. Such a reading can only be done by moving out of the binary frames used by postcolonial theories that simply present the modality as confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized, which erases the local and specific concerns expressed in these literatures particularly their dialogue with their fellow citizens. Additionally, the creation of a unitary postcolonial subject erases the difference between and within postcolonial societies and replaces it with the difference between the centre and the margin, thus, leaving no space for the consideration of issues that confront postcolonial societies today.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss how postcolonial critic's creation of a theory that is applicable globally is counter-intuitive?
2. Postcolonial theory creates a unitary discourse that stands in the place of culturally discursive heterogeneity. Discuss.
3. Discuss how ideologies of colonialism was employed differently, experienced differently and the product of a dialectic.
4. Discuss the ways the novel Untouchable erases the voice of the untouchable community as a dissonant discourse in the Indian social fabric?
5. Untouchable is a text that erases the active agency of the marginalised people and reveals the cracks of postcolonial analysis. Discuss

6. What according to Mukherjee constitutes the political unconscious of a text? Discuss with reference to her essay.

Short-Answer Type Questions

1. Mention two major problems with postcolonial theory identified by Arun P Mukherjee.
2. Why is postcolonial theory's exclusive focus on the essentialised native's resistance to the colonizer politically regressive?
3. What is the problem with essentialising the native?
4. Name the two shared concerns of all postcolonial societies according to postcolonial theory as identified by Mukherjee.
5. What action according to Mukherjee should be taken on the basis of Foucault's warning against ready-made synthesis?
6. Name three binary oppositions created by post-colonial theory.

7. How is heteroglossia erased out of texts by postcolonial analysis?
8. What is the problem with the assumption of transparency of meaning in post-colonial texts?

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