

# METHODOLOGY OF LITERATURE

Study material

**II SEMESTER**

CORE COURSE (2011 Admission)

**V SEMESTER**

CORE COURSE (2012 Admission)

For

**BA ENGLISH**



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**  
**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O. MALAPPURAM, KERALA, INDIA - 673 635

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## **Module I**

### **Objectives:**

To acquaint the student with

1. The distinctive features of literature
2. Canon formation and marginalized literatures

### **Introduction**

Language and literature together with various performing arts and philosophy are considered to be part of Humanities. What is literature? There have been various attempts to define literature. It can be defined as

- a) imaginative writing
- b) writing which uses language in particular ways
- c) discourse which is non-pragmatic and self-referential.
- d) writing that is highly valued, non-objective, interpretative and value-based.
- e) writing that uses narrative to present human condition aesthetically.
- f) writing that is ideological.

It is clear from the above that a clear cut definition for literature is impossible. Literature is creative or imaginative writing in the sense that it is fiction. However, at a higher level the distinction between fact and fiction is questionable with no final solution. Literature includes factual writing, for e.g., literary essays are considered as literature but they carry factual explanations about life. Literature uses language in particular ways. It is thus viewed as a specialized mode of using language (especially by the Russian Formalists). According to this theory literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language and deviates systematically from every day speech. Literature may not have a use-value in the sense that biology textbooks have. It serves no immediate practical purpose. It may be referring to a general state of affairs. It uses highly embellished language that draws attention to itself (self-referential). It is considered to be different from certain other kinds of fiction (e.g., popular fiction) because of its peculiar use of language, that is, it is held in higher esteem. Literature is non-objective and hence subject to differing interpretations and value-based judgments. It uses the narrative mode to present ideas. Literature is ideological in that it has a largely concealed structure of values which informs it and connects it with the power structure and power relations of the society we live in.

### **Canon**

The term *canon* ('Kanon' in Greek signifies a measuring rod or a scale) was originally applied to the Christian religious texts in the middle ages which were designated by the church authorities as comprising the genuine Holy Scriptures. Later the term was used in literature to signify the list of secular literary works accepted as really written by a particular author. Thus we have "the Shakespeare Canon" "the Milton Canon" and so on. Now the phrase "literary canon" denotes the works of those authors/writers who are commonly accepted by authorities like the critics, scholars and teachers as major writers and which is often hailed as literary classics. Canon

thus refers to authorized texts. The canonical writers are the ones who, at a particular time are the most published, most discussed by critics and likely to be included in the curriculum.

The canon of literature, unlike that of religion, emerges by way of a gradual and unofficial consensus. It is tacit rather than open and has no clear cut boundaries. It is also subject to changes. New books could be included or excluded from it. The social process by which an author comes to be tacitly and durably accepted as canonical is called “canon formation”. The factors involved in canon formation are complex and disputed. Anyhow, it involves the acceptance of certain works by critics, scholars, teachers and authors with different viewpoints, the use of an author in curriculum and frequent references to the author in discussions within her/his community. All of this points to the fact that, the so-called ‘literary canon’, unquestioningly considered as the ‘great tradition’, has to be recognized as a construct, formed by particular ideologies at particular times. Many English writers of the twentieth century like T.S.Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf as well as present day writers like V.S.Naipaul and Salman Rushdie amongst others have achieved this status.

At anytime the boundaries of the canon remain unclear, within which some authors are central and others marginal. Some marginal authors later achieve central status. A notable example in twentieth century English literature is that of John Donne who achieved prominence because of the reevaluation made by T.S.Eliot and other New Critics. Once firmly established in the canon, it is very difficult for an author to be excluded from it.

Presently the canon has become an area of dispute. Opposition to the established canon has become an important area of concern for different types of critics like deconstructive, feminist and Marxist critics. The centre of the discussion is what book to be selected for the curriculum. An important accusation is that the standard canon represents the dominant white, male, European Middle to upper class ideology. Gauri Viswanathan in her *Masks of Conquests: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1989) has conclusively shown that the canon in English is indirectly related to British imperialism (a system in which one country rules over other one by force).

The canon provokes a lot of debate because since the 19<sup>th</sup> century it has been viewed as something in which the language achieves its finest expressions. Critics like Mathew Arnold and F.R.Leavis viewed literature as providing a model for social harmony and cultural integration. The theory revolution of the 1970s however seriously challenged the ideology and concept that formed the basis for canon. Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), Harold Bloom’s *The Western Canon* (1995), Dinesh D’souza’s *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex in Campuses* (1991) have all strongly defended pluralism and multiculturalism against elitism and hierarchism in canon formation.

## **Module II**

**Objectives:**

1. To acquaint the student with the various theoretical schools and approaches.
2. To enable the student to read literature using critical tools of different theoretical schools
3. To equip the student to make insightful readings and interpretations.

**Textual Approaches**

**New Criticism**

New Criticism is an American critical movement which began in the 1930s and played an important role in American literary criticism until the end of 1960s. Some English critics had tremendous influence over it. The literary criticism of T.S.Eliot and I.A Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929) were crucial. Eliot's redefinition of tradition in his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent", his making of the critical concepts like "objective correlative," his reassessment of Jacobean and Metaphysical Poetry had an important influence on New criticism.

The term New Criticism was coined by Joe Elias Spingarn in 1910 in protest against the pedantry of the American academic scene. John Crowe Ransom's essay "Criticism Inc." published in 1937 gave the literary movement an identity. According to him criticism should become more scientific or precise and systematic. However the movement got its name from John Crowe Ransom's book *The New Criticism*. This book was published in 1941. Cleanth Brooks' and Robert Penn Warren's text books *Understanding Poetry* (1938) and *Understanding Fiction* (1943) greatly helped New Criticism to become the then current method of teaching literature in American Colleges for the next two or three decades. Other important New Critics are Allen Tate, R.P.Blackmur and William K. Wimsatt.

The following are some of the important features of New Criticism.

1. They considered a poem or a literary work in isolation, as a self contained object. That is, they regarded a poem as an independent and self sufficient verbal object. The first law of criticism according to John Crowe Ransom is that it should be objective. In analyzing and evaluating a literary work they were not concerned with the biography of the author, the historical conditions at the time of the making of the work or its emotional effects upon the reader.
2. The procedure that the New Critics followed is *explication* or close reading. This means the detailed and subtle analysis of the complex relationships and multiple meanings of the elements inside a work.
3. New Critics viewed literature as a special kind of language which is directly opposite to the language of science and other practical subjects. Their explicative procedure is to analyze meanings and interactions of words, figures of speech and symbols.
4. The difference between various types of literature (genres), though recognized, has no important role in New Criticism. The essential elements of any literary work are words, images and symbols rather than character, thought, and plot, irrespective of which genre it belongs to. In his essay of 1951 "The Formalist Critic" Cleanth Brooks asserted that "form is meaning."

**Intentional and Affective fallacy**

William K. Wimsatt, an important theoretician among the New Critics, is notable for two essays written with Monroe C Beardsley. The essays are “The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy” published in the years 1946 and 1949 respectively and later reprinted in the book, *The verbal Icon* (1954). *Intentional Fallacy* refers to the error of interpreting and evaluating a literary work in the light of what the critic believes was the author’s aim or the intention of the author in writing the work of art. They saw this as misleading because it diverted attention away from the text itself to external matters such as the author’s life or state of mind when writing the work. They argued that the meaning of the work lay solely within the words on the page. *Affective fallacy* is the error of evaluating a poem by its effects – especially its emotional effects upon the reader. The New Critics wanted criticism to be more objective and detached.

### **Irony, Paradox and Tension**

Qualities that the New Critics praised in literature included *irony, paradox, ambivalence* and *tension*. Irony assumes that there are different sides to any issue. Good poetry is always ironic and its tone is ambivalent. Only then can the complexity of life be presented. A paradox is a self-contradictory statement. When Donne writes, “death, thou shalt die”, he is using a paradoxical statement to come to terms with the idea of life after death. Paradox became established as a widely used critical term with the publication of Cleanth Brooks’s *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). Tension is a term used by Allen Tate to designate the totality of meaning in a poem. He coined the word by moving the prefixes from the words ‘extension’ and ‘intension’. Extension is the literal meaning and intension is the metaphorical meaning. The simultaneous co-existence of these sets of meaning constitutes tension.

### **Russian Formalism (Formalism)**

Like the New Critics, the Russian Formalists also made a close analysis of form. Russian Formalism began in the work of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the St.Petersburg based group Opajaz. These two schools were concerned with the study of poetic language. The important Russian Formalists are Victor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Boris Eikhenbaum, Osip Brik and Yuri Tinjanov. The Russian formalists rejected unsystematic and eclectic critical approaches which had previously dominated literary study and tried to create a literary science. The formalists focused on those elements of texts which they considered to be uniquely literary in character. They focused on formal patterns and technical devices of literature (sound, rhythm, imagery, syntax, meter, rhyme, narrative techniques etc.) and not on the content or subject matter. They were interested in the ways in which literature transformed and intensified ordinary language.

Formalism is essentially the application of linguistics to the study of literature. The Formalists were primarily concerned with determining the principles by which literature could be distinguished from non literature.

The most important principle of the group is illustrated in an essay by Victor Shklovsky named “Art as Technique.” It is the principle of *defamiliarisation (Ostranenie)* or the process of

“making strange.” According to Shklovsky as human perception becomes habitual it becomes automatic. Art, however can recover the “sensation” of life which has been lost to habit and abstraction. Artists exchange or make objects unfamiliar by using literary conventions. Thus the difficulty and length of perception is increased because perception is an aesthetic exercise in itself. The purpose of art is to experience the artfulness of the object. The object in itself is not important. Ordinary language is intensified, condensed, twisted, drawn out, in short ‘made strange’ and because of this estrangement the ordinary world is seen in a new light, in an unfamiliar way. Tolstoy makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object. Instead he describes it as if seeing it for the first time.

A second Russian Formalist notion that later proved highly influential is the idea of a “motif” as being the smallest element of thematic material in a story. It could contain in separate sentences like “the girl met a boy,” “the old man left his home” and so on. The *fabula* (story) is merely the sum total of these motifs in a casual chronological order; the *Sjuzet* (plot) is the organization of the motifs in strategic ways, and this, the Russian formalists call “motivation”.

The difference between Russian formalism and Anglo American formalism (or New criticism) lies in the former’s focus on purely literary devices. For the American formalists, the technique of the literary work existed for the sake of discovering its theme. For the Russian formalists the theme of the work existed simply to make possible the author’s “play” with the technique.

### **Structuralism**

Structuralism is an intellectual movement which began in France in the 1950’s. It was first seen in the works of the anthropologist Levis Strauss and in the early work of Roland Barthes. Saussure’s linguistic model (already studied in Core Course En1B1) is said to be the origin of structuralism. Later Strauss used it in anthropology to study the structures underlying early societies.

Structuralism has been applied to linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, folklore, mythology and Biblical studies, in fact to all cultural phenomena. It claims to be scientific and objective. It identifies *structures*, systems of relationships which give meaning and identities to signs in culture. It shows us the ways in which we think. The structures in question here are those imposed by our way of perceiving the world and organizing experience and not objective entities already existing in the world. It follows from this that meaning or significance is not an essence residing inside things but is outside, in the ways in which we give it meaning through certain codes and conventions. These codes and conventions form the grammar or the structure which generate meanings. Hence, for the structuralist, meaning is constructed through a culturally shared system of signification. In the structuralist approach to literature there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work and a drive towards understanding the larger, abstract structures out of which they evolved. To take a crude example of chicken and egg, for the structuralists determining the precise nature of the chicken (containing structure) is the most important activity and not the egg (the individual text). Thus structuralism is an analytical approach which is less concerned with the unique qualities of any individual example than with the structures that underlie these individual examples.

Applying Saussure's ideas about language to literary texts, structuralists consider texts as a self-sufficient system. They are concerned with the operations of and relations between the signifiers, rather than outside the system of language at the signified. Like the New critics they do not move outside the text to relate it to life. Instead they move in the opposite direction, trying to work out general theories about how texts function. The pure structuralist hopes to establish a grammar of texts, a set of general rules about how texts function.

The structuralist critics work with general ideas about the patterns underlying texts. They look closely at the structure and language of a text and thus make the book's own form its subject. They point out how the text might be discussing the gap between the word and the world, the gap between the structure of art and the structure of reality. Structuralist criticism is, by and large, self-reflexive. It points to the limits of literature in representing the complex world. It discusses the problems of writing about reality. These critics analyse prose narratives mainly, relating the text to some larger containing structure such as:

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

### **Poststructuralism and Deconstruction**

Poststructuralism begins at the point where structuralists start to doubt the adequacy of the comprehensive theory that they are imposing on literature. Poststructuralism is less concerned with establishing a firm hold on the text than with acknowledging the text's elusive/slippery nature and the fallibility of all readings. It stresses the indeterminacy of all texts and the inadequacy of all readings.

Poststructuralism takes its lead from the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida who followed the insights of structuralists about language to its conclusion. A central idea is that language is an infinite chain of words which has no extralingual origin or end. Derrida used Saussure's concept of difference, that words are defined by their difference from other words. He then introduced the concept of deference, to show how meaning is endlessly deferred (delayed) as each word leads us on to another word in the signifying system. Normally readers are committed to the notion of presence, to the idea that there should be some outside referent to which the word can relate. According to Derrida, however, the text should be seen as an endless stream of signifiers, with words only pointing to other words, without any final meaning. Such a view rejects the ordering strategies that readers and writers impose on language. The form of criticism that emerges from such thinking is referred to as deconstruction. The terms poststructuralism and deconstruction are often used interchangeably. Strictly speaking, poststructuralism encompasses all the approaches that have developed in the wake of structuralist insights into language. Such approaches step back to look at how we conventionally organize the world. Deconstruction, which originated from Derrida and was later taken up by American critics like Hillis Miller and Geoffrey Hartman is a less broadly-based outgrowth of structuralism. It could also be considered as applied poststructuralism. In her book *The Critical Difference* (1981), Barbara Johnson clarifies the term:

"Deconstruction is not synonymous with "destruction", however. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself, which etymologically means "to undo" -- a virtual synonym for "to de-construct." ... If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself."

A deconstructive reading is a sort of double reading – it acknowledges the way in which the writer attempts to order things, but then points to the contradictions and problems in the text. Terry Eagleton defines it as 'reading against the grain' or as 'reading the text against itself' with the purpose of 'knowing the text as it cannot know itself'. A deconstructive reading uncovers the unconscious rather than the conscious dimension of the text, all the things which its overt textuality glosses over or fails to recognize. An example of deconstructionist reading (here, using etymology) is the meaning of the word 'guest'. Etymologically 'guest' and 'host' have the same root. However the word 'host' comes from the Latin *hostis* which means enemy or stranger. This hints at a potential double aspect of a guest, as either welcome or unwelcome. This notion of hostility is like the repressed unconscious of the word.

The critic's own response can also be deconstructed, for the critic, too, is involved in trying to create coherence where none exists. Derrida's method is to look closely at individual texts, searching for the contradictions and gaps in what appears to be a logical argument. However, this reading also is a misreading as it imposes ordering strategies. The standard ordering strategy of Western culture is the organisation of thoughts into binary pairs – i.e. as good/evil, man/woman, white/black etc. wherein one of the pairs is privileged and dominant. Derrida draws attention to the presence of and inadequacy of the use of binaries in order to present a coherent case.

One of the key figures in the deconstructive approach to literature is Roland Barthes (later works). Barthes was the first to talk of the openness of texts, the text's connection with other texts and the reader's role in the production of meaning. He argued that texts can be either 'readerly' or 'writerly'. A readerly text was one that left the reader with nothing to do – it explained, explicated and described everything. It controlled meaning and the reader was a mere passive recipient of meaning. A writerly text, on the other hand, was one where the reader had an active role to play. The text teased and offered the readers hidden clues to decode. It offered a subtext which the reader was left to decipher. In other words Barthes was proposing that meaning was not embedded within the text but within the reader. For Barthes, therefore

1. The text is plural
2. The text is open to other texts in an endless series of intertextual operations.
3. The author is 'dead'
4. The 'pleasures' of the text lie in the process of playing with the narrative.

Here Barthes puts in a different view of textuality. He argues for an openness and endlessness of meaning-making and narrative process.

## **Reader Response Criticism**

Reader- Response Criticism arose as a reaction against the New Criticism, or Formalistic approach. Formalistic approach regards a piece of literature as an art object with an existence of its own. It focuses exclusively on the text to generate meaning, independent of its author or its readers. On the other hand, Reader -Response criticism focuses on the reading process. For them the text does not even exist until it is read by some reader, that is, the reader has a part in creating the text or actually does create the text. In other words, if a text does not have a reader it does not exist or at least, it has no meaning. It is the readers, with whatever experience they bring to the text, who give it meaning. Thus it is the reader who should say what a text means. Reader -Response critics may use other critical practices but with the focus on the reader's point of view in interpreting the meaning of a text. Reader- response ideas were present in critical writing of I.A Richards, D.W.Harding and Louise Rosenblatt in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Basic Premises of Reader-Response Criticism**

1. In literary interpretation the text is not the most important component; the reader is. There is no text unless there is a reader.
2. The reader is the only one who can say what the text is. The reader creates the text as much as the author does.
3. To arrive at meaning critics should reject the autonomy of the text and concentrate on the reader and the reading process, the interaction that takes place between the reader and the text. Thus this method is subjective and relative.
4. Reader-response theory is based on rhetoric, the art of persuasion. Rhetoric refers to the various methods or strategies used to get the reader to respond to the literary work.

Wayne Booth, in his *Rhetoric of Fiction*, was among the first to restore affective readers in the interpretive act. In 1929, I.A.Richards , usually associated with New Critics, constructed an affective system of interpretation , that is, one based on emotional responses. The group of critics who are now regarded as the exponents of reader-response criticism are Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Norman Holland and Stanley Fish.

Wolfgang Iser, a German critic, applies the philosophy of phenomenology to the interpretation of literature. Phenomenology stresses the perceiver's (here the reader's) role in any perception (here the reading experience) and says it is difficult to separate anything known from the mind that knows it. According to Iser, the critic should not explain the text as an object but its effect on the reader. However Iser does not ignore the importance of the text in interpretation. He has also posited an *implied reader*, one who is present in the text. At the same time he does not agree that there can only be one interpretation for a text. Readers' experiences will throw up different interpretations.

### **Psychoanalytical Criticism (Psychological Criticism)**

“Psyche” the Greek word means spirit, soul, or mind. Psychology is the science of the mind. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the celebrated Austrian psychologist coined the term psychoanalysis in 1896. He used the term to describe the therapeutic technique of deeply probing into the unconscious. For Freud human mental activity is controlled by the “unconscious” mind and the primary source of psychic energy is sexual - “libido”.

Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature. Broadly, psychological criticism deals with the work of literature as the expression of the inner psyche or character and personality of the author. This was made possible with Sigmund Freud's important work *The Interpretation of Dreams* published in 1900. There is nothing new in linking the author and his work very closely. Coleridge, with his theory of imagination, proceeded on the path of psychological criticism. John Livingston Lowes' *The Road to Xanadu* on the sources of Coleridge's "Rime of Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan" are a sort of non Freudian psychological criticism.

Linked with Freud's idea of the unconscious is the idea of "repression" which is the "forgetting" or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires or traumatic past events which will remain in the unconscious. Through "sublimation" the repressed material is promoted into something grander or is disguised as something "noble." For example, repressed sexual urges may be given sublimated expression in the form of intense religious experiences or longings. Repressed experiences also reappear in the form of dream images through a process of displacement and condensation. Displacement is a process wherein one person or event is represented by another which is in some way linked to it. In condensation, a number of people, events or meanings are combined and represented by a single image in the dream. Dreams, thus, communicate indirectly. The purpose of devices like displacement and condensation is two-fold. Firstly these devices disguise the repressed fears and wishes so that they can get past the bodily censor which normally prevents their surfacing into the conscious mind. Secondly, they mould this material into something that can be converted into images, symbols and metaphors which then can be represented in the dream. In the same way, slips, spoonerisms jokes etc, are repressed experiences represented in different forms. By analyzing and coming to the root cause of such manifestations, psychoanalytic interpretation is able to uncover deep rooted psychological problems. Freud, later suggested a three part model of psyche, dividing it into the "ego," the "super ego," and the "id" which roughly correspond to the consciousness, the conscience and the unconscious.

### **Jacques Lacan**

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) who is sometimes called the "French Freud" developed a semiotic (on the basis of symbols and their meanings) model of Freud. He did this by presenting the ideas of psychoanalysis in a different way on the basis of Saussure's ideas on language. His most important remark is the claim that "the unconscious is structured like a language." Lacan was partly reacting to the biological reading of Freud done by Freud's American followers.

According to Lacan the child of 6-18 months enters the "imaginary" or "the mirror stage" which is also called the pre-oedipal period. This is a period of illusory unity and mastery of its world. In this state there is no clear distinction between the subject and object or between *self* and *other*. Later the child acquires language and enters into what Lacan calls the symbolic order. In this stage the child understands the system of linguistic differences and also its position in such oppositions as male/female, father/son, mother/daughter.

The entry into language is similar to the oedipal crisis in Freud's theory. The child now comes under what is called the "law of the father." The child expelled from the imaginary order, who enters the symbolic order as a result of its construction in language experiences the loss of existence as pure organism. This lack creates desire in the subject. This desire (a type of symbolic castration) creates the unconscious in the subject. Thus the position and identity of the subject is constituted by language. Lacanian psychoanalysis is an example of poststructuralist analysis of language.

Psychoanalytic critics read texts in the following ways:

1. When they interpret literary texts they give importance to the difference between the conscious and unconscious mind. The surface or overt meaning of the text is like the conscious mind. The covert or hidden meaning of the text, which is more important to them, is like the unconscious.
2. The unconscious motives of, both the author and the character, become important to these critics.
3. They read Oedipal motives in relationships, not only among the characters but also between writers of different generations.
4. They identify a psychic context for a text rather than a social or historical context.
5. The Lacanian critics do not pay attention to the unconscious motives and feelings of the author or character like the Freudian critics. They search the text for contradictory undercurrents of meaning beneath the surface. They demonstrate the presence of Lacanian mirror stage and symbolic stage.

### **Slavoj Zizek**

Slavoj Zizek born in Slovenia in 1949 is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute of Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London and a senior researcher at the institute of sociology, University of Ljubljana. He has been a visiting professor at various European and American Universities. He became internationally famous as an author and philosopher with the publication of *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), a book which is a pioneering assessment and distillation of Lacan, Hegel, and Marx is an analysis and modern ideology. His other prominent works are *They Know Not What They Do* (1991), *The Ticklish Subject* (1999), *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (2002), and *In Defense of Lost Causes* (2008). While providing original insights into psychoanalysis, philosophy and radical political theory and employing his extraordinary scholarship to the examination of popular culture he has established himself as a witty and deeply moral cultural critic of modern times.

### **Archetypal Criticism**

The term archetype in literary criticism defines recurring (happening again and again) narrative designs, patterns of action, character types or images which are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, myths, dreams and social rituals. Northrop Frye is the best known practitioner and spokesman of archetypal or myth criticism.

Earnest Cassirer, a social anthropologist was an important influence on myth criticism. For Cassirer, reason alone cannot lead to truth, but mythical thinking which focuses on immediate experience is essential. Another important influence was Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) who used the term archetype to what he called “primordial images”. According to him the “psychic residue” of the repeated patterns of experience in the lives of our ancestors survives in the “Collective Unconscious” of the human race. This is expressed in myth, religion, dreams and private fantasies as well as in works of literature.

Important practitioners of various modes of archetypal criticism are Maud Bodkin, Wilson Knight, Robert Graves, Philip Wheel Wright, Richard Chase and Joseph Campbell. Northrop Frye contributed the most to the mythic method, especially as a school of criticism. In the introduction to his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye argued for a varied field of study called “archetypal criticism” In this book the four radical platforms correspond to four seasons in the cycle of natural world. They are incorporated in the four major ‘genres’ of comedy (spring), romance (summer), tragedy (autumn) and satire (winter). Frye expanded the theory in his long series of later writings.

## **Module III**

### **Objective:**

1. To enable the students to understand alternate sexualities and related critical practices.
2. To acquaint the students with ethnicity and marginalization including introduction to Dalit literatures
3. To introduce the concept of subalternity

### **Gay, Lesbian and Queer Theories.**

#### **Gay Theory**

The origin of the Gay Liberation Movement can be traced to the Stone Wall Riot in New York in 1969 when occupants of a gay bar resisted a police raid. The incident had a radicalizing effect on homosexual rights groups throughout the United States and Europe.

The two goals of the Gay Liberation in the 1970s were to resist persecution and discrimination against a sexual minority and to encourage gay identities. The movement utilized two main strategies: consciousness raising, and coming out. The Gay Liberation activists saw themselves as part of a more general move towards the liberalization of sexual attitudes in the 1960s. They particularly questioned the homophobic prejudices and repressive character of mainstream heterosexual society.

Gay and lesbian activists recently used the term “heterosexism” to refer to the prevailing social organization of sexuality which privileges and mandates heterosexuality. Homophobia, which is a pathological condition, is the irrational fear or hatred of same sex love and heterosexism designates an unequal social and political power relation. It is an important theoretical term in lesbian and gay theories. Two main influences on gay theory have been Freud and Michel Foucault.

#### **Lesbian Feminist Theory and Criticism.**

Lesbian feminist theory developed as a response both to the heterosexism of mainstream culture and radical subcultures and to the sexism of the male-dominated Gay Liberation movement. It concentrates on the interrelationship between gender and sexual oppression. In particular, lesbian feminist theory has consistently problematised heterosexuality as an institution central to the maintenance of patriarchy and women’s oppression with it.

Lesbian feminist theory makes use of many other theories and methods. While it cannot be reduced to a single model several features are prominent:

1. a critique of “compulsory heterosexuality”,
2. an emphasis on “woman identification”
3. the creation of an alternative women’s community.

Whether taking a black feminist, a radical feminist or a psychoanalytic approach, lesbian feminist theory foregrounds all of these elements. Gayle Rubin introduced the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” which later received wide circulation in the essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980) by Adrienne Rich. The concept challenges the common sense view of heterosexuality as natural and therefore requiring no explanation. Unlike lesbian and gay sexuality Rich argues that heterosexuality is a social institution supported by a range of powerful sanctions. According to Rich the source of lesbianism is in the fact that girl children are of women born and have an original same sex attachment to their mothers

Monique Wittig’s analogous concept of “the straight mind” views heterosexuality as an ideological construct which is almost taken for granted yet institutes an obligatory social relationship between men and women. The discourses of heterosexuality work to oppress all deviants, particularly lesbians.

### **Subalternity**

In postcolonialism and related fields, *subaltern* refers to persons socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structures. The term, derived from the work of the Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, entered postcolonial studies through the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, a collective of South Asian historians interested in exploring the role of non-elite actors in South Asian history. Following the publication in 1983 of *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* by Ranajit Guha, a Bengali historian, Indian Subaltern Studies became visible in India. If traditional historians addressed the progress of the state, Guha and the other Subalternists wrote about the activities of those peripheralized by the state; if the one used “event history”, the other used myth and legend, if the one homogenized, the other particularized, if the one praised the development of nationalism, the other found its faults. The term “subalternity” refers to a condition of subordination brought about by colonization or other forms of economic, social, racial, linguistic, and/or cultural dominance. Subaltern studies is, therefore, a study of power. Who has it and who does not. Who is gaining it and who is losing it. Power is intimately related to questions of representation—to which representations have cognitive authority and can secure hegemony and which do not and cannot.

In the 1970s, the term began to be used as a reference to colonized people in the South Asian subcontinent. It provided a new perspective on the history of a colonized place from the perspective of the colonized rather than from the viewpoint of the colonizers. Marxist historians had already begun to view colonial history from the perspective of the proletariat, but this was sometimes seen as unsatisfying as it was still a Eurocentric way of viewing the globe. "Subaltern Studies" began in the early 1980s as an "intervention in South Asian historiography." While "subaltern" began as a model for the Subcontinent, it quickly developed into a "vigorous postcolonial critique." Subaltern is now regularly used as a term in history, anthropology, sociology, human geography, and literature.

Some thinkers use it in a general sense to refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes—a person rendered without agency by his or her social status. Others, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, use it in a more specific sense. She argues that:

*subaltern* is not just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie....In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference.

Subaltern was first used in a non-military sense by Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Some believe that he used the term as a synonym for proletariat, possibly as a codeword in order to get his writings past prison censors, while others believe his usage to be broader and less clear cut. In several essays, Homi Bhabha, a key thinker within postcolonial thought, emphasizes the importance of social power relations in his working definition of subaltern groups as oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power.

Postcolonial theory tries to understand the power and continued dominance of Western ways of knowing. Edward Said's work *Orientalism* is related to the idea of the subaltern in that it explains the way in which orientalism produced the foundation and the justification for the domination of the Other through colonialism. Europeans, Said argues, created an imagined geography of the Orient before European exploration through predefined images of savage and monstrous places that lay outside of the known world. During initial exploration of the Orient these mythologies were reinforced as travelers brought back reports of monsters and strange lands. The idea of difference and strangeness of the Orient continued to be perpetuated through media and discourse creating an "us" and "them" binary through which Europeans defined themselves by defining the differences of the Orient. This laid the foundation for colonialism by presenting the Orient as backward and irrational and therefore in need of help to become modern in the European sense. The discourse of Orientalism is Eurocentric and does not seek to include the voices of the Orientals themselves. Spivak argues that other forms of knowing are marginalized by Western thinkers reforming them as myth or folklore. In order to be heard the subaltern must adopt Western thought, reasoning and language. Because of this, Spivak argues that the subalterns can never express their own reasoning, forms of knowledge or logic, they must instead form their knowledge to Western ways of knowing. The abandonment of one's customary thoughts, and the subsequent adoption of Western thought is necessary in many postcolonial situations. The subordinated individual can only be heard by his oppressors if he speaks their language. Therefore, filters of conformity muddle the true voice of the subaltern. These filters manifest themselves in a multitude of ways.

In Colonial Latin America, for example, the subaltern must utilize the filters of religion and servitude in their language. In order to appeal to the good graces of their Spanish oppressors, slaves and natives would mask their own voice with the culture of the Spanish Crown. In 1600, Francisca

de Figueroa brought an appeal to the Crown. Francisca, an enslaved African woman in Spain, is requesting permission to join her enslaved daughter in the Americas. As an Afro-Iberian woman, she must repress her own native tongue, and speak Spanish with her adopted Spanish tongue.

Spivak and bell hooks question the academic engagement with the Other. To truly engage with the subaltern they argue that an academic would need to decenter himself or herself as the expert. Traditionally the academic wants to know about the subaltern's experiences but not their own explanations of those experiences. hooks argues that according to the received view in Western knowledge a true explanation can only come from the expertise of the academic. The subordinated subject, gives up their knowledge for the use of the Western academic. hooks describes the relationship between the academic and the subaltern subject:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk.

We must not take on an aspect of superiority while studying these voices. The subaltern's story is a way that we can build a bigger historical picture for ourselves. It allows for us a revealing look at a society, from the perspective of the most powerless individuals that live within its confines. Yet, we must read into these stories tenderly. Or else, we risk further subjugating and further complicating the voice of the Subaltern.

### **Dalit Literature**

The demolition of caste walls intended to segregate Dalits from other caste Hindus still appears in our newspapers. This shows that casteism is still a cruel reality in our country. The caste system in India and the racism in America and other European countries have played and still play an important role in destroying the self esteem and identity of the oppressed group – the Dalits. Erik.H.Erikson's concept of "Pseudo speciation" explains the psychology of both the masters and the victims. Certain tribes, castes, or nations consider themselves superior to certain other groups, as they believe that they are chosen by God. So instead of accepting the equality of all human beings they try to assert their superiority upon what they call the "inferiors" and torture them.

Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka and Ismael Reed are some of the few Afro-American writers who have lifted modern Afro-American literature to great heights and as the same time waging war against racialism.

Dalits could voice their bitterness at the caste prejudice and social oppression through their literature, only after the arrival of Dr. Ambedkar as an outstanding national leader with his revolutionary ideas for the social upliftment of the Dalits. The writers who had become familiar

with the Black movements and literature established the political movement called the Dalit Panthers in Bombay in 1972. In their holy war for social justice, the Dalit writers portray their hopes and aspirations as also their fight for survival and their day to day life experience which are humiliating and degrading. Their view of protest also pervades their literature.

But the origin of Dalit literature goes back to 1950s. Siddartha Sahitya Sangha (1950) later known as Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha began the process of Dalit Literature as a movement and convened its first literary conference in 1958 in Bombay. This inspired Dalit writers to take up their cause with great vigour. They spread Ambedkar's message, later called Ambedkarism, throughout Maharashtra. One of the important decisions at the conference was the defining of Dalit literature as that written by the Dalits themselves and also those written by others about the Dalits. The term "dalit" denotes "downtrodden" while Dalit literature does not simply mean the literature of the downtrodden, but it is an expression of Dalit consciousness, their anxieties, their feeling, their experiences and their struggles. Dalit literature therefore is a product of new awareness and is a literature of protest too. Dalit writers view the established literature as an upper class one and hold the view that their literature is more in the tradition of great humanistic literature of the world.

*Poisoned Bread*, published in 1992 is an anthology of Dalit writing including poems, prose, and criticism translated from Marathi into English. *The Oxford India Anthology of Malayalam Dalit Writing* being published by Oxford University Press and co-edited by Dr M Dasan, Dr V Pratibha, Dr Pradeepan Pampirikunnu, and Dr CS Chandrika is a representative collection of the translations of Malayalam Dalit writings from the early 20th century to the present times. It really is an attempt to bring out the silenced and marginalized voices unrepresented until now. It includes a collection of Dalit writings in different genres (forms of literature) including poetry, short story, novel, biography, plays, and critical essays by thirty seven writers.

## Module IV

### Objectives:

1. To introduce the theory of Postcolonialism
2. To teach students to read texts using the critical tools of postcolonial theory.
3. To introduce them to the concepts of subalternity and hegemony.
4. To introduce them to the discipline of cultural studies.

### Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial Criticism developed as a distinct category of criticism only in the 1990s. It achieved currency through the influence of such books as *In Other Worlds* (1987) by Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft *Nation and Narration* (1990) by Homi Bhabha and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by Edward Said. An important collection of relevant essays is *Race, Writing and Difference* (1986) edited by Henry Louis Gates.

A significant effect of postcolonial criticism is to further weaken the universalist claims made by liberal humanist critics (traditional critics) for literature. Claiming timeless and universal significance for great literature is now considered as degrading or disregarding cultural, social, regional and national differences in experience and outlook.

The origin of postcolonial criticism can be traced to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* published in French in 1961. This text expressed what might be called "cultural resistance" to France's African empire. According to Fanon, a psychiatrist from Martinique, the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past. The first step towards the postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one's own past and the second one is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued. Yet another major book, which can be said to inaugurate real postcolonial criticism, is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).

When we interpret Yeats' two Byzantium poems ("Sailing to Byzantium" and "A Picture of Istanbul"), the Eastern capital of the former Roman Empire will emerge with torpor, sensuality, and exotic mysticism. At such moments Yeats adopts an ethnocentric or Eurocentric perspective seeing the East as an exotic "other." Thus the first characteristic of postcolonial criticism is an awareness of representations of the non-European as exotic or immoral "other."

The language itself is a second area of concern in postcolonial criticism. Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* expresses this uneasy attitude to the colonial language. Stephen tells himself that "the language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine.... My soul frets in the shadow of his language". European languages are considered as instruments of colonial power. Some writers turn away from the domination of these languages to embrace native languages( Ngugi wa Thiong'o); others nativise the dominant languages, seek a more hybrid nature for language identity (Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie)

The emphasis on identity as doubled or hybrid is another characteristic of postcolonial criticism. Thus Chinua Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), was criticized by an early reviewer for affecting to identify with African villagers while his education, job and urban residence implied the values of "civilization," supposedly brought to Africa by Europeans.

### **Cultural Studies**

Towards the end of 1990s Cultural Studies dominated the direction of literary criticism. Cultural studies try to understand the functioning of culture, particularly in the modern world, how cultural productions work and how cultural identities are constructed and organized.

The rise of Cultural Studies can be traced back to the late 1950s when Richard Haggard and Raymond Williams published their seminal works in Great Britain. Haggard in his *The Uses of Literary* explores the post war shifts in the lives of working class Britons confronted with the changes in modernization. Williams in his *Culture and Society* questioned the conventional notions of making a distinction between "culture" and "society" and between "high culture" and "low culture". In *Marxism and Literature* (1979) Williams explores the ideology of "cultural materialism" or the idea that economic forces and modes of production influence cultural products like literary works.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, cultural studies continued to progress as a practical interpretative tool. In 1964, for instance, Haggard and Stuart Hall founded the Birmingham Universities' Centre for Contemporary Studies which became synonymous with the Cultural Studies movement of that era. E.P.Thompson published his influential *The Making of the English Working Class* in 1964. This book examines the political and economic components of the working class identity. He also argued that the conceptions of individuality have become fragmented in the postwar world. During the 1970s literary critics discussed cultural materialism in terms of "hegemony." This is a term used by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to denote invisible relations of cultural or intellectual domination. Hegemony is the domination of particular sections of society by the powerful classes not necessarily through threats of force and violence or through the law but by subtly winning their consent to be governed and dominated. The 1970s also witnessed the influence of Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan on cultural studies.

Cultural studies generally share four goals. They are:

- Cultural studies go beyond the limits of a particular subject such as literary history or criticism.
- Cultural studies are politically active. Cultural critics see themselves as against the power structures of the society. They question the inequalities of the power structures and seek to restructure them.
- Cultural studies deny the separation of "high" and "low" or popular culture. All forms of cultural productions are studied in relation to other cultural practices.
- Cultural studies analyses not only the cultural work that is produced but also the means of production.

In “Cities Without Maps” (1994) Ian chambers constructs an elaborate reading of the city as a cultural metaphor. “Art as Cultural Production” (1994) by Alan Sinfield is an important essay in cultural studies.

### **Cultural Materialism**

The term cultural materialism was originally coined by Raymond Williams in the early 1980s to describe the analysis of all forms of cultural production. The term cultural materialism was made current in 1985 when it was used by Jonathan Dollimore and Allan Sinfield as the subtitle of their edited collection of essays, *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (1985). Cultural materialism’s key role as Sinfield puts it is that culture is political. They argue that culture is inseparable from its conditions of production and reception in history. According to Alan Sinfield in his “Art as Cultural Production” cultural materialism cannot be seen merely as a variation of new historicism. According to Sinfield and Dollimore it is a critical method which combines a focus on

- (a) historical context
- (b) theoretical method
- (c) political commitment
- (d) textual analysis.

The first aspect refers to the efforts to recover the histories of literary texts which earlier studies have ignored. Theoretical method suggests a break with liberal humanism and accepting the lessons of structuralism, post structuralism and other prominent theoretical approaches since the 1970s. The focus on political commitment signifies the influence of Marxist and feminist theories. Finally the stress on textual analysis denotes the practice of theory on colonial texts.

The term culture in “cultural materialism” includes all forms of culture not just high culture. Materialism is opposed to idealism in the belief that culture cannot transcend the material forces and relations of production.

### **New Historicism**

New historicism emerged as a recognizable practice with Stephen Greenblatt’s book *Renaissance Self Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (1980) which is considered as the beginning of the New Historicist practice, and Louis Montrose’s essay “Eliza Queen of Shepherdess.” Stephen Greenblatt coined the term new historicism in his book. New Historicism can be simply defined as a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non literary texts, usually of the same historical period. That is, new historicism does not give a privileged position to literary texts and it visualizes and practices a method of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal importance and constantly inform and question each other. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a renewed interest in the relationship between literature and history. It was the American critics known as the new historicists who were responsible for the prominence of historical approaches to literature towards the end of twentieth century.

New historicist critics tended to

- read literary texts as material products of specific historical conditions.
- see texts of all kinds as vehicles of politics.
- consider literature and history are inseparable. History is not an orderly body of objective knowledge which simply can be applied to a literary text in order to discover the facts in the text. Literature is a vehicle for the representation of history and it reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes about. Literature does not merely reflect history as a mirror; it shapes and constitutes historical change.

The key concern of the new historicists according to Louis Adrian Montrose was the “historicity of texts and textuality of history.” By historicity of texts he meant that all texts were embedded in specific social and cultural contexts and by textuality of history he meant that all our knowledge and understanding of the past can only exist through the surviving textual traces of the society in question. Thus the new historicists are concerned with the role of historical context in interpreting literary texts and the role of literature in mediating history. Typically a new historicist essay will place a literary text within the frame of a non-literary text. Thus Greenblatt’s main contribution to literary study is his reading of the dramas of the Renaissance period by juxtaposing them against colonialism.

New historicism is strongly anti-establishment, always basing the study upon liberal ideas of personal freedom and accepting and celebrating all forms of differences. New historicism believed that the all-powerful state maintained its domination upon the private life of the individual not by physical force but by its discursive practices (use of knowledge and ideology). Michel Foucault’s thought linking knowledge with power and his study of the institutions which enabled this power to be maintained, like the state, punishment, prisons, medical establishment was very influential in the development of New Historicism. Besides, New Historicism as a whole is founded on poststructuralist thinking.

### **Marxist Literary Criticism**

Marxist literary theory is based on the philosophy and principles of Karl Marx (1918-1883) and Friedrich Engles (1820-1895). Marx and Engels introduced communism in their jointly-written *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. The objective of Marxism is to bring about a classless society, based on the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Marxism is a materialist philosophy because it explains things without assuming the existence of worlds or of forces beyond the natural world around us and the society we live in. For Marxists, history is class struggle and progress comes through the struggle for power between different social classes.

Marxists believe that literature can only be understood by viewing it in the context of history and society, both of which are and have been dominated by class struggle and by the ownership of the means of production. In every age mankind work to an ideology, a superstructure of ideas which they erect themselves to explain how the society works. Marx’s *The German Ideology* defines ideology as the sets of beliefs, concepts, and ways of thinking, ideas and values that shape

our thoughts and is used to explain and understand the world. More precisely, and in the Marxian sense it is a system of beliefs or ideas of an economic and political system. Marx and Engels published *The German Ideology* in 1846, the central thesis of which for later literary theory is the idea that culture is materially produced. The work constituted a preliminary statement of their later and more developed theory of historical materialism that consciousness and its products are determined by material conditions. According to its specifically Marxist use the ideology that is dominant in any era is the product of its economic structure and the resulting class-relations and class interests.

In his famous architectural metaphor Marx represented ideology as a “superstructure” of which the contemporary socio-economic system is the “base.” In the present age the dominant ideology is that of the property-owning class, the bourgeoisie. A strict Marxist critic treats all literary works of art as being dominated by the bourgeois mentality, and demands a literature that will present “social realism.”

George Lukacs, the Hungarian thinker and the most widely influential of Marxist critics represent the flexible view of the role of ideology. He inaugurated a distinctively Hegelian style of Marxist thought, treating literary works as reflections of an unfolding system.

Bertolt Brecht, another prominent Marxist theoretician rejected the kind of formal unity admired by Lukacs and opposed the social realism. His well known theoretical device, the *alienation effect*, has similarity to the Russian concept of defamiliarization. He named his theory of realism “anti-Aristotelian” and his epic theatre signified primarily his attempt to emulate on the stage the objectivity of epic narrative. His aim was to prevent the spectators empathizing with the characters and their action, so as to encourage them to criticize, rather than passively to accept the social conditions that the play represents.

The Frankfurt School of Marxist critics rejected realism altogether. The institute of social research at Frankfurt founded in 1923 practiced what is called “Critical Theory.” This was a wide ranging form of social analysis based on Hegelian Marxism and including Freudian elements. The leading figures in this philosophy and aesthetics were Marx Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse.

The 1960s saw the influence of structuralism on Marxian theory. Both traditions believe that individuals cannot be understood apart from their social existence. Lucien Goldman, a Roman theorist based in France single-handedly developed the method of Marxist literary criticism known as “genetic structuralism”.

Despite their difference Marxist cultural theories refuse to separate art from society. All Marxist theories continue to assert that certain inequalities such as class exploitation and poverty is ‘wrong’ and that this is very much related to literature. Marxism is thus both a political movement and a form of intellectual resistance

## **Postmodernism**

Postmodernism is the term used to refer to the non-realist and non-traditional literature and art of the post-Second World War period. Literature and art during this period took certain modernist characteristics to an extreme limit. The term is also used to refer to the general human condition in the “late capitalist” world of the post 1950s.

The term postmodernism was first used emphatically in the 1960s by critics such as Leslie Fielder and Ihab Hassan for the change of sensibility that occurred during the period. Arnold Toynbee became the first person to use the term outside the specific literary critical sense, when he announced in 1947 that we were entering the postmodern age. In the mid 1970s the term gained importance and comprised first architecture, and later dance, theatre, painting, film and music.

Jean Francois Lyotard is undoubtedly one of the most important early theoreticians of postmodernism. Lyotard, a French philosopher, was commissioned by the Council of Universities of Quebec in the late 1970s to do a survey of the state of knowledge in the Western world. In his seminal work *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, first published in 1979 in French and later translated into English in 1984 he decided to use the word “postmodern” to describe the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies. He posited a simple definition for the idea of ‘postmodern’ as “incredulity to metanarratives.” By metanarrative Lyotard means all those grand narratives or intellectual discourses which aim to offer a comprehensive frame in which to understand some aspect of modern life. The Enlightenment belief in progress, Darwinian theory of evolution, Marxism, Freudian psychology are all metanarratives.

Jean Baudrillard, the French sociologist was concerned with the transformation that occurred to signs in the passage of time. For him in the postmodern times it is the “Map that precedes the territory” instead of territory preceding the map. Now it is simulation opposed to representation. Simulation is “the radical negation of sign as value.” For him the four successive stages, the image goes through are the following:

- ❖ It is the basic reflection of reality.
- ❖ It masks and perverts a basic reality.
- ❖ It masks the absence of a basic reality.
- ❖ It bears no relation to any reality whatever; it is its own pure simulacrum.

Another important postmodern theoretician is Frederic Jameson who wrote the foreword to Lyotard’s book *The Postmodern Condition*. Jameson’s two influential articles on postmodernism are, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” later expanded and elaborated as, “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” and “The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Postmodern Debate.” In the first essay he explores the important features of postmodernism of which to him the most important is pastiche. Pastiche is a patchwork of words, sentences or complete passages from various authors or one author. It is like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style. It is a neutral practice, but unlike mimicry it does not have hidden motives and satirical aim.

In postmodernism “text” is supplemented or displaced by “discourse.” A keynote feature of postmodernism is the fading of boundaries between genres.

### **Eco criticism**

Eco criticism or green criticism is one of the latest interdisciplinary fields developed in literary and cultural studies. William Rueckert coined the word “eco criticism.” Specifically, eco criticism enquires how nature is used literally or metaphorically in certain literary or aesthetic works. Rueckert emphasized the importance of relevance in literary criticism.

Rueckert experiments with the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. This is important because ecology has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we live in. In his essay “Literature and Ecology” he characterizes green plants as “nature’s poets” and poems as green plants among us. He focuses on the strong link between survival and literary expressions by considering poems as “part of energy pathways which sustain life.” He uses the word “poem” in a broad sense so as to include all forms of literature. Some poems with their capacity to remain active and capable of energy transfer continue to sustain life and the human community.

According to Rueckert a poem is stored energy, a formal turbulence and a living thing. Poems are part of the energy pathways which sustain life. The first Law of Ecology is that everything is connected to everything else. This applies to poems as well as to nature. Reading, teaching, and literary criticism are enactments of the poem which release the stored energy so that it can flow into the reader. Green plants are among the most creative organisms on earth. They are nature’s poets. Poems are green plants among us.

SAMPLE QUESTION PAPER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reg No \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SEMESTER B.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION

(CCSS)

English Core Course - EN2B2

METHODOLOGY OF LITERATURE

Time: Three Hours  
30

Maximum Weightage:

I. Answer all the twelve questions from this part.

A. Choose the correct answer for each of the following:-

1. Who wrote the work *The New Criticism*?

- (a) Shakespeare (b) John Crow Ransom  
(c) Elaine Showalter. (d) Spivak.

2. *The Anxiety of Influence* is a famous critical work by:-

- (a) Mathew Arnold (b) Harold Bloom  
(c) F.R. Leavis (d) T.S.Eliot

3. Who is the proponent of the 'mirror stage'?

- (a) F.R. Leavis (b) I.A.Richards  
(c) Freud (d) Lacan

4. The essay '*Can the Subaltern Speak?*' was written by:

- (a) Spivak (b) Virginia Woolf  
(c) John Stuart Mill (d) Judith Butler

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct answers:

5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the exponent of epic theatre.

6. The term *Intentional Fallacy* was introduced by \_\_\_\_\_.

7. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* is a work by \_\_\_\_\_.

C. Answer the following questions in a single word:

8. Who put forward the idea of 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts?

9. Who is associated with the notion of "superstructure"?

10. Who coined the word “cultural materialism” originally?
11. Name Fanon’s 1961 work hailed as a pioneering work of postcolonial criticism?
12. The term signifying a patchwork of words, sentences or complete

passages from various authors or one author.

(12x ¼ = 3 weightage)

II. Answer each of the following questions in a sentence or two.

13. What is subalternity?
14. What is ideology?
15. Name the qualities that the New Critics praised in literature?
16. Define New Historicism?
17. Who was Edward Said?
18. What is “intentional fallacy”?
19. What does Lyotard mean by “metanarratives”?
20. Postcolonial criticism.
21. Slavoj Zizek.

(9 x 1 = 9 weightage)

III. Answer any *five* of the following in a paragraph each.

21. Postmodernism
22. Deconstruction
23. The distinctive features of literature
24. Lesbian feminist theory
25. The Frankfurt school
26. Dalit literature
27. Reader Response criticism

(5 x 2 = 10 weightage)

IV. Write an essay on any two of the following:

28. Explain the politics of canon formation.
29. Psychoanalytic Criticism
30. Write an essay on New Criticism.

(2 x 4 = 8 weightage)

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