

Literary criticism

Literature



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LITERARY CRITICISM LITERATURE - What is literature? Literate/ literacy - able to read/write Origin- from Latin “ litteratura” (letter) - literature with the small ‘ l’ Literature - piece of writing/printed information on a particular subject - literature with the big ‘ L’ Literature - pieces of writing that are valued as works of art eg. Novels, plays, poems (contrast to technical books/ scientific/ academic writings) - Literary - connected with literature eg Literary Criticism; Literary Theory - Literal - the basic or usual meaning of a word/phrase (compare to figurative language eg. Metaphor, irony, allegory) Literature? In a broad sense – to mean compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations express emotions, analyze and advocate ideas. ♦- Literature - helps us grow - personally, intellectually – ‘ opens doors’ to a wide world/new experiences – develops our imagination, increases understanding, power of sympathy – see the beauty of the world around us – links us with the cultural, philosophical, religious world – recognize human dreams/struggles in different time and place – develop mature sensibility, compassion for living beings – appreciate the beauty of order/arrangement – It exercises our emotions through concern, sympathy, interest, excitement, tension, regret, fear, laughter. Hope etc. – Through experiences in reading. Literature shapes our goal and values by clarifying our own identities-positively through acceptance of the admirable in humans and negatively through rejection of the sinister. – Literature — can also serve as a guide to life/ inculcate moral and ethical values and provides good examples to emulate. Whereas the negative examples serve as a reminder.

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY THEORY/ CRITICISM 1. Literary Theory - A set of principles or assumptions upon which our interpretation of a text is based.

Our personal literary theory is our conscious or unconscious development of

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a mind-set (values, aesthetics, morals etc.) concerning our expectations when reading any type of literature. - To articulate this framework and piece together the various elements of our practical criticism into a coherent, unified body of knowledge is our literary theory. - Literary theory offers a variety of methodologies for us to interpret a text from different viewpoints. - The importance of literary theory (Bressler 1999)

1. Literary theory assumes that there is no such thing as an innocent reading of a text. Whether our response are emotional and spontaneous or well-reasoned and highly structured, all such interactions with and to a text are based on some underlying factors that cause us to respond to the text in a particular fashion. What elicits these responses or how a reader makes sense out of a text is at the heart of literary theory.
2. Because our reactions to any text have theoretical bases, all readers must have a literary theory. The methods we use to frame our personal interpretations of any text directly involve us in the process of literary criticism and theory, automatically making us literary critics.
3. Because many readers' literary theory is more often than not unconscious, incomplete, ill-informed, and eclectic, their interpretations can easily be illogical, unsound and haphazard. A well-defined, logical, and clearly articulated theory enables readers to consciously develop their own personal methods of interpretation, permitting them to order, clarify, and justify their appraisals of a text in a consistent and logical manner. - The benefit of understanding literary theory - ... theory can help us learn to see ourselves and our world in valuable new ways, ways that can influence how we educate our children, both as parents and teachers; how we view television, from the nightly news to situation comedies; how we behave as voters and consumers; how we react to others with whom we do not agree

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on social, religious, and political issues; and how we recognize and deal with our own motives, fears and desires. And if we believe that human productions — not just literature but also, for example, film, music, art, science, technology, and architecture — are outgrowths of human experience and therefore reflect human desire, conflict, and potential, then we can learn to interpret those productions in order to learn something important about ourselves as a species. Critical theory, I think you will find, provides excellent tools for that endeavor, tools that not only show us our world and ourselves through new and valuable lenses but can also strengthen our ability to think logically, creatively, and with a good deal of insight. (Lois Tyson 2006) - Usage of the theory — ‘ see the world through the lens of the theory’ Since there are many ways of seeing the world, critical theories compete with one another for dominance from social, educational, cultural aspects. Each theory seems to offer itself as the most accurate means of understanding human experience. These theories have a strong political dimension because they offer different interpretations of history and current events. - Differences in the theories — even within a single theory there are disagreements which result in the emergence of different schools of thought. ‘ The history of critical theory is, in effect, the history of an ongoing debate among its own advocates as well as an ongoing debate with the advocates of other theories. 2. Literary Criticism â–ª ... Overall term for studies concerned with defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating works of literature. (M. H. Abrams) â–ª Matthew Arnold, a 19th century literary critic “ A disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world” Therefore: L. C. is a disciplined activity that attempts to study, analyze, interpret and

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evaluate a work of art (literary text) — Theoretical criticism — formulates theories and principles regarding the nature and value of literary works. Through these principles, theoretical criticism provides the necessary framework for practical criticism. M. H. Abrams - T. C. ...proposes an explicit theory of literature, in the sense of general principles, together with a set of terms, distinctions, and categories, to be applied to identifying and analyzing works of literature, as well as the criteria by which these works and their writers are to be evaluated. The earliest, and enduringly important, treatise of theoretical criticism was Aristotle's Poetics (4th century BC) — Practical Criticism (applied criticism) — applies the theories of theoretical criticism to a particular work. A practical critic explains, evaluates or justifies a work of literature. — Distinction between an absolutist critic and the relativistic critic. 1) Absolutist critic — who posits that there is only one theory a critic may utilize when evaluating a work. 2) Relativistic critic — utilize various and even contradictory theories in critiquing a literary work. 3) The basis is for either kind of critic or any form of criticism, is literary theory. Without theory, practical criticism could not exist. 3. The Function Of A Critic A common meaning of criticism is ' fault finding'. The most valuable criticism is not that looks at faults only but that which calls our attention to interesting things going on in art. W. H. Auden — so far as I am concerned, a critic can do me one or more of the following services: 1) Introduce me to authors or works of which I was unaware 2) Convince me that I have undervalued an author or work because I had not read them carefully enough 3) Show me relations between works of different ages and cultures which I could never have seen for myself because I do not know enough and never shall 4) Give a " reading" of a work which increases my understanding of it 5) Throw light

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upon the process of artistic “ making” 6) Throw light upon the relation of art to life, science, economics, ethics, politics, religion etc. 4. The Growth of Literary Criticism

1. Plato (427 -347 BC) In his works such as Republic and others, he laid the foundation of philosophy and literature: the concepts of truth, beauty, goodness, reality, ontology (nature and relations of beings), epistemology (how we know, what we know), ethics and morality.
2. Aristotle (384 — 322 BC) His well-known Poetics, is a discussion of literary theory used until the present - definition of tragedy — hamartia (heroes downfall), catharsis (purging of audience’s emotions)
3. Horace (65 — 8BC)
4. Longinus (1st Century A. D.)
5. Dante Alighieri (1265- 1321) - the middle ages, Italy
6. Sir Philip Sydney (1554 — 1586) —Renaissance
7. John Dryden (1631 — 1700) — the Restoration period
8. Alexander Pope (1688 — 1744)
9. William Wordsworth (1770- 1850) Romanticism. Published Lyrical Ballads- redefines poetry
10. Hippolyta Adelphi Taine (1828 — 1893) Victorian era. Published The History of English Literature in 1863. Advocated a historical approach to literary analysis.
11. Matthew Arnold (1822 — 1888) Victorian era —poetry and humanity
12. Henry James (1843 — 1916) focuses on novel

5. Literary Theories

1. New Criticism/ Formalism
2. Psychoanalytic criticism
3. Reader-response criticism
4. Deconstructive criticism / Deconstruction
5. Marxist/sociological criticism
6. Feminist/Gender criticism
7. New Historicism
8. Structuralism/ Structuralist criticism
9. Postcolonial criticism
10. Cultural criticism
11. African American criticism
12. Lesbian, Gay and Queer Criticism
13. Postmodern criticism/ postmodernism
14. Eco criticism

Critical Approaches to Literature: (According to Kennedy & Gioia 2002)

1. Formalist criticism
2. Biographical criticism
3. Historical criticism
4. Psychological criticism
5. Mythological criticism
6. Sociological criticism
7. Gender criticism

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8. Reader- Response criticism 9. Deconstructionist criticism 10. Cultural Studies

TO CONCLUDE: - Literary criticism is a natural human response to literature - People will ponder, discuss, analyze text that interests them - Informal criticism e. g. of friends talking about a literary text — informal, casual, subjective. Now —academic-- more disciplined- scholars - Literary critics have borrowed from other disciplines; e. g. Linguistics, history, psychology, political science, sociology etc. - Mass media critics tend to evaluate which work is worth reading - But serious literary criticism — helps us to better understand a work

THE LITERARY THEORIES: 1. FORMALIST CRITICISM (NEW CRITICISM)

1. Emphasizes the work as a self-contained, independent unit, which is to be studied in itself, not as part of some larger context such as the author's life or a historical period.
2. Named after John Crowe Ransom's book *The New Criticism* (1941) proposed that a text is a concrete object that can be analyzed to discover its meaning independent of the author's intention or emotional state or values of either author or reader.
3. It is also called the New Criticism because it replaced biographical-historical criticism that was dominant in the 19th century. It was a common practice at that time to interpret a text by studying the author's life and times to determine authorial intention (the meaning the author intended the text to have). The author's letters, diaries, and essays were combed for evidence of authorial intention as well as autobiographies, biographies and history books. In an extreme form, biographical-historical criticism seemed to examine the text's biographical-historical background instead of examining the text.
4. New Critics sees a literary text as a unique form of human knowledge that needs to be examined on its own terms. It refers to its own intrinsic value, not on social or biographical etc. aspects. It sees elements in

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the text itself. It focuses on the words in the text itself rather on the author's life/historical background. 5. "The text and text alone" approach. Close reading. explication/line by line plot, characterization, point of view, setting, diction, imagery, structure

FORMALIST CRITICAL QUESTIONS - How is the work structured or organized? How is the plot? - Who is the narrator? How is the narrator/character revealed to the audience? - Who are the major/minor characters? - What are the setting- time/ place? - What kind of language is used? What images, symbols, metaphors appear in the text?

2. READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

1. R-R criticism focuses on readers' response to literary texts. The "meaning" of a literary work is not merely something put into the work by the writer: the "meaning" is an interpretation created or constructed or produced by the reader and the writer.

2. Stanley Fish: *Is There a Text in This class?* (1980) "Interpretation is not the art of construing, but of constructing. Interpreters do not decode poems; they make them."

3. In R-R criticism, the reader is active, not passive, during the reading process. Both reader and text interact (share a transactional experience)

4. The text is a stimulus for eliciting various past experiences, thoughts, ideas of the reader (real life experiences/ past reading experiences). The text shapes the reader's experiences; selecting, limiting and ordering ideas that best conform to the text.

READER-RESPONSE CRITICAL QUESTIONS - What is your initial emotional reaction to the text? How do you feel after reading it? - Do you find yourself agreeing to or responding differently at any point? - At what places in the text do you often have to make inferences, interpret, and fill in gaps? - How do you respond to the characters/ the speaker/ the narrator? How do you feel about them? - What places/ aspects of the text had caused you to do some serious

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thinking? - If you have read a text more than once, how has your second and subsequent reading differed from the earlier reading? 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL

(PSYCHOANALYTIC) CRITICISM 3. 1 Introduction 1. This theory has its roots in the work of Sigmund Freud and his followers. Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis — which is a medical technique or a method of therapy for the treatment of the mentally ill or distressed patients which would help them to understand the source of the symptoms. 2. It is the application of the psychological principles of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in analysis of literary texts. The analysis would examine the author and the writings in the framework of Freudian psychology. A central doctrine of Freudian psychology is the Oedipus complex, the view that all males (females?) unconsciously wish to displace their fathers and to sleep with their mothers (?). According to Freud, hatred for the father and love of the mother, normally repressed, may appear disguised in dreams. Works of art, similar to dreams are disguised versions of repressed wishes 3. Example — In the play Hamlet, Hamlet delays killing Claudius because Claudius (who has killed Hamlet's father and married Hamlet's mother) has done exactly what Hamlet himself wanted to do. For Hamlet to kill Claudius would be to kill him. 4.

Psychological criticism can also turn from the author and the work to the reader, seeking, to explain why we, as readers/audience, respond in certain ways. 3. 2 Historical Background 1. Since the 4th Century B. C., Aristotle commented on the effects of tragedy on the audience: through pity and fear, tragedy created a catharsis of these emotions. 2. Matthew Arnold- literature can make us better people. he believed that poetry can “inspire and rejoice the reader” 3. William Wordsworth- said that the impulse to write comes from “emotion recollected in tranquility” 4. Coleridge- described ‘creativity’
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as “ the living power and prime agent of all human perception” 5. The above are examples of questions/theories of a psychological nature. They try to explain the growth, development, and structure of the human personality. In the late 19th century, Sigmund Freud introduced his theories about the workings of the human psyche, its formation, organization and problems. 6. Freud’s students, e. g. Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, would build on his ideas to probe the workings of the human psyche. 7. In the 1950’s. Northrup Frye developed Jung’s ideas where it is applicable to literature. 8. Jacques Lacan — new linguistic theories- said that language shapes our unconscious and conscious minds, thereby giving us our identity. 9. Contributions from Jung, Lacan, etc. plus Freud’s — it is possible to discover in literary works what the author had not stated directly or had not realized what he had said. Possible to “ read between(beneath) the lines” 10. There is an absence of the aesthetic theory (science/study of beauty or perception of what is beautiful and meaningful), nevertheless, it can be used in combination or to complement other literary theories. 3. 3 Sigmund Freud 1. Worked with hysterics, neurotic patients. Theorized that the root of their problems was psychological, not physical. Believed that suppressed incestuous desires, fantasies and wishful thinking had a part in neuroses. 2. He developed the Model of the Human Psyche: The Dynamic Model — the human mind consists of the conscious (rational) and the unconscious (irrational) which controls a major part of man’s actions. 3. The unconscious - receive, stores hidden desires, fears, ambitions, and passions. It is a dynamic system that stores biographical memories and also suppressed and unresolved conflicts. These disguised truths and desires may be revealed through the conscious. Inevitably, these desires are revealed through dreams, art, literary works, <https://assignbuster.com/literary-criticism/>

and accidental slips of the tongue “ Freudian Slips” 4. The Economic Model — helps to govern the human psyche :- a) The pleasure principle — craves pleasure, instant gratification, ignoring moral and sexual boundaries of society. b) The reality principle — conforms to society standards and regulations on pleasure. Keep the pleasure principle in check. 5. The Tripartite Models - the psyche is divided into: A) Id — the irrational, unconscious — fulfills the urges of the pleasure principle. It contains the libido — source of psychosexual desires. Id operates on impulse, without any controlling will to get immediate satisfaction of desires B) Ego — the rational, logical part of the mind. It operates on the reality principle — regulate the instinctual desires of the Id. C) Superego — part of the mind that acts as an internal censor-help to make moral judgment under social pressures. Representing society’s moral norms/restrictions, the superego becomes a filtering agent - suppress the desires and instincts forbidden by society and thrusting them back into the unconscious. Superego manifests itself through punishment. May create an unconscious sense of guilt and fear. D) It is left to the ego to mediate between the instinctual (esp. sexual) of the Id and social pressure from the superego. 6. Freud’s Pre-Oedipal Developmental Phases — in early childhood we go through 3 phases: a) Oral phase — suck mother’s breast, libido activated. Mouth becomes the erotogenic zone (sucking thumbs, later kissing) b) Anal stage — anus becomes the object of pleasure when children learn the delight of defecation and learning that they are independent from their mothers. The anus becomes the erotogenic zone- when turn sadistic, expelling and destroying through defecation. As of expressing anger and excitement upon discovering their freedom from their mothers. By withholding feces, they learn they can control others! c) Phallic <https://assignbuster.com/literary-criticism/>

stage — child's sexual desire/libido is directed towards the genitals when the child learns the pleasure from stimulating one's sexual organ. At this stage, the pleasure principle controls the child. Child — sadistic, self-centered, cares for pleasure only. To grow up as a normal adult - the child must develop a sense of maleness/femaleness, which can be achieved through Oedipus or Electra complex.

3. 4 Freud's Oedipus, Castration, Electra Complexes

a) Oedipus Complex — during the child's late infantile stage (3-6 yrs.) the infant male has an erotic attachment to his mother. (Unconsciously desires for sexual union with his mother). But he has a rival: father. At the phallic stage and aware of his own erogenous organ, he perceives the attention given to the mother by the father as sexual.

b) Castration Complex- the child must pass through this stage for normal sexual development. The boy knows that he has a penis like his father whereas his mother and sister do not. He is prevented from having incestuous desires for his mother by the fear of castration by his father. He represses his sexual desire, identifies with his father and hopes to possess a woman like his father (transition to manhood)

c) Electra Complex - transition from a girl to a normal woman. The young child is also erotically attracted to her mother and recognizes a rival (the father). Unconsciously, she realizes she is already castrated. She turns to her father for her desires (penis). After the seduction of her father fails, she goes back to her mother and identifies with her. She hopes to possess a man like her mother. Through her relationship with a man, her desire for a penis (penis envy) will be appeased.

3. 5 Freud's Significance of Dreams In The Interpretation of Dreams (1900): in the process of growing up to manhood or womanhood, the child has stored memories of repressed sexual desire, anger, guilt etc. in the unconscious. The unconscious will affect the

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conscious in the form of inferiority feelings, irrational thoughts and dreams and nightmares. Even though the conscious has suppressed the desires etc. into the unconscious, it can redirect and reshape the concealed wishes/desires into acceptable social activities—in writings. The psyche opens a window to the id by allowing the softened and acceptable desires etc. to seep into the conscious through: a) Displacement — e. g. switching a feeling of hatred for someone to something else in a dream b) Condensation — one may consolidate feelings/ anger/emotion to a variety of people in a sentence, phrase or symbol.

3. 6 Freud's Psychoanalysis and Literature -

When repressed feelings etc. cannot be released through dreams, the ego must act and block any outward response. The ego and id becomes involved in an internal battle/conflict called neurosis. Through Freud's psychoanalysis, it is hoped to identify the unresolved conflicts that caused the neurosis. - According to Freud, a literary work is the external expression of the author's unconscious mind. Therefore, the work must be treated like a dream, applying psychoanalytic principles to the text to uncover the author's hidden motivations and repressed desires.

3. 7 Application of Psychoanalysis

Character Analysis

- o What are the main traits of the character?
- o How are those traits revealed?
- o What does the narrator reveal about the character?
- o Does the character change? If so, how and why?
- o Does the character come to understand something not understood at the outset?
- o How does the character view himself/herself?
- o How is the character viewed by other characters?
- o Do the two (above) views agree?
- o What images are associated with the character?
- o What are the main symbols?
- o What symbols are connected with the character?
- o Does the character have any interior monologues/dreams?
- o Are there any conflicts between what is

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observable and what is going on in the character's mind? o Where do the characters act in ways that are inconsistent with the way they are described by the narrator or perceived by other characters? o How can you explain a characters irrational behavior? What causes? What motivation? 3. 7. 1

Others o What similarities do you find among the characters, situations, and settings of the text with other works that you have read? o Is the narrative like any classical myths you know? o Does the protagonist reject some part of his/her personality and project it onto someone / something else? o Does the character have a realistic and accurate sense of self? 3. 7. 2

Critical Questions- on the Author - What connections can you infer between your knowledge of the author's life and the behavior of characters in his or her text? - How does your understanding of the characters' actions, relationships, motivation, attitude, behavior in a literary work help you understand the mental world and imaginative life of the author? - How does a text- its images, symbols, metaphors etc. — reveal the psychological motivations of its characters or the psychological mindset of its author? - How can a psychological or psychoanalytic approach to a particular text be combined with another theory e. g. formalist, biographical, feminist, Marxist?

3. 8 Alternative approaches: â-ª What unconscious motives are operating in the main character(s); what core issues are illustrated? (the unconscious — repressed desires, conflicts, guilt) â-ª Are there any oedipal dynamics present? Is it possible to relate a character's patterns of adult behavior to early experiences in the family as portrayed in the text? â-ª How can characters' behavior, events, images etc. be explained in psychoanalytic concepts e. g. crisis, sexuality, regression, fears of death, love, romance etc.? â-ª In what ways can we interpret a text as analogous to a dream? â-ª

What does the literary work suggest about the psychological being of its author? (psychobiography) 4. MARXIST/SOCIOLOGICAL CRITICISM 4. 1

Introduction - A form of historical criticism which sees history primarily as a struggle between socioeconomic classes and it sees literature as the product of economic forces of the period. - Economics is the “ base” or “

infrastructure”. On this base rests a “ superstructure” of ideology (law, politics, philosophy, religion, arts, and literature) which reflect the interests of the dominant class. Thus literature is a material product, which is produced to be consumed. - Marxist/Sociological criticism— examine

literature in the social, economic, political, cultural context in which the text is written - relationship between the artist and society - analyze the content of the text - what sociological/cultural/economic etc. values the is

implicitly/explicitly stated in the text 4. 2 Karl Marx - Background - German philosopher, economist, sociologist of 19th century - Born 1818 - Trier,

Germany - Jewish descent - 1835 - University of Bonn - not serious. 1836- his father sent him to U of Berlin - Wrote poems/comic novels/tragic plays/ also wrote on metaphysics - 1842 - Became a journalist in an opposition

newspaper- deemed subversive-banned - Married Jenny Von Westphalen - daughter of city councilor in Trier - 1843 - emigrated to Paris-journal — wrote

on politics and law - Together with Frederick Engels - wrote “ Paris

Manuscripts” (humanistic communism) - 1845 Engels - visits to London -

wrote ‘ The German Ideology’ - 1846 - Expelled from Paris. Went to Brussels - Communist Correspondence Comm. - 1848 - Communist League formed.

Engels-wrote The Communist Manifesto - The Manifesto called for workers’ uprising/result in revolutions - France/Germany - Exiled to London - stayed

with family - financial difficulties/sick wife/death of his children - He was also

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sick - boils from head to foot - Withdrew from political activities - wrote on economic issues - 1867 - the well-known *Das Kapital* — condemned the free market (*laissez-faire*) capitalist system - 1881 - wife died. 1883 - daughter died - March 1883 - Marx died in his armchair

4. 3 Marx's Theories o Address social problems from the economic aspect o Concerned with physical/material reality of man o Not about truth, virtue, sin or existence of God

1. In Marxism, economic conditions are known as material circumstances while social, political, ideological settings generated by the material circumstances are known as historical situation. 2. Any changes in material condition would result in changes in class structure. Class struggle for economic/political/social advantage. 3. The basis of society is the economic system. Other aspects like religion, culture etc. are parts of the superstructure which depends on the base (economy). 4. Dialectic materialism — class struggle within society - borrowed the term from Hegel's philosophy of thesis — antithesis — synthesis concept * Dialectic - ideas formed in intellectual debate * Thesis - proposition * Antithesis - challenges/counter proposition * Synthesis - revised proposition

5. Thesis — ruling class - monopolizes factors of production - 'bourgeois' 'capitalist system' Antithesis — working class 'proletariat' Synthesis — outcome - the new working class overthrows the ruling elite and restores a new order/system 'communist state'. Quote: In the *Communist Manifesto* "... the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.... A fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes. 4. 4

Terms/concepts of Marxist criticism 1. Ideology - system/beliefs in society. Indoctrinated through cultural conditioning or use of force or coercion. E. g. <https://assignbuster.com/literary-criticism/>

Communism/capitalism/environmentalism/nationalism/patriotism Critics can explain literature in any era in terms of the economic or ideological situation specific to that era. 2. Hegemony - related to ideology- enforces the society's social/collective consciousness. E. g. the ruling elite impose ideals on the working class - wages/property they could earn. 3. Alienation — distance of individual workers from the final product/esp. in division of labor (capitalism). Worker could not see the finished product. No sense of individual achievement. 4. Commodification - in a free market system, a commodity is produced for exchange (has value) Humans/workers are regarded as a 'thing' or commodity for the economic functions that they perform. 5. Bourgeoisie — A term by Marx which refers to the owners of the means of production in a society. (land, labour, capital) 6. Proletariat — Marxist term for — workers in society 7. Exchange value — An assessment of the worth (value) of something based on what it can be traded or sold for. 8. Use value — an appraisal of something based on what it can do 9. False consciousness — People's acceptance of an unfavourable social/economic system without questioning, that is, as the logical way for things to be. 10. Superstructure — The social, political, and ideological systems (values , arts, legal system etc) generated by the base (methods of production/economy)

4. 5 Questions for a Marxist Analysis: ^a Who are the powerful people in the society depicted in the text? ^a Who are powerless people/ are they depicted with equal attention? ^a Why do the powerful people have that power? Why is it denied to others? ^a Do you find evidence of class conflict and class struggle? ^a Do you find repression and manipulation of workers by owners? ^a Is there evidence of alienation and fragmentation? ^a Does the bourgeoisie in the text, either consciously or unconsciously routinely repress and manipulate

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less powerful groups? – Do you find tools for repression - news, media, laws, etc. – What does the setting tell you about the distribution of power and wealth? – Is there evidence of conspicuous (clearly seen) consumption? – Does the society depicted value things for their usefulness, for their potential for resale or trade, or for their power to convey social status? – Do you find in the text itself evidence that it is a product of the culture in which it is originated? – What ideology is revealed? - Racism, sexism, nepotism, imperialism? – Does the text support the ideology or condemn it? – Any overlapping of other literary criticism eg feminism? – Are you aware of your own acceptance of any social, economic, or political practices that involve control or oppression of others?

4. 6 Other Critical Questions - What social forces/institutions are portrayed in the text? What is the author's attitude towards them? - What political/economic elements appear in the text? How important are they in determining/influencing the lives of the characters? - What economic issues appear in the text? How important are economic factors in influencing the motivation/behavior of the characters? - To what extent are the lives of the characters influenced /determined by social, political and economic forces/conditions? Are the characters aware of these factors?

5. FEMINISM/FEMINIST CRITICISM

5. 1 The Issue in Feminism

- o Men, either consciously or unconsciously have oppressed women, by allowing them little, or no voice in social, political and economic matters. A patriarchal society dominated by men.
- o By not giving an opportunity for women's voices, opinions, responses and writings, men have suppressed the female (women), defined what it means to be feminine and have devalued, devalued, and trivialized the female gender.
- o Men have made women as the " no significant other".

5. 2 Responses from Feminism - <https://assignbuster.com/literary-criticism/>

A need to change this degrading view of women as the 'no significant other'

- Every woman is a valuable person with the same privileges and rights as every man
- Women must assert their own voices in politics, society, education etc. E. g. debunking stereotyping of women in texts/republishing/rediscovering texts written by females but suppressed by males. Re-reading the works of male authors from the woman's point of view
- Through such changes, feminists hope to create a society where male and female voices are heard and valued.

5. 3 Background

1. Prejudice/ bias against women have its roots in Western culture. Even Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, states that "the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior, and the one rules and the other is ruled" Western culture/philosophy have labeled women as "imperfect and spiritually weak creatures"
2. A struggle for women's rights began in the 1700's. Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. She asserted on women's rights and rejected the patriarchal assumption that women are inferior to men.
3. Virginia Woolf published *A Room of One's Own* in 1919, declaring that men have and continue to treat women as inferiors. She cited an example of Shakespeare's sister who was also gifted but suppressed since she is a woman.
4. The Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War in the 1940's have delayed the development of feminist ideals.
5. Feminist voices arose in the 1960s along with political and social changes. Kate Millet published *Sexual Politics* in 1969 to change the ideological social characteristics of male and female. She states that 'a female is born but a woman is created'. Sex is determined by birth but gender is a social construct created by cultural ideals and norms e. g. boys must be aggressive and domineering while girls must be passive and humble. The ideology is

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transmitted through the mass media and literature. She reiterated that women must revolt against the power center of their culture i. e. male dominance. They must establish female discourse, literary studies and feminist criticism.

5. 4 Gynocriticism Analysis — from woman's view/experience

1. Images of the female body in the text. Could highlight how certain parts of the female anatomy become significant images/symbols in works written by women
2. Female language- differences between male/female languages. Do women speak/write differently from men?
3. Female psyche and its relationship to the writing process. Physical/psychological development? (Freud's psychoanalysis?)
4. Culture - role of women in society? How society shapes a women's role etc.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS FROM A FEMINIST ASPECT

- Author male or female?
- Role of women in the text?
- Female characters- protagonist/antagonist/minor/major role?
- Any stereotyping of women?
- Attitudes of men towards women?
- Author's attitude towards women?
- Author's background/culture influences his/her attitude?
- Feminine images/symbols used?
- Female characters speak/think different from males?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the representation of women (including men) reflect the place and time in which the text was written?
- How are relations between men and women or between the same sexes presented in the text?
- What role/s do men and women assume and perform and the consequences?
- Does the author present the text from within a predominantly male or female point of view/sensibility? What is the effects/result?
- How do the background/facts of the author's life relate to the presentation of men and women in the text?
- How do other works by the same author correspond to each other in their depiction of power relationships between men/women?

6. POSTCOLONIAL

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CRITICISM A. BACKGROUND - 15th century - European domination of the New World - England, Spain, France, Portugal — plundered human/natural resources - 19th century - Britain — largest imperial power - After WW II, gradual independence — India 1947 - 1980 — Britain lost colonies except a few

B. POST - COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM

1. Deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies.
2. Used by historians after the Second World War e. g. “ The post-colonial state” in discussion of the post-independence period.
3. Since the 1970’s, the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various effects of colonialization.
4. Post colonialism definition: an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself with particularly literature written in English in formerly colonized countries. It usually excludes literature that represents either British or American viewpoints and concentrates on works from colonized cultures in Asia, Africa, South America, including Australia and New Zealand. (Places that were once dominated by but outside of the white, male, European cultural, political, social and philosophical tradition.
5. Marxist critics- use the term “ third-world literature”.
6. Definition - investigates/discusses what happens when two cultures meet/clash and when one of them with its accompanying ideology empowers and deems itself superior to the other.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY

1. 1950’S — ending of colonial powers worldwide e. g. France ended its involvement in Indochina.
2. Alfred Sauvy — coined the term third world to represent countries that were philosophically, politically, and culturally not defined by Western metaphysics.
3. 1960’s — critics, philosophers, authors e. g. Frantz Fanon began publishing texts on postcolonial issues.
4. 1980’s — the term ‘ post-colonial ‘ and ‘ post colonialism’ appear in scholarly journals. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & <https://assignbuster.com/literary-criticism/>

Helen Tiffin wrote *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* in 1989. 5. Mid 1990's — the term had been firmly established in scholarly writing where 'post colonialism' refers to literature of cultures colonized by the British Empire. 6. Two schools of thought of post colonialism: A) Post colonialism — period of after the colonized societies/countries have become independent B) Post colonialism — referring to all the characteristics of a society/culture from time of colonization to the present. 7. PC is concerned with diverse issues e. g. nationalism, ethnicity, universality, feminism, language, education, history, resistance. It highlights the struggle that occurs when a culture is dominated by another. In interaction with the conquering culture, the colonized or indigenous culture is forced to go underground or be obliterated. 8. After colonization, the colonized people then write about the oppression and loss of cultural identity. How the colonized respond to changes in language, education, socio-economic matters etc. become the context and theories of PC. 9. Postcolonial theorists — Franz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The key text is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). He said that the Europeans tried to justify their conquests by the propaganda/belief called 'orientalism' (the creation of non-European stereotypes that suggested that 'orientals' were indolent, thoughtless, sexually immoral, unreliable. He said that human knowledge can be viewed from only one's political, ideological and cultural framework. No theory can be totally objective. Therefore, a writer in a colonized culture would ask questions: Who am I? How did I develop into the person that I am? To what country/countries /cultures am I linked to? In asking these questions, the colonized author is connecting him to historical roots, admitting a tension between these roots and the new

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culture or hegemony imposed on him and he confronts the fact that he an individual and a product of the social contract created by the dominant/colonizer's culture. 10. The writings of the author would be personal, political, ideological, painful, disturbing, enlightening etc. The result would be a message sent back to the Empire telling the imperials what they did wrong and how their ideology and hegemony damaged and suppressed the ideologies and cultures of the conquered. D. BASIC

PRINCIPLES 1. Colonizers physically conquer other territories and practice cultural colonization by replacing the practices/beliefs of the natives with their own values, systems, laws. It resulted in loss of the pre-colonial culture. 2. When the natives' own culture is forbidden or devalued, they see themselves as inferior to the colonizers. They 'hide' or abandon their culture and adopt or imitate the 'superior' culture. 3. Colonized natives practice 'mimicry' imitation of dress, behavior instead of resistance. 4. European colonizers asserted the superiority of their culture- they are civilized whereas the natives are backward/savage. They are Eurocentric (Eurocentrism), the standard for their culture which would be superior than the natives, lower status, the 'subaltern' 5. The practice of 'Othering'- viewing others as inferior. Sometimes, view the natives as evil or 'the demonic other'. 6. Sometimes, the 'other' is deemed to have natural beauty, becomes the 'exotic other' 7. The interaction of cultures created mixtures of native and colonial - process called as 'hybridity' or 'syncretism'. They are characterized by tensions and change - dynamic. E. POSTCOLONIAL TERMS

1. Cultural colonization- imposition of beliefs and social practices of the dominant power on the subjugated one, resulting in loss or changes of the native's culture. 2. Demonic other - the view that those who are different

form one are backward, savage and evil. 3. Double vision/ double consciousness — sense of being part of both the colonized and the colonizers, with conflicts and contrasts. Refers to both the indigenous people and later the settlers. (Ambivalence) 4. Eurocentrism — belief that European ideals are the standard by which all other cultures are to be measured and judged. 5. Exotic other - the view that those who are different from oneself have an inherent dignity and beauty, perhaps because of their undeveloped, natural state. 6. Hybridity/syncretism - the quality of cultures that characterized both the colonized and the colonizers. Marked by conflicts and dynamic. 7. Mimicry — imitation of dress, language etc. of the dominant culture by the oppressed people. 8. Neocolonialism — domination of a developing nation by international corporations, attracted by cheap labour and manipulable political systems. 9. Othering — belief that those who are different from oneself are inferior beings. 10. Subalterns — people of inferior status. Subaltern writers seek to make their marginalized cultures known and valued for their past and present.

7. BIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM 1. Deals with the interpretation of a literary text by looking into the author's life and times to determine authorial intention (what the author intended the text to be). 2. This criticism was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries before the advent of New Criticism (focuses on the text only) 3. Also known as historical-biographical criticism — involves the analysis of real historical events during the author's time, or when the text was written. 4. Literature is written by actual people and understanding an author's life can help us comprehend the text. A reader who reads the biography of an author can see how the author's life experiences and also the historical setting determine what the author will create. 5. We are not concerned with

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recreating the record of an author's life, but we can explicate his/her work by using the insight of the author's life/background. 6. Biographical data can be used to interpret/comprehend/amplify the meaning of the text but not to drown the text with irrelevant material! CRITICAL QUESTIONS - What influences - persons, ideas, events etc. — are evident in the author's life? - To what extent are the events described in the work a direct transfer of what had happened in the author's actual life? - What changes/modifications of the actual events has the writer made in the text? - Why might the author have altered his/her actual experience in the text? - What are the effects of the differences between actual events and literary transformation in the text? - What has the author revealed in the work about his/her thought, perception, emotion? What does this have to do with the author's literary development/career? GENRES Major Genres Genre = type/style 3 genres — 1. Prose fiction 2. Poetry/poem 3. Drama *usually classified as “imaginative literature” 1 genre - nonfiction prose 1. prose fiction - (narrative fiction) — myths, parables, romances, novels, short stories 2. poetry - brevity (few words) 3. drama/play — script/stage/audience/dialogue Non-fiction prose- news reports, articles, essays, -describe/present facts, judgments/opinion - Present truths of history, science, contemporary events etc. ***recent - diaries/journals — creative non-fiction ----- To understand the theory, you have to familiarize with the language each theory advocates — familiarize with the key concepts on which the theory is grounded.