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Study Material



Literary Theory And Cultural Studies

WOLFGANG ISER

1. The Implied Reader (1972)
2. The Act of Reading (1976)
3. The Reading Process: A Phenomenological (essay)
4. Towards An Aesthetic of Reception

Textual gaps

To understand what is Textual Gaps let's take Coleridge's Kubla Khan. As Coleridge mentions, the first two sections of the poem was conceived by him in an opium-induced dream state but the last section was written after this state of reverie was broken by the arrival of a visitor. And the sections of the poem Kubla Khan very distinctly carries the mark of this break in the mental state of the poet which the reader needs to negotiate through her reading.

In every novel, poem or any other work we find textual gaps that we have to fill by ourselves.

The way we fill these gaps is what Iser calls is "ideation". The same thing is said by Roman Ingarden and he called this process "active reading."

Actual Reader and Implied Reader

Let's understand with an example. A literary text is written by an author with the assumption that it will be read by a white middle-class woman.

For example if a text is written with the white middle-class woman as its "implied reader". Now it is possible that the actual reader of that text might be very different from the implied reader socially, culturally, as well as historically.

So let us say if the implied reader of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a nineteenth-century white British middle-class heterosexual woman, its actual reader might very well be a twenty-first century brown homosexual South Asian male. Implied reader is what author keeps in mind while writing a work. Actual reader is one who purchases the book and read the book. It can be anyone.

STANLEY FISH

Works:

1. Is There Any Text In The Class?
2. Interpreting the Variorum?
3. Surprised by Sin: The reader in Paradise Lost

Fish is primarily known for two very important theoretical concepts which are "affective stylistics" and "interpretive communities".

Affective Stylistics

As we know that for reader response critic, text is dynamic process which unfolds over time as the reader proceeds through it.

The dynamism results from the fact that readers bring their own imagination, sentiments, and expectations to the reading and these keep changing as they progress through the text.

As a result, their idea about what the text also keeps changing during the course of their reading.

So when you read a sentence you first read a word. This word gives some signification. You move on from one word to another to understand the whole meaning of the sentence.

You adjust yourself, you from word to word. And your interpretation gets changed from word to word. This process of meaning building little by little is what Fish called "affective stylistics."

TIMOTHY MO

The Monkey King

It follows the humorous exploits of protagonists Wallace Nolasco, who finds himself in financial straits after being denied his dowry in hectic post-war Hong Kong, and must by guile better both himself and the moribund reputation of the Chinese house he has married into. The plot of *The Monkey King*, which is a family saga, divided into three sections, is driven by the tensions between Wallace and his father-in-law, the patriarchal Mr Poon.

Sour Sweet

Written as a 'sour sweet' comedy the story follows the tribulations of a Hong Kong Chinese immigrant and his initially reluctant wife as they attempt to make a home for themselves in 1960s London. This novel explores the clans and conflicts of Soho's Chinatown, where the Chen family arrives and want to succeed as restaurants in the 1960s. No family can survive for long without encountering the Traids.

The Redundancy of Courage

It is set in the fictitious country of Danu in Southeast Asia, which is based on East Timor. It is narrated by Adolph Ng, an ethnic Chinese businessman educated in Canada. Danu is a former Portuguese colony north of Australia. It is invaded and occupied by its giant neighbor, which is not named, but is based on Indonesia. The people of the occupying country are referred to throughout the book as the Malai. This similar to malae, the word for foreigner in Tetum, East Timor's main language. Danu is annexed by the malai and declared their fifty-eight province, over which their green and white flag is raised.

CARYL PHILLIPS

The Final Passage

In her village of St. Patrick's, Leila Preston has no prospects, a young son, and a husband, Michael, who seems to prefer the company of his mistress. So when he ailing mother travels to England for medical care. Leila decides to follow her.

As Caryl Phillips follows the Prestons' outward voyage and their bewildered attempt to find a home in a country whose rooming a tragicomic portrait of hope and dislocation. *The Final Passage* is a novel rich in language, acute in its grasp of character, and unforgettable in its vision of the colonial legacy. It is about the Caribbean diaspora exemplified in the lives of a young family from a small island of the British West Indies who decide to join the 1950s exodus to the mother country. They arrive in London full of hope, but their hopes are thwarted while new challenges, if not opportunities, never thought of before, seem to arise.

Crossing the River

Crossing the River is a story about three black people during different time periods and in different continents as they struggle with the separation from their native Africa. The novel follows Nash, who travels from America to Africa to educate natives about Christ; Martha, an old woman who attempts to travel from Virginia to California to escape the injustices of being a slave; and Travis, a member of the U.S. military who goes to England during World War II.

Dancing in the Dark

The novel re-imagines the life of Beri Williams, the first black entertainer in the U.S. to achieve the highest levels of fame and fortune, while darkening his skin with burnt cork and "playing the dim-witted 'coon' on Broadway and elsewhere", a story that allows the author to deal with issues

British Diaspora, Canadian Literature, Caribbean Literature

African Literature

African literature, literary works of the African continent. African literature consists of a body of work in different languages and various genres, ranging from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages (French, Portuguese, and English).

Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral Literature is known as "Orature," coined by Pio Zirimu. It is divided into two parts: Plass Roman which includes stories set in rural and Dorps Roman which includes stories set in cities.

ALBERT OCTAVIA V ROGER

The House of Bondage or Charlotte Brooks

Albert focuses on episodes that illustrate hostility from slave masters, as well as the ways in which religion influenced the slaves' everyday lives. Albert interviews several slaves and their lives —though Charlotte Brook's interviews make up the bulk of the text. These anecdotes are woven together to provide a harrowing image of the horrors suffered by slaves, as well the progress that former slaves are able to make through education.

BUCHI EMCHETA

- In the Ditch
- Head above water – an autobiography
- The Second Class Citizen
- The Bride Price
- The Joys of Motherhood
- Juju Landlord
- A Kind of Marriage
- Family Bargain

Summary

The Second Class Citizen

Struggles of Adah and her dreams. High class in Nigeria but poor in European society. Story take place after 7-8 years as the part of colonial system. Good student travels to Europe for study. To study UK is everyone's dream.

Adah father dies and she lives with her maternal uncle. Married to Francis who later studies in U.K. Her in-laws did not send her so she is disappointed. So, she plays a trick by saying that Francis needs her in England. In-laws let her go. She became second class citizen there.

Theme – Black woman in white society learns about woman's right, birth control and struggles of becoming a writer.

The Bride Price

A Nigerian girl Aku-nna is allowed to finish her education because a diploma will enhance her bride price, but she rebels against traditional marriage customs.

American Literature

SOME LITERARY MOVEMENTS / EVENTS /

HISTORY

1. The Salem Witch Trials
2. Ku Klux Klan
3. Transcendentalism
4. Harlem Renaissance
5. The Lost Generation
6. Dark Romanticism
7. Oxford Movement
8. Realism
9. Naturalism
10. Impressionism
11. Symbolism
12. Imagism
13. Surrealism
14. The Black Mountain Poets
15. The Beat Generation
16. The Objectivists Poet
17. Ethnopoetics
18. New Apocalyptic
19. Existentialism
20. Theatre of Cruelty
21. Confessional Poet
22. The Movement
23. Kaliyard School of Poetry
24. New Formalism

1. The Salem Witch Trial

Salem had been divided into two regions "Salem Town" and "Salem Village", the former being more urban and its economy relying on trade, fishing,

Tensions built between those who had a close affiliation with the town and those who lived in the village without much connection to the town.

The town became roughly divided in half over the appointment of a man by the name of Samuel Paris who did not receive the pay from the villagers over petty disputes.

When Paris was refused part of his pay due to the displeasure of others within the village, his daughters and their friends began accusing people of witchcraft.

The Salem witch trials were a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in colonial Massachusetts between February 1692 and May 1693. More than two hundred people were accused. Thirty were found guilty, nineteen of whom were executed by hanging (fourteen women and five men).

2. Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan commonly shortened to the KKK or the Klan, is an American white supremacist terrorist hate group whose primary targets are African Americans as well as Jews, immigrants, leftists, homosexuals, Catholics, Muslims, and atheists.

Organized entirely in the Southern United States, it was suppressed through federal intervention in the early 1870s.

American Literature

American Literature

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (1861 – 1865)

The central cause of the war was the status of slavery, especially the expansion of slavery into newly acquired land after the Mexican-American War. In the northern states, industry largely drove the economy. Many people in the north and the south believed that slavery was immoral and wrong.

After Abraham Lincoln won the November 1860 presidential election on an anti-slavery platform, War broke out in April 1861 when the Confederate army attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

Confederate States or the Confederacy:

It was an unrecognized breakaway state that existed from February 8, 1861 to May 9, 1865 and that fought against the United States of America during the American Civil War.

The Confederacy was formed on February 8, 1861, by the seven secession slave states: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. After that four more states joined the Confederacy, summing up to 11 states against the Union.

All seven of the states were located in the Deep South region of the United States, whose economy was heavily dependent upon agriculture—particularly cotton—and a plantation system that relied upon slaves of African descent for labor.

Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens described its ideology as centrally based "upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition".

Army Raised

The states that remained loyal to the U.S. were known as the Union. The Union and the Confederacy quickly raised volunteer and conscription armies that fought mostly in the South for four years.

The North also had more money, more factories, more horses, more railroads, and more farmland. On paper, these advantages made the United States much more powerful than the Confederate States. However, the Confederates were fighting defensively on territory that they knew well.

Intense combat left between 620,000 and 750,000 soldiers dead along with an undetermined number of civilians.

The North controlled both the shipping and railroad avenues, allowing them to trade and to get supplies fairly quickly. That can be one of many reasons why North won the civil war.

After four bloody years of conflict, the United States defeated the Confederate States.

Literary Criticism

PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF CAVE



The allegory states that there exists prisoners chained together in a cave. Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners are people carrying puppets or other objects. This casts a shadow on the other side of the wall. The prisoners watch these shadows, believing them to be real.

Plato posits that one prisoner could become free. He finally sees the fire and realizes the shadows are fake. This prisoner could escape from the cave and discover there is a whole new world outside that they were previously unaware of.

This prisoner would believe the outside world is so much more real than that in the cave. He would try to return to free the other prisoners. Upon his return, he is blinded because his eyes are not accustomed to actual sunlight. The chained prisoners would see this blindness and believe they will be harmed if they try to leave the cave.

Such prisoners would mistake appearance for reality. They would think the things they see on the wall (the shadows) were real.

Plato's aim in the Republic is to describe what is necessary for us to achieve this reflective understanding. But even without it, it remains true that our very ability to think and to speak depends on the Forms.

Literary Criticism

Literary Criticism

BEGINNING OF LITERARY CRITICISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

PHILIP SIDNEY – THE FIRST ENGLISH CRITIC

Works:

The Defence of Poesy originally published under two different titles,

1. *The Defence of Poesie*
2. *An Apologie for Poetrie*.

While its ideas are not original, it represents the first synthesis in the English language of the various strands and concerns of Renaissance literary criticism, drawing on Aristotle, Horace, and more recent writers such as Boccaccio and Julius Caesar Scaliger.

Sidney's writing of the *Apologie* as a defense of poetry was occasioned by an attack on poetry entitled *The School of Abuse* published in 1579 by a Puritan minister, Stephen Gosson. As mentioned earlier, Sidney rejects Gosson's Protestant attack on courtly pleasure, effectively defending poetry as a virtuous activity for the aristocracy.

Sidney's initial argument is that poetry was the first form in which knowledge was expressed, the "first lightgiver to ignorance,"

Even Plato used poetic devices such as dialogue and description of setting and circumstance to adorn his philosophy,

Sidney concludes here that "neither philosopher nor historiographer, could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry"

Sidney's second argument might be called the "argument from tradition" since it appeals to the ancient Roman and Greek. The Roman term for the poet was *vates*, meaning "diviner, foreseer, or prophet, . . .

Sidney argues that this definition of the poet was quite "reasonable," as shown by the fact that the Psalms of David are a "divine poem," whereby prophecy is expressed in a poetic manner.

Hence poetry does not deserve the "ridiculous . . . estimation" into which it has lapsed, and "deserveth not to be scourged out of the Church of God"

Sidney reminds the reader that the Greek origin of the English word "poet" was the word *poiein*, meaning "to make".

The poet, however, is free of any dependence on nature. Poetry is in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or quite anew forms such as never were in Nature."

This God-like activity in man which exalts him above the rest of nature is expressed above all in poetry.

The poet imitates, says Sidney, in order "both to delight and teach."

As for the poet's superiority over the historian, Sidney appeals to Aristotle's statement that "poetry is more philosophical, and more studiously serious, than history". It is unmistakably a step in the direction of secular humanism.

There can be no "more fruitful knowledge" than this Poetry is **not the mother of lies**.

Sidney's famous retort is that "the poet . . . **nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth**". Unlike the historian, the poet does not claim to be telling the truth; he is not relating "what is, or is not, but what should or should not be." He is writing "not affirmatively, but allegorically, and figuratively".

Plato was "a natural enemy of poets".

Sidney also cites Plato's dialogue *Ion* as giving a "divine commendation to poetry," viewing poetry as inspired by "a divine force, far above man's wit" Sidney also cites the authority of many great figures who admired poetry, including Aristotle, Alexander, Plutarch, and Caesar.

British Poem

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

BY ROBERT BROWNING

The rain set early in to-night,

The sullen wind was soon awake,

It tore the elm-tops down for spite,

And did its worst to vex the lake:

I listened with heart fit to break.

When glided in Porphyria; straight

She shut the cold out and the storm,

And kneeled and made the cheerless grate

Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;

Which done, she rose, and from her form

Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,

And laid her soiled gloves by, untied

Her hat and let the damp hair fall,

And, last, she sat down by my side

And called me. When no voice replied,

She put my arm about her waist,

And made her smooth white shoulder bare,

And all her yellow hair displaced,

And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,

And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,

Murmuring how she loved me — she

Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,

To set its struggling passion free

From pride, and vainer ties dissever,

And give herself to me for ever.

But passion sometimes would prevail,

Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain

A sudden thought of one so pale

For love of her, and all in vain:

So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Happy and proud; at last I knew

Porphyria worshipped me; surprise

Made my heart swell, and still it grew

While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,

Perfectly pure and good: I found

A thing to do, and all her hair

In one long yellow string I wound

Three times her little throat around,

And strangled her. No pain felt she;

I am quite sure she felt no pain.

As a shut bud that holds a bee,

I warily oped her lids: again

Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

And I untightened next the tress

About her neck; her cheek once more

Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:

I propped her head up as before,

Only, this time my shoulder bore

Her head, which droops upon it still:

The smiling rosy little head,

So glad it has its utmost will,

That all it scorned at once is fled,

And I, its love, am gained instead!

Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

Her darling one wish would be heard.

And thus we sit together now,

And all night long we have not stirred,

And yet God has not said a word!

Literary Theory

Literary Theory And Cultural Studies

VICTOR SHKLOVSKY'S THEORY OF PROSE

He explained the concept in 1917 in the important essay "Art as Technique" (also translated as "Art as Device") which comprised the first chapter of his seminal Theory of Prose, first published in 1925.

Here in the essay "Art as Technique" he coined the term "defamiliarization."

Defamiliarization: What a literary text did was to use language in such a way that everyday objects could be made to look different, extraordinary or even strange. Literary and poetic language transformed everyday objects into something else by using words about the objects differently. A literary text represents the world in such a way that ordinary things appear different. This is what engages our (the reader's) attention. This process is what Shklovsky termed defamiliarization.

It is self-reflexive, drawing attention to itself. Poetic language makes us aware that it is unique (for example: 'My love is like a red, red rose' by Edmund Waller alerts us to the fact that something unusual is going on. The quality of love is not an object, so the poet is using the two key words, love and rose, in an odd combination).

It often uses a word to mean multiple things and thus destabilizes meaning itself. The words in poetry can mean more than one thing.

"Art is experiencing the artful of the object than the object itself," said Shklovsky.

Jan Mukarovsky termed the same concept of making the everyday language poetic as "Foregrounding." He went to explain that "Foregrounding" is the aesthetic use of language.

ROMAN JACOBSON (1896-1982)

- "Linguistics and Poetics"
- "Functions of Language"

Roman Jacobson's concept of metaphor and metonymy (selection and combination) is worth noting.

e.g. "The bus is moving on the road."

By using a metaphor "crawl", we can give literary quality to this simple sentence. "The bus is crawling on the road."

Metaphor is done through selection while metonymy is done through combination.

Bus is (moving,
crawling,
running) on the road.

Metaphor is done through selection and **vertical paradigm**.

Now, talking about metonymy, it is done through combination and horizontally.

I live in a house.
That's the house I live in.
House is where I live in.

It's about **horizontal paradigm**.

INDIAN WRITING, DALIT LITERATURE, INDIAN MODERN THEATRE

KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Kamala Markandaya, a popular Indian journalist and novelist. Kamala Purnaiya was born in a small town in Mysore in the year of 1924. Markandaya attended the University of Madras, beginning in 1940, where she studied history. From 1940 to 1947, she worked as a journalist and also published short stories in Indian newspapers. The works of Kamala Markandaya feature the modern traditional and spiritual values of Indian societies. The novels of Kamala Markandaya are popular for boldly depicting the cultural and traditional clashes of different societies.

Works:

1. Nectar in a Sieve (1954)
2. Some Inner Fury (1955)
3. A Silence of Desire (1960)
4. "Possession" (1963)
5. "A Handful of Rice" (1966)
6. "The Coffin Dams" (1969)
7. "The Nowhere Man" (1972)
8. "Two Virgins" (1973)
9. "The Golden Honeycomb" (1977)
10. "Pleasure City" (1982)

Nectar in a Sieve- 1954

The title "Nectar in a sieve" has an allusion to the famous poem by Coleridge "Work without hope". The 13-14 lines of the poem "work without hope" ("Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve, and hope without an object cannot live.")

Hope stands as a very important attribute of the lives of the character thus aptly befitting the title.

It is a touching account of the life of an Indian peasant woman, Rukmani, her struggle for survival and her abiding love for her husband.

This novel depicted the difficult life of an Indian peasant. It was written in a narrative style and wonderfully depicted the clashes between the urban and rural societies of India.

Rukmani married Nathan, a tenant farmer whom she had never met, as a child bride. Even though Rukmani was ignorant of the simplest of tasks, Nathan never uttered a single cross word or gave an impatient look. He looked at her as if nobody had discovered her beauty. He never asserted his rights to prohibit her from reading and writing. Though Nathan was illiterate he always shows respect towards her literate wife. Misfortune seemed to have a tight foothold in Rukmani and Nathan. The monsoon flooded the rice paddies where Rukmani worked side by side with Nathan to wrest a living for a household of eight. No sooner had the monsoon tapered off than a drought devastated the harvest. Hope and fear acted like twin forces that tugged at them in one direction and another. Poverty-stricken Rukmani saw her daughter Ira become a prostitute, her 4-year-old son Kuti died from hunger, her teenage son Raja caught stealing and beaten to death, her oldest sons Thambi and Arjun set off to Ceylon to work in a tea plantation.

And yet, Rukmani survived. Ira, who exchanged her body for Kuti's milk and food, had lost her reason and given up her sanity rather than faced the truth. Far beyond its political context, the novel is appealing to modern readers for its sensitive and moving portrayal of the strength of a woman struggling with forces beyond her control.