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M.A. ENGLISH (THIRD SEMESTER)

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Prepared by

Dr. S. Christober Jacob

Assistant Professor, Department of English,

St. John's College, Palayamkottai - 627 002

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CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM

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CHAPTER XIV (FROM BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA – S.T. COLERIDGE

Author Introduction

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834) was a founding member of the English Romantic Movement and, together with his friend William Wordsworth, one of the Lake Poets. He was also an English poet, literary critic, philosopher, and theologian. Along with working with Charles Lamb, Robert Southey, and Charles Lloyd, he also exchanged volumes with them. In addition to the significant literary work Biographia Literaria, he produced the poems Kubla Khan and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. His analytical writings had a great deal of influence, particularly when it came to William Shakespeare, and he was instrumental in bringing German idealism philosophy to English-speaking societies. Coleridge is credited with creating a number of well-known expressions, such as "suspension of disbelief," Ralph Waldo Emerson and American transcendentalism were greatly influenced by him. It has been suggested that Coleridge suffered from bipolar illness, which was not diagnosed in his lifetime, because he had debilitating episodes of anxiety and despair throughout his adult life. His physical ailments might have been caused by a childhood sickness and/or a case of rheumatic fever.

Summary

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's critical autobiography, The Biographia Literaria, was released in two volumes in 1817. 'Autobiographia Literaria' was the working title. William Wordsworth's poetic theory, the Kantian perspective on the shaping power of imagination, the works of various post-Kantian writers such as F. W. J. von Schelling, and the earlier influences of the empiricist school, such as David Hartley and Associationist psychology, all had a formative effect on the work. Despite having autobiographical components, the work is lengthy and appears to be loosely organised; it is not a simple or linear autobiography. It's also a contemplative form.

Coleridge goes into great length about the nature of poetry and its purpose in chapter fourteen of "Biographia Literaria", but he does it from a philosophical standpoint. He addresses several questions on the nature and purpose of poetry after posing them. In this chapter, Coleridge's interpretation of poetry has been expanded. Coleridge examines the distinctions between prose and poetry as well. He looks at how poetry is different from other forms of artistic

expression as well as the importance of nature as a necessary component of a valid poem. He is the first critic and poet to declare that all art is an organic unity.

In the first paragraph of the Chapter Coleridge describes a conversation he had with Wordsworth on two fundamental principles of poetry. Nature is one, and imagination is the other. Nature occasionally blends the two with the aid of light and shadow from the sun and moon. The purpose of Lyrical Ballads was to compose two sets of poetry, one emphasising the supernatural and imagination and the other nature. In addition to focusing on environment, the second collection of poetry intended to highlight daily life in the villages. Coleridge was expected to write poetry that honoured fantasy and the paranormal. Wordsworth would write about defamiliarising the familiar and the beauty in the ordinary.

Wordsworth had greater success and produced a greater number of poetry centred on everyday life and the natural world, whereas Coleridge penned works like *The Ancient Mariner, The Dark Lady,* and *Christabel*. As a result, there was an imbalance in the Lyrical Ballads due to the disparity in the quantity of poetry inspired by nature and imagination. Lyrical Ballads was released in this way as a collection of poems that defied the prevalent poetic norms of the day. Wordsworth said in the Preface of the second edition that speech patterns that are not found in everyday English should not be used in poetry. The arguments around Lyrical Ballads originated from this Preface. Coleridge does not quite concur with Wordsworth's opening remarks. He thus wants to make it clear where he disagrees with Wordsworth and where he agrees. However, he first wants to clarify what poetry and poems are.

Coleridge thinks that the components of prose and poetry are the same. But what distinguishes poetry from prose is how these components are combined. The lowest definition that can be given to poetry is that it has rhyme and meter. Poetry's primary goal is enjoyment, not truth. Furthermore, each section of poetry should provide the reader or listener the same joy as the entire work. Coleridge thinks that reading poetry should be enjoyable as a whole, not only as a finished product. It should be as enjoyable to travel as it is to arrive. Without metric, poetry of the finest calibre can still exist.

What constitutes a poet must be defined in order to respond to the question, what is poetry? The power of poetry to maintain and alter thoughts, feelings, and pictures. A poet has the

power to awaken humanity's entire spirit. By combining and merging different poetry parts, the poet uses imagination to create oneness. Poetry requires the ability to bring disparate or discordant elements together, such as sameness and difference, general and concrete, concept and picture, etc. The imagination is capable of doing this. For Coleridge, the most crucial element of poetry is organic coherence, which can only be attained by the force of imagination.

Essay

Wordsworth and Coleridge were neighbours, but they frequently discussed two essential aspects of poetry: the ability to arouse readers' compassion by adhering faithfully to the reality of nature, and the capacity to pique readers' attention by employing vivid imagery. They realised that a collection of poetry might be written and that these poems could be examined in light of these two criteria. It would be reasonable to assume that the supernaturally influenced events in the poetry are genuine given the feelings that result from them. Characters and occurrences from every hamlet and the surrounding areas would be chosen for poetry that evoke the readers' sympathies.

This line of reasoning served as the inspiration for the Lyrical Ballads' plot. Coleridge's efforts would focus on otherworldly, or at least romantic, people and characters, it was agreed. His goal was to have his readers come to the conclusion that lyrical reality is a "willing suspension of disbelief" throughout the duration of the piece. Wordsworth, on the other hand, aimed to bring freshness to ordinary objects and evoke a sensation akin to the paranormal by arousing readers' attention from the complacency of habit and focussing it on the beauty and grandeur of the world in front of them.

Wordsworth added a lengthy Preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads, declaring that "the language of real life" was the only language appropriate for all forms of poetry. He also disapproved of the use of artificial language, ornamentation, phrases, and stylistic devices that were not common in everyday speech. Wordsworth made a contentious comment. Wordsworth's poetry were criticised for their "meanness of language and inanity of thought." Had the poetry's language been so awful, it would have been forgotten long ago, and the Preface would have faded into history as well, but that is not what happened.

Wordsworth's Preface had numerous points Coleridge disagreed with. Because Wordsworth's personal conduct contradicted the beliefs he held in the poems he had written for the Lyrical Ballads, he believed the rule to be false in principle and inconsistent. Coleridge's Thoughts on Poetry and Prose Coleridge asserts that a poem has the same components as a prose work. Because a distinct object was presented, the difference must therefore be in the word combinations used. The difference in the combination would be determined by the disparity in the composition's purpose. The purpose of the artificial arrangement might be to aid in the recall of the provided information or observation.

The piece will therefore only qualify as a poem if its metre, rhyme, or both set it apart from prose. There is little formal difference between poetry and prose. The disparity in substance might serve as an additional basis for differentiation. Either pleasure or truth can be found at the conclusion of a work. A poem is a type of work that defies science by advocating pleasure over truth as its primary goal. A poem makes you happy as a whole, not just as each of its individual parts. A poem is considered suitable when its elements complement and elucidate one another. A poem cannot be defined as a sequence of powerful lines or distiches that form a distinct whole rather than a harmonising section.

The reader should be propelled onwards by the enjoyable mental activity sparked by the voyage itself, rather than just or mostly by the mechanical need of curiosity or the restless need to get the answer. Coleridge's Poem Definition Coleridge provides his own definition of a poem in addition to attempting to highlight the obvious differences between poetry and prose. Due to his conflicting mental states, it is unclear how he feels about meters. He speaks in a hesitant, occasionally nearly contradicting manner. He said that a poetry employs the same medium, words, as a prose writing. Because their purposes are different, the two must employ language differently, which accounts for the disparity between them. Since it is particularly enjoyable to anticipate the return of certain sounds and characteristics, all compositions that offer this find an additional attraction. Although metre and rhyme help poems like this one stick in the mind, the poem's subject does not require them to be used. It is understandable how the subjects of poetry and scientific works differ from one another. A poem's immediate goal is pleasure, although a work of science may also be used to provide readers with pleasure, and both include significant truths. A poem's ultimate goal is to convey truth.

Metric should be appropriate for the poem's language and subject, not just a fantastic addition for show or recall. A piece of writing that isn't metrically composed, like romances and novels, may have pleasure as its primary goal. A poem is considered valid when its individual sections complement and elucidate one another while also harmonising with the established metrical arrangement influences. A piece of writing that lacks coherence and allows the reader to quickly grasp the overall idea without being drawn in by the individual sections cannot be categorised as poetry. Not every section of a lengthy poem may be as satisfying as the others. Consequently, "a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry," according to Coleridge.

The other components need to be kept consistent with the poetry if a harmonic totality is to be created. This may be accomplished more successfully than with prose language by purposefully choosing and artificially arranging words to elicit a more constant and equal attention. Studying the traits and roles of a poet is crucial to understanding what poetry is. Coleridge's Poet's Definition In the purest meaning of the word, a poet is someone who awakens the spirit of man by submitting the faculties to the dignity and value of each in turn. Through the synthetic and magical power of imagination, the poet imbues each skill with a tone and spirit of oneness that merges and melts into the other. This power is shown in the discordant qualities of sameness with difference, the general with the concrete, the idea with the image, the individual with the representative, the feeling of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects, the balance or reconciliation of opposites, the judgement that is always alert and steady, and the combination of profound or vehement feeling and enthusiasm with self-possession.

Even while the sensibility harmonises and combines the artificial and natural, it nonetheless puts poetry above art, style above substance, and poet appreciation above poetry. Eventually, common sense unites to make a lovely and intelligent totality; "finally, good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy is its drapery, motion is its life, and imagination is the soul that" is present everywhere. Differentiating between poetry and poems "A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition," according to Coleridge. Poetry and prose both employ words. A poetry and a prose writing use the same medium—words—so there can be no distinction between the two. Rhyming words of that kind, with their recurring, "sounds and quantities," yield a particular pleasure to, though not of a very high order. If one wants to name a poem to the

composition of this kind, there is no reason why one should not; however, the use of rhyme is merely to increase pleasure. A poem combines words differently because it seeks to do something different. Coleridge says, “of course all it may be seeking to do is to facilitate memory. You may take a piece of prose and cast it into rhyme and metrical form in order to remember it better.”

THE ARCHETYPES OF LITERATURE – NORTHROP FRYE

Author Introduction

Northrop Frye (1912-1991) was a prominent Canadian literary critic, theorist, and educator known for his impactful contributions to literary criticism and theory. His most significant work, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), established a systematic framework for understanding literature by categorising it into archetypal patterns and themes that transcend individual works. He is known for his books *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), *The Great Code* (1982), *Words with Power* (1990) and *The Educated Imagination* (1963). Northrop Frye is known for his significant contributions to literary criticism, particularly through his development of archetypal criticism. His seminal work, “Anatomy of Criticism,” offers a systematic framework for analysing literature by categorising it into various types and exploring universal themes. Frye emphasised the importance of myth and symbolism in literature and advocated for integrating literature into education to foster imaginative thinking. His influential ideas have shaped the field of literary studies, connecting classical and modern criticism and inspiring generations of scholars.

Summary

“Archetypes of Literature” is an excerpt from the book. In the essay, Frye examines literature critically in light of myths and rituals. He evaluates literature in the context of many rites and mythology. The easy has been split into three sections by Frye. The idea of archetypal critique is covered in the first section. The inductive approach to text analysis is explained in detail in the second section. The logical approach to analysis is the subject of the third section. Critics of the approaches’ structure point to all of them.

Part-I - The Concept of Archetypal Criticism

The interpretation of literature can take many forms, and one of these forms is the archetypal approach. An archetype is an original idea or pattern of something that is copied by others. The archetypal approach involves interpreting a text in the context of the cultural patterns that are present in it, which are derived from the myths and rituals of a particular race, nation, or social group. The purpose of exploring these patterns in a text is to uncover its meaning and message. This approach to text analysis has become more and more popular in recent years.

Carl Gustav Jung and James George Frazer are the two great figures who have made significant contributions to the development of the archetypal approach. Frazer is a social anthropologist, and his book The Golden Bough examines magic, religion, and myths of various races. Jung was a psychologist who was affiliated with Freud, and one of his major theories is "collective consciousness," which holds that civilised man "unconsciously" preserves the ideas, concepts, and values of life cherished by his distant forefathers. These ideas are expressed in a society's or race's myths and rituals. Creative writers have used myths in their works, and critics examine texts to identify "mythological patterns." Archetypal criticism is the term used to describe this type of text-critical study. One of the best examples of T.S. Eliot's usage of legendary motifs in his works of art is The Waste Land. In his article, Northrop Frye examines "mythical patterns" that authors have employed generally rather of focussing on any one specific myth in a work. The Humanities and Two Forms of Criticism Literary criticism is a systematised and organised body of knowledge, just as science. Science examines and evaluates facts and nature. Comparably, literary criticism evaluates and explains works of literature.

Frye goes on to suggest that while literacy critique and its ideas and methods may be taught, literature itself must be experienced and appreciated. Yes, literary critique may be innovative and is similar to science. Literary criticism may be divided into two categories: important and insightful critique and pointless criticism. A reader seeking to organise their knowledge about a piece of literature won't benefit from a pointless critique. This type of critique will simply provide background knowledge about a piece of art. A pointless critique will draw the reader's attention away from the book. Humanities encompass philosophy and history in addition to literature. These two areas of expertise offer a type of framework for comprehending literature. Two important instruments for interpreting literature are philosophy

and history; the foundation of archetypal criticism is found in these two areas. Meaningful critique is characterised by its archetype. Historical and Formalistic Criticism There are many distinct kinds of critique, and the most of them are still textual commentary. There is a certain kind of criticism that simply concentrates on text analysis. One critique of this kind stays within the text itself and provides no more context. This kind of structural or formalistic critique will only partially aid readers in comprehending a work.

A reader may be able to discern a text's pattern, but without the underlying knowledge—what is sometimes referred to as historical criticism—it is hard to comprehend how the pattern developed. A reader can gain a better grasp of a text's structure and content by employing structural and historical critique. A combination of historical and structural critique is what today's readers need. Historical and structural critique are combined to create archetypal criticism. Literary criticism is a science that investigates nature, and many scientific disciplines investigate various facets of nature. A subfield of science called physics studies matter and the universe's natural forces. During the Renaissance, astronomy and physics gained recognition as scientific disciplines and acquired scientific relevance. In the eighteenth century, chemistry achieved scientific credibility, followed by biology in the nineteenth. In the twentieth century, social sciences came to be seen as important branches of science. Likewise, literary criticism may now be regarded as a science as it has evolved into a methodical field of study. Based on this principle, a work of literature may be critically (or scientifically) appraised, argues Northrop Frye. He employs structural critique and historical criticism as two of the criticism's instruments. He goes into great length on the two ideas in the second and third sections of this analytical essay, respectively.

Part-II The Inductive Method of Analysis

Frye argues that structural critique will aid a reader in understanding a text, and in his analysis, he progresses inductively. In other words, he deduces general truths from specific facts found in a book. Owing to jealousy, Othello, in the Shakespearean play, inflicts upon himself misery and this is the particular truth of the drama from which the viewer learns the general truth of life that jealousy is always harmful. Under structural criticism, this is known as the inductive technique of analysis, and Frye goes into great depth about it in this portion of the essay. An

author is not allowed to impose his or her own opinions and feelings on the work. He ought to be completely impartial.

A critic examines a piece of writing to see whether the author is free from the influence of the text. This critique technique, which also has certain psychological undertones, aids the reader in comprehending the myths, symbols, and personal meanings that an author uses in his writing. Sometimes the critic “discovers” things that the author himself may not have known about—myths, symbols, etc.—that he has used in his works. Inductive Analysis and Historical Criticism A critic who practices the second kind of criticism, known as historical criticism, analyses the genesis of a work and concludes that it is the result of the social and cultural expectations of a society within a specific time period.

A work’s production is a result of its social and cultural environments. It is obvious that the historical-critic is crucial to comprehending a work. In actuality, archetypal critique requires both structural and historical criticism, and neither can be skipped. However, neither of them by itself fully explains a work. A historical critic concludes that there must be a common “source from which writers have derived their symbols, images, and myths” after noticing common symbols and imagery utilised by many writers in their works. The sea is a popular symbol utilised by numerous writers throughout the years and so it is an archetypal symbol.

Not only can symbols, pictures, and tales have archetypal qualities, but genres also do. For instance, Greek religion is the source of the theatre genre. Thus, the historical inductive approach of criticism aids readers in comprehending the genre itself as well as symbols, pictures, and myths. The Racial Memory or Collective Unconsciousness The analysis of a writer’s symbols, images, and mythologies found in his works is known as archetypal critique. These symbols, myths, and rituals have their roots in ancient stories, customs, folklore, and cultures. According to Jung, these archaic elements are buried in a people’s “collective unconscious,” also known as their “racial memory.”

A writer’s “unconscious” mentality is conveyed in his works through myths, rituals, symbols, and pictures since they are products of his race. Such aspects of a work are the subject of archetypal critique. In archetypal criticism, a critic explains a work by moving from the specific truth to the overall truth using the reductive approach of analysis. A specific story or

symbol helps to build a universal reality. In this way, works of art are produced, and their roots may be found in prehistoric societies. This is how literature is created over time. Archetypal Criticism and Its Facets The word “archetypal criticism” is broad.

It is based “on a certain kind of scholarly organisation” at every step of text interpretation and entails the work of several professionals. A philologist examines word choice and relevance; a rhetorician assesses narrative pace; a literary social historian investigates the development of myths and rituals; and an editor is required to “clean up” the work. All of these experts’ efforts come together to analyse a work under archetypal critique. A literary anthropologist makes a significant addition to archetypal critique. An anthropologist doing a classic analysis of Hamlet links the play’s origins to the folklore surrounding the play as told by the thirteenth-century Danish historian Saxo in his book Danes, Gesta Danorum. He goes on to link the origins of the play to nature tales, which were popular during the Norman Conquest. Thus, under archetypal critique, an anthropologist offers a flimsy interpretation of Hamlet’s genesis.

Part - III Deductive Method of Analysis (Rhythm and Pattern in Literature)

In the deductive approach of analysis, an archetypal critic moves from the general truth to the specific truth in order to determine the meaning of a work. Writing and music go hand in hand. In music, rhythm is a fundamental quality, and in painting, pattern is the most important quality. Whereas pattern in painting is spatial, rhythm in music is temporal. In writing, repetition of shapes, pictures, and phrases is known as both rhythm and pattern. In literature, rhythm refers to the narrative, which speeds up action by presenting all the incidents and episodes in order. In literature, pattern denotes the word structure and expresses meaning. A literary work needs both rhythm (narrative) and pattern (meaning) to achieve the desired artistic impact. A Work’s Rhythm The natural world follows a cycle and is regulated by rhythm. A solar year has four seasonal rhythms: spring, winter, autumn, and summer. Both the animal kingdom and the human world contain this type of rhythm. Animals and birds mate at a predictable season each year; this mating behaviour can be referred to as a ritual. A ritual has a purpose and is not usually performed; instead, it is done regularly after a considerable interval. Animal mating is a synonym for reproduction. The natural world likewise has rhythmic rituals. Every year, crops are systematically planted, harvested, and given a season.

Offerings and sacrifices are made during planting and harvest seasons, and they represent fertility and the completion of life. Rituals have their own meaning and are carried out willingly in the human world. Such rituals are the source of literary works, which the archetypal critic unearths and clarifies. He describes the rites' rhythm, which is the foundation of writing in general. Pattern in a Work: It is well known that repetition of forms, pictures, and phrases constitutes a pattern in literature. The "epiphanic moments" that writers experience lead to patterns. In other words, an author investigates deeply and derives the notions or ideas for his work in spur of the moment.

He then uses proverbs, riddles, prohibitions, and etiological folktales to convey what he has "perceived." These items already have a narrative component, and they enhance the writer's story in his works. Writers employ myths to convey what they have "perceived," either consciously or subconsciously. The critic's job is to identify the myths and archetypes in a piece of writing and to explain the patterns within it. The two main fundamental elements of a piece of work are rhythm and pattern. The Myth's Four Stages Every myth has a fundamental theme, and the story of a myth revolves on a character who might be a legend, god, demi-god, or superhuman creature. Many writers have come to agree with Frazer and Jung's assertion that the centre character or focal importance plays the most crucial role in the creation of a myth. Myths are divided into four groups by Frye: 1. The season of birth, daybreak, and spring. There are tales about the birth of heroes, their resuscitation and resurrection, and their victory over the forces of evil and death. The myth introduces subordinate characters like the mother and father. These myths are the prototypes of rhapsodic poetry and romance. 2. The peak, summer, and marriage/victory period.

There are tales about divine marriage, apotheosis—the act of rising to the status of a god—and entering paradise at this time. In these stories, the companion and the bride are subordinate figures. These myths represent the archetypes of the idyll, humour, and pastoral. 3. The dusk, fall, and dying stages. These tales deal with a dying deity, violent death, sacrifice, the solitude of the hero, and the fall of a hero. The traitor and the siren are the subordinate characters. These myths represent the archetypes of elegy and tragedy. 4. The gloom, cold, and barren time. Myths exist that describe these powers' victory. This stage is typified by stories about floods, the return of chaos, and the hero's downfall. Here, the myths represent the

archetypes of satire, and the subordinate characters are the ogre and the witch. These are the four sorts of myths that Frye names, and they all appear in various genres and authorial styles. In fact, they serve as the foundation for a vast deal of outstanding literature. Myth - Quest Apart from the aforementioned four kinds of myths, Northrop Frye delves into the quest-myth, which is believed to have originated from the four sorts of myths. A quest-myth is a kind of myth that is common to all faiths in which the hero sets out to discover a truth or anything else.

For instance, in the final section of The Waste Land, the Messiah narrative is a Christian quest myth involving the Holy Grail. Every religion's sacred writings have their own mythology, and an archetypal critic must carefully study them in order to arrive at a suitable reading of the texts. A critic can research genres by deriving from an examination of myth archetypes, and from genre studies, he can deduce the meaning of a book in terms of myth. The term "deductive method of analysis" refers to this kind of disagreement in critique. In other words, the critic progresses from a text's general truth—a myth—to an explanation of its specific truth—the reason for a character's actions. A critic might therefore examine how a drama, lyric, or epic has developed from mythology. According to Frye, nearly every literary genre has developed from the quest story alone. An archetypal critic's responsibility is to study myths and determine the purpose and message of a piece of art. Religion and Literary Criticism There is a tight tie between literary criticism and religion. A literary critic views God as an archetype of a man who is depicted in a work as a hero in his interpretation.

In the narratives of Paradise Lost and the Bible, God is a character that the critic works with and takes into consideration solely as a human character. Criticism deals with what is conceivable and possible; similarly, religion deals with how things look rather than scientific actuality. Both literary criticism and religion operate on the basis of conceivability; there is no room for scientific actuality in either, but what is conceived is accepted by all. In both cases, an epiphany is at work, which is a profound insight of God or truth. It comes from the dreams and the subconscious. There is a cycle to waking and dreaming in human life, and one may observe this cycle of light and dark in nature as well. Dreaming and waking, light and dark, are two opposite elements that cause a person to have an epiphany. Man experiences dread and frustration during the day, and his libido—the powerful force of life—awakens and drives him to

accomplish goals in the dead of night. It is the contrast that lets man see truth in both religion and literary criticism, solving his difficulties and clearing his misconceptions.

In a Myth, the Tragic and Comedic Visions Religion and art have the same goal of perfection. When all is said and done, perfection is what awaits. In religion, it is accomplished by visualisation, but in art, it is accomplished through dreaming (imagination). so is possible for literary criticism to reach perfection as well, and the ideal critic is the one who accomplishes so by analysing both a work's tragic and comedic view of life. The following describes the main structure of a myth's tragic and comedic visions:

1. In the humorous interpretation of life, a myth presents the "human" world as a community or a hero as the reader's representation. In this case, the archetypes of images are love, friendship, order, communion, and symposia. Marriage, or a similar completion, is part of the humorous view of life. The tragic view of life includes tyranny or anarchy, a solitary man or an individual leader, a bullying behemoth of romance, a betrayed or abandoned hero, and a leader with his back to his people in the "human" world. In addition to these, the tragic picture of life will include a witch, harlot, or other variations of Jung's "terrible mother."

2. In the comedic image of life in a myth, the "animal" world is shown as a society of tamed animals, generally a flock of sheep, or a lamb, or one of the softer birds (commonly a dove). Pastoral images are the prototypes of visuals. In the melancholic portrayal of existence, there exist many creatures in the "alien" realm, such as wolves, vultures, serpents, dragons, and raptors.

3. There is a garden, a grove, a park, a tree of life, a rose, or a lotus in the humorous interpretation of life, in the "vegetable" world of a tale. Shakespeare's woodland comedies and Marvell's verdant realm serve as instances of the archetypes of Arcadian imagery. There is a dark forest, as to the one in Milton's Camus or at the beginning of Dante's Inferno, or a heath or wilderness, or a tree of death, in the tragic perspective of existence, in the "vegetable" world of a story.

4. In the humorous interpretation of reality, within the mythical "mineral" realm, there exists a metropolis, a solitary edifice or temple, or a single stone—typically a radiant, priceless gem. They appear to be bright or flaming. "Starlit dome" is an example of an archetype of image.

The “mineral” world of a myth is viewed in the tragic perspective of existence as deserts, rocks, and ruins, or as geometric shapes like the cross.

5. The Renaissance depiction of the temperate body with its four humours was influenced by the river, which is customarily fourfold in the comedic view of existence in the “unformed” world of a story. Since the narrative myth of dissolution is frequently a story of flooding, in the tragic vision of existence, this world typically turns into the sea. The leviathan and other similar aquatic creatures are created when the sea and beast imagery are combined.

Frye introduces W.B. Yeats’ “Sailing to Byzantium” as a fitting and well-known example of the comic vision, which is represented in the poem by the city, the tree, the bird, the community of sages, the geometrical gyre, and the detachment from the cyclic world. This comes after discussing the fundamental patterns of the tragic and comic visions in a myth. According to Frye, the perception of a symbol or story is determined by one’s tragic or comical view of life. Conclusion Northrop Frye has proven the legitimacy of the archetypal method and its applicability in the interpretation of a text among the many literary criticism approaches.

Similar to literary works, criticism is likewise creative, and the typical critic deciphers a text’s meaning and a character’s motivations. No human effort is autonomous and the task of an archetypal critic is inclusive of formalistic critique (or structural criticism) and historical criticism. J.G. Frazer and C.G. Jung both unlocked new perspectives in archetypal or mythological criticism, and Frye removed obstacles to a text’s comprehension. According to Frye, the inductive and deductive methods are both useful instruments in mythological critique and neither should be abandoned. When one approach explains a text by drawing a general fact from a specific example, the other approach goes the other way. Because the two approaches are complimentary, archetypal critique would be lacking if one is not used. Using an archetypal approach to a text has helped to develop a methodical and all-encompassing understanding of literary criticism.

UNIT – II

STRUCTURE, SIGN AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSE OF HUMAN SCIENCES – DERRIDA

Author Introduction

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) was a French philosopher and literary critic celebrated for founding the deconstruction movement, which questions conventional beliefs about language, meaning, and interpretation. His seminal works include *Of Grammatology* (1967), where he critiques the Western preference for speech over writing and introduces the idea of "différance," which underscores the instability of meaning. In *Writing and Difference* (1967), Derrida explores the interplay between language and philosophy, emphasising the multiplicity of textual interpretations. *Dissemination* (1972) delves into the complexities of meaning, while *The Post Card* (1980) blurs the lines between philosophy and literature. Through these influential texts, Derrida has significantly shaped literary theory, philosophy, and the humanities, encouraging a reassessment of how texts are interpreted and understood.

Summary

Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" has frequently drawn criticism from a number of philosophical schools. One of the seminal works in the annals of literary theory and criticism is still the essay. Though poststructuralism gained popularity in the 1970s, this groundbreaking book also serves as the birthplace of the movement.

As the title implies, Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" addresses issues related to human sciences including literature, anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy in addition to being primarily a literary theory. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism had already started to take hold in the human sciences. In continental Europe, structuralism was the most widely accepted and significant doctrine by 1960. Although structuralism became quite popular, it was still seen as a novel and experimental approach. Its validity still has to be determined and evaluated. In 1966, the Johns Hopkins University conference "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" was held with this goal in mind. Many well-known and influential structuralist philosophers attended this

symposium in an effort to study and talk about structuralism and its influence on the human sciences.

Derrida notes that the history of the idea of structuralism has seen a “event” of rupture and redoubling or recurrence right in the introduction of the essay. Derrida then goes on to discuss the idea of structure and its past prior to this “rupture” occurrence. According to Derrida, the idea of structure and the word “structure” are as ancient as Western philosophy and science. ‘epistēmē’ refers to established and indisputable knowledge and comprehension. Derrida calls Western philosophy and science absolutes. The term and idea of structure are as old as epistēmē.

In Western philosophy, order is based on the ordering of the world according to binary opposites. For instance, in Genesis and Jewish scriptures, God creates light by separating it from darkness, creates land by separating it from water, and creates Earth by its separation from Heaven. In these ways, we can see how order segregates the world into binary opposites. The pre-modern world was geocentric and divinely ordained. The universe had a specific structure and order, and because it had these qualities, it also had a centre. An order without a centre is hard to understand in a structure.

It is assumed that there must be a ruling centre that maintains the structure’s coherence in order for there to be a structure or order. Everything is a little version of the divinely ordained order of the cosmos. The premodern manner of thinking did not vanish in the contemporary era. We still have a strong belief in centres and institutions nowadays. Derrida makes reference to the structure’s significance and structurality. Even though the structure is always at work, we do not observe or discuss it because we assume that it is naturally structured.

Subsequently, Derrida starts discussing the centres of the constructions. In his view, structural centres restrict free play in addition to organising it (as per Western philosophy and ideas). A structure permits some degree of unrestricted play within its defined bounds. If a structure has no centre, this restriction on free play will vanish. But it will also result in a lack of coherence. Let’s look at a linguistic sample. We will not be able to communicate clearly and effectively if we start to disregard the fundamental grammar norms of the English language and

start speaking whenever and however we choose. Therefore, it is inexplicable and inconceivable to have a structure without a centre or coherence.

Even if a centre is what makes a structure exist, it escapes and remains outside of structurality. When we stop to think about it, chess rules don't actually exist. Outside of the game, there are rules. Therefore, the centre of a structure is not its component. There is no way to change an element in the centre. This is not the same as the usual belief that the structure's origin or centre is both its source and its holding. According to Derrida "The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its center elsewhere." Derrida therefore highlights the conflict between the episteme itself and Western rationality, which is predicated on this center-based structure. It's "contradictorily coherent."

Derrida goes on to say that this contradiction's coherence is a sign of desire. A centre has long been wanted in Western thought. Western philosophy is predicated on the concepts of an origin, an ideal form, an infallible truth, a god, etc. All the meaning is provided by this centre. The West has traditionally favoured wholes over holes, presence over absence, and a variety of stand-ins to fill in the centre. But this need for a centre only suggests that there is something wrong with it, or that it does not exist at all. Ultimately, we don't want things that are already ours or that are known to exist. This desired idea of a centred structure, according to Derrida in Structure, Sign and Play, is merely another play that is based on a basic foundation and an immovable centre that is beyond the play itself. This play is the outcome of and contributes to the anxiety that keeps this structure with an absolute centre. This is true since there is always a certain amount of tension involved in games because there is always play at risk.

The result of this concern is that the free play eventually freezes. All other viable options are marginalised and excluded by a centre. Women will be marginalised, for instance, in a society where men predominate. In a same vein, every culture that has Christ at its core will marginalise all other cultures. Binary opposites like Christian/Pagan, Spirit/Matter, Nature/Culture, etc. are the result of this concern for a centre. The left side of the binary is marginalised while the right side is given preference. In a drama concerned with maintaining its core, our understanding is reliant on binary codes and notions. Our world is governed by the dominant side of the binary, which also freezes free play. Social conventions, taboos,

advertisements, rituals, and other practices, for instance, all aim to suppress the other and promote one side of the dichotomy. Language and reality, in Derrida's view, are not black-and-white categories. They are unclear and might mean many things. There are always going to be more than one option, even if some are emphasised and chosen.

The structural centre is described as the origin, the end, the arché (beginning), or the telos in Derrida's Structure, Sign, and Play. A history of meanings informs each replacement, alteration, or even recurrence of the structural centre. There is a set beginning and conclusion to this history of meanings as well. The study of eschatology, or the theology of death and judgement, is also limited to a framework that has a fixed centre and is outside the scope of any play.

Derrida then moves on to talk about the development of the idea of structure prior to the rupture he notes at the opening of Structure, Sign, and Play. Derrida examines structures both historically (diachronically) and at a specific moment in time (synchronically). We are unable to replace a structure's centre once we notice it within a specific time period. Nevertheless, a sequence of centre substitutions may be observed when examining the idea of structure historically or diachronically. All that has happened to the idea of structure throughout its history is the gradual and controlled replacement of one centre by another. The centre remains the same, it merely takes on new identities and shapes. These centres are known as metonymy and metaphors. For instance, God was the focal point during the early Christian era and the 18th century. In the 19th century, reason took the place of this centre. Eventually, irrationality, desire, and the unconscious took the place of reason. Derrida underlines once more how "Presence" in every meaning of the word unites all these centres. Every word pertaining to foundations and principles always indicates a sense of presence. Etymology: eidos (form or essence), archđ (beginning), telos (goal), energeia (activity), ousia (real being), and alētheia (truth) are notable instances.

According to Derrida's Structure, Sign, and Play, the instant the structurality of the structure started to be recognised, observed, and repeated was the event that caused a rupture in the history of structure. The law that motivated the search for a reliable centre or origin in a structure, as well as the process of signification that governs the replacement of the rule of central presence, are the next points Derrida highlights. In Derrida's Structure, Sign and Play, we

discover that there is no absolute centre at all when we start to investigate the structurality of the structure and search for it.

This is comparable to the non-positive, inherent meaning of Saussurean linguistics. Actually, as the aforementioned sections explain, it is arbitrary and differential. The systems that give meaning are not predicated on anything definite and logical. A linguistic sign system lacks both a centre and an organising principle that would provide coherence to the linguistic structure. The distinctions give each symbol a significance. Because it is not darkness, we comprehend day, and because afternoon differs from dawn, we comprehend the idea of afternoon. A dictionary can help us better grasp the lack of centre in the language sign system. We search up a term in a dictionary to find its definition.

Instead of providing the "meaning" of the word, the dictionary directs us to a number of other terms. Other signals and phrases create the meaning. As a result, we will eventually reach a solid base that powers the entire meaning system. Each word or signifier is a sound whose meaning is dependent upon another signifier. There is merely a never-ending series of noises. Derrida just erasures the term signified, not opposing it (a quote from Heidegger). We cross out words that are marked for erasure. Erasure confirms the word's existence but calls for more investigation. The word is thus left, but it is crossed out.

Derrida emphasises the absence of a centre. As a centre lacks a natural location or purpose, we are unable to experience it as a "presence." Rather, it is a gap that may be filled by several replacements. Right now, when there is no centre and everything turns into argument. There are several equally legitimate ways to look at the world, and each perspective has its own vocabulary, which is referred to as discourse. It turns into a system that allows for endless play and does not require a transcendental signified. Derrida presents the idea of decentering as a method of reading and interpreting. It awakens our awareness of the presence of a centre and a binary. It also overthrows the prevailing hierarchy by subverting or substituting the marginalised or suppressed notion for the established centre, which then becomes the new centre. Derrida concedes that this new centre is just as prone to instability and is just as readily replaced by another centre. Free play, on the other hand, is the state in which several centres (or non-centers) become equally conceivable. A key component of the deconstruction notion is the decentering of the transcendental signified.

Derrida's 'Structure, Sign and Play' highlights how each author's decentering is contained within a single circle. The link between the development of metaphysics and its eventual annihilation is outlined in this circle. It's noteworthy to observe that in order to decenter metaphysics, we depend on its core ideas.

Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play" also makes reference to Claude Lévi Strauss' introduction to "The Raw and the Cooked." In the introduction, Strauss makes an effort to transcend the dichotomies of nature vs culture, reasonable versus intelligent, etc. Beyond the dichotomy between an individual's sensory and intellectual selves, Strauss aims to travel. Beyond the unequal link between the sign system is what he is aiming for.

Derrida claims that there are two ways in which we eliminate the distinction between the signifier and the signified. The first method is the traditional approach, which favours the signified above the signifier. We view the meaning or notion as steady and fundamental. Conversely, we understand the signifier to be only a tool or instrument used to express the signified or its meaning. But in doing so, we fail to see or pay attention to the subtleties inherent in the signifier. Derrida argues that a signifier cannot convey the signified in a transparent or play-free manner. The second method is to challenge the mechanism that underlies the signifier's first reduction to eliminate the distinction between the signifier and the signified. The signifier no longer alludes to an outside idea or meaning in this instance. Rather than referring to a signified, it just relates to other signifiers. As a result of the signifier's continuous chain of linguistic allusions to other signifiers, the meaning is perpetually postponed or delayed. Reaching a stable meaning is challenging when signifier and signified fade apart.

Derrida makes an effort to demonstrate how conventional structural frameworks are also a part of the human sciences. He uses the field of ethnology as an example to show how traditional metaphysical frameworks might be dismantled. The study and comparison of various human civilisations is known as ethnology. Derrida claimed that the emergence of ethnology coincided with the decentering of metaphysical frameworks. Derrida claims that speech is a part of ethnology, just like it is of any other structure. Even if it rebels against them, the European discipline of ethnology also uses classical structuralism notions. As a human science, ethnology functions inside a predetermined framework of ideas that have been passed down from its academic and intellectual past. These ideas include identity, rituals, social structure, etc. But

ethnologists are also conscious of the prejudices ingrained in earlier theories and understandings. Because of this, ethnologists have to balance their desire to characterise societies using accepted terms with the uneasy realisation that these notions may be insufficient or constrictive.

Derrida asserts that there are two methods to critique language:

1. After you see how nature and culture's disagreement has boundaries, you may start methodically and completely challenging the ideas. In the conventional sense, this questioning is neither philosophical nor philological. Rather, this methodical inquiry constitutes a departure from conventional philosophy.
2. Preservation of customary and traditional conceptions combined with rejection of their boundaries constitute the second method of language criticism. In this sense, the conventional wisdom is not regarded as infallible. Rather, they are only perceived as instruments that remain available for contesting or scrutinising existing structures that they are a part of. This is the way social scientific terminology criticises itself.

In "The Elementary Structures of Kinship," Claude Levi Strauss maintains the conventional nature/culture split while challenging its veracity, claims Derrida. The notion of bricolage introduced by Levi Strauss in 'The Savage Mind' is mentioned in Derrida's Structure, Sign and Play. A bricoleur, in Strauss's opinion, employs devices that are easily accessible but not customarily employed for that specific purpose. Derrida makes reference to Gerard Genette's assertion that bricolage may be used in literary criticism in "Structuralisme et critique littéraire." In Structure, Sign, and Play, Derrida claims that all discourse is a bricoleur. Every form of expression and communication requires the imaginative reorganisation and repurposing of pre-existing language and cultural components.

Claude Levi Strauss presents the term engineer as the antithesis of bricolage. A bricoleur modifies pre-existing tools to suit their needs and put them to unusual uses. Conversely, the engineer creates his own syntax and tools. Since they started the conversation from scratch, they are its ultimate source. Thus, the term "engineer" is fictitious. Strauss's notion of an engineer is criticised by Derrida in Structure, Sign, and Play. He asserts that a pure discourse devoid of all historical discourses is unachievable. According to Derrida, because Strauss views bricolage as mythopoetic, bricoleurs also created the myth of the engineer.

Claude Lévi Strauss asserts that bricolage is more than merely a craft. It is also a myth-making or mythopoetic endeavour. As per Derrida, Strauss's 'The Raw and the Cooked' rediscovered the mythopoetic essence of bricolage. The first book in the four-volume "Mythologiques" series on cultural anthropology is titled "The Raw and the Cooked." Strauss gives up on any mention of a core, an origin, a preferred reference, or an unchanging reality across this body of work.

The Bororo tale, which Strauss uses as the key or reference myth, is not entitled to any preference over other stories. Rather, it is essentially a reworking of previous tales from the same or nearby tribes. According to Strauss, he might have used any other tale as a primary source. According to Strauss, he uses the tale of Bororo as the main myth not because it has any unique qualities that make it deserving of being the reference myth. Rather, it is solely due of its haphazard placement within the mythology category.

Furthermore, Derrida notes that the central myth lacks a solid genesis. Everything starts with a structure that lacks a definite, stable centre. After realising that a systematic examination of myths is unachievable, Strauss tries. As a result, Strauss claims that we have to reject the conventional language and epistemology of philosophy and science that demands the presence of an absolute centre. Therefore, the book on myths becomes a tertiary code if the myths are based on secondary codes. The book itself turns into a myth, a mythical story whose lack of a subject and creator is its centre. The ethnographic bricolage takes on its mythopoetic role at this time.

Derrida values Strauss's investigation into the structural patterns seen in myths as well as their absence. He does, however, also bring out a number of issues with Strauss's theory of bricolage and its application to mythopoetic creativity at the same time. Derrida asks if we should do away with the epistemic criteria that categorise and differentiate different discourse features.

Totalisation, in Derrida's view, is 'impossible' and 'useless' at different times. This is due to the two ways in which we conceptualise the limit of totalisation:

- The traditional method: in situations when there are many more objects than there are forms to depict them.
- Totalisation is not allowed in the language since something is always missing.

This is seen through the lens of play. The need for ongoing supplementation is made easier by the center's absence. Although this addendum contributes something, the centre is still missing. Thus, the constant emphasis on something missing takes the role of the lack of a firm, absolute centre.

Derrida claims that the meaninglessness of totalisation stems from the fact that a field is endless and cannot be fully understood in a single glance. Rather, it is because totalisation is forbidden by a finite language. There is always going to be something that words cannot express. It is the substitute, the unrestricted play, that is infinite—not the field itself. The march towards supplementarity, which embraces both addition and substitution, is also the movement towards free play.

According to Derrida, there is a constant tension between history and presence in play, as stated in "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." Metaphysics has always been associated with the notion of a transcendental presence—a God—during the history of the West. The goal of historical narratives has been to give events lasting interpretations and meanings. Coherence, stability, honesty, and closure have always been desired by them. Play subverts and tests these conventional structures, stories, and inclinations. 'Play is the disturbance of presence', says Derrida. A play is always about what may be there or not. It must be conceived before you can determine if it will exist or not.

Derrida's Structure Sign and Play states that there are two ways to understand sign and free-play in relation to structure. The first is about searching for the truth, its source, and its order without allowing for free play. The second reading of the structure, symbol, and free-play is the one that accepts free-play and gives up on looking for an origin. It makes an effort to transcend humanity and man. Derrida claims that despite their irreconcilable differences, both interpretations fall under the category of human sciences. Since we are unable to select one over the other, we must find a middle ground and recognise the subtle differences between the two interpretations. By merging the terms "difference" and "deferral," Derrida creates the term "différance."

The definition of différence is "being different from something else." It does not, however, imply it in the conventional sense. Derrida suggests that we shouldn't be devastated by

the loss or lack of a centre in his concluding remarks to his groundbreaking article. In contrast to Rousseau, who had grown melancholy and nostalgic, we must discover freedom and delight in play and the lack of total presence.

Essay

Derrida articulates the concept of freeplay—a decentering of systems inside systems—in Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of Human Science. The centring of systems is intended to give the system coherence, however it is paradoxical because it is based on desire rather than any underlying principles, which is supposed to prevent freeplay. A structure's foundation is made up of historical repeats and patterns that may be seen in historical documents. These repetitions and patterns are made up of several centre replacements.

The substitutional moment, dubbed "rupture" by Derrida, is when the pattern or repetition reasserts itself by shifting the structure's centre of gravity. It is an instance of freeplay (within the system) upending history, which is a sequence of occurrences that gives a system linear, logical coherence. Heideggar, Freud, and Nietsche's three main criticisms of de-centering employ the vocabulary of metaphysics to dissect, analyse, and dismantle the metaphysical precepts itself. This conundrum is pertinent to the shifting of culture in any context—historical, philosophical, political, economic, etc. Concepts take on opposing sides as they grow (binary oppositions).

After that, Derrida discusses Levi-Strauss' theory of bricolage, which holds that ideas must be borrowed from other texts in order to give a work coherence (intertextuality of whatever notions appear convenient to create coherence, an intertextual collage) that is obviously susceptible to change. This bricolage gives rise to the notion of myth. It is assumed that every myth has an engineer, [the idea/person] who crafts concepts "out of whole cloth," but this notion of the engineer is implausible because it would imply that concepts from outside the system are used to create a system. Therefore, where did the engineer get these concepts from? Levi-Strauss claims that the bricoleur created it, yet if the engineer were real, the bricoleur's centred system would be under jeopardy.

Bricolage is a notion that is both academic and mythical. However, it appears to demand respect as an absolute source for an idea founded on myth. It is necessary to reject current

epistemè (foundations / sciences) in order to return to an absolute source, yet mythomorphic principles must also be applied in order to counter mythomorphic discourse on myth. The triple philosophers are faced with a similar dilemma regarding metaphysics. Since myths lack author, the idea that they must have a source is a historical illusion. This raises the question of whether other discourse domains are subject to the same historical illusion regarding absolute sources.

This is the single question raised by Levi-Strauss, and Derrida makes no attempt to address it. Rather, he claims that many philosophers make the presumption that philosophy cannot advance since there is no language that can describe the boundaries of the centred system because there is none that exists beyond what is now known. According to Derrida, philosophy must be understood in "a certain way" in order to transcend it; one cannot just presume that philosophy exists elsewhere. Empiricism, or the collection of data that depends on what can be represented inside a system, shapes the vocabulary and body of knowledge that we use to build our systems and threatens scientific discourse by continuously refuting it, even if it is founded in it.

In a paradoxical way, structuralism—a critique movement that prioritises a binary system—claims to be critical of empiricism, yet Derrida notes that Levi-Strauss' books and essays are also empirical works that are subject to criticism. In order for the sciences to have an empirical principle-based centre of reference, history must be understood in order for the sciences to record knowledge and data. Empiricism is likewise ineffective as a system of information since it requires the collection of all available data in order to be totally valid (totalisation). However, it is hard to totalise all of this limitless information because of freeplay, or the continual replacements of the centre.

Freeplay throws off presence as well as the feeling of history. Despite pointing this out, Levi-Strauss' critique seems to be centred around the idea of genesis, speech, and an unadulterated source to base its existence.

Ultimately, Derrida identifies two reasons why there are conflicting but coexisting schools of interpretation: 1) the interpretation that aims to unravel an original Truth free from the interference of freeplay, and 2) the interpretation that upholds the place of freeplay within the system. While it may seem unachievable, this gives viewpoints the opportunity to identify

common ground, even if it does not support any comprehensive viewpoint. In my opinion, the notion of freeplay may be used to expand and improve a system to make room for new centres of thought, if the goal of freeplay is to de-center within it. Finding fresh perspectives on the world that are not constrained by established norms but rather continually evolving in accordance with the ideas of freeplay to improve one's participation in it appears to be the main goal of the post-modern spirit.

THE STRUCTURAL STUDY OF MYTH – CLAUDE LEVI STRAUSS

Author Introduction

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) was a French anthropologist and ethnologist who played a pivotal role in establishing structuralism within the social sciences. He is renowned for his innovative approach to understanding human cultures, positing that the structures of human thought shape cultural expressions, including myths, kinship systems, and social practices. In his influential works, such as "Tristes Tropiques" (1955) and "Structural Anthropology" (1958), Lévi-Strauss examines the connections between culture and the cognitive structures that inform human behavior. By applying linguistic principles to anthropology, he highlighted the significance of binary oppositions—like nature/culture and raw/cooked—in understanding cultural phenomena. His ideas have significantly impacted various fields, including anthropology, sociology, and literary theory, establishing him as a key figure in 20th-century intellectual discourse.

Summary

Saussure studies language as a structure, or langue, and his theories on the fundamental patterns of language apply to any system of meaning-making, whether it a set of codes or signals, such as football referee signals, or an official "language," such as English, Spanish, or Arabic. A system that does this is known as a signifying system, and it can be any organisational structure or structure that interprets cultural signals. A literary piece, like a poem, for instance, as well as any tribal or communal ritual, like a wedding, rain dance, or graduation ceremony, as well as any form of "fashion" (in terms of attire, cuisine, vehicles, etc.) and advertising, all function as signifying systems. Essentially, every aspect of a culture may be considered a signifying system as long as it has signs that can be "read" and understood in the ways Saussure described: by

figuring out signification (observing the relationships between signifiers and signifieds) and by figuring out value.

For Levi-Strauss in particular, such universal human truths—what all humans share by virtue of being human—exist at the level of structure. All signifying systems, all systems of cultural organisation, share the same fundamental structures, regardless of their particular content. So the motive for using structuralist analysis is, in this sense, the same as the motive for using a humanist perspective: to find out what we have in common, or what is "the human condition." Nevertheless, structuralist analysis of Levi Strauss and Saussure offers a chance to uncover the "timeless universal human truths" so beloved of the humanist perspective, but using a methodology that seems much more "objective" and "scientific."

According to Levi-Strauss, kinship is one of the fundamental structures that all human societies have in common. Every culture that has ever been, regardless of location, has some sort of system for determining who can marry whom, who inherits what from whom, and how these connections are referred to. Similar to Saussure's langue, such a kinship system consists of units (men and women, identified as fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, uncles and aunts, etc.) and rules that link those units. Two key themes are highlighted by Levi-Strauss's research of kinship systems in his book *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. In particular, he points out that kinship networks account for what he terms "the exchange of women," in which family groups "give" women to another family in order for them to become wives in return for something valuable.

Saussure's concept of paradigms—where one thing can be exchanged for something similar—and syntagms—where one thing is exchanged for something different—corresponds to Levi-Strauss's insistence that the relations among units within the structure occur in binary pairs, which are either similar to each other or different from each other. This ties in with the concepts of metaphor and metonomy as well. Metanomy is the process of finding similarities between two objects, whereas substitution involves replacing one item with another that is similar to yet distinct from the original. Stated differently, Levi-Strauss is not concerned with the identification of any particular unit—he doesn't even care what "A" is—but rather with the relationship between any two units that are compared in a binary pair.

Because Levi-Strauss focusses on relations, his analyses in his books on kinship, culture, and myth sometimes begin to resemble algebraic equations. Clans and totems are used by "The Structural Study of Myth" as an example of how structures can only be understood in structural relationships inside a signifying system, according to Levi-Strauss. A tribe may recognise different clans, such as the bear and eagle clans, but each clan's customs are based on the structural link between all the potential clan animals rather than the species after which it was named. Levi-Strauss uses the comparison between an eagle and a bear as an example. What matters is not how eagle people are like genuine eagles, but rather how the distinctions between eagle people and bear people replicate the differences between real eagles and real bears. In algebraic words, units inside the system only have significance in relation to other units, and can only be analysed in binary pairs. Levi-Strauss adds that you look not at why A is A, but rather at how A is to B as C is to D.

Levi-Strauss goes on to explain how binary pairs—in particular, binary opposites—form the fundamental building blocks of all human civilisations, intellectual processes, and signifying systems in his book *The Raw and the Cooked.* From this angle, if there is a universal "human nature" or "human condition," it is because people understand and organise their surroundings in terms of binary pairs of opposites, such as "raw and cooked." More significantly, one word is preferred over the other in every binary pair: light is preferable to dark, cooked is better than raw, good is superior to evil, etc. Keep this in mind when we begin discussing Derrida and deconstruction the following week.

And now for the reading for today. In "The Structural Study of Myth," Levi-Strauss aims to elucidate the reasons for the striking similarities between tales from many civilisations worldwide. Since myths aren't restricted by probability or truth standards, they may contain anything. So why are so remarkably many tales from so many different cultures?

Instead of focussing on the substance of myths, he examines their structure in order to respond to this query. Levi-Strauss contends that the structural sameness of myths accounts for their commonalities, even when the stories' substance, individual characters, and events may differ greatly. Levi-Strauss argues that myth is language in order to make this point about the construction of myth, as myth needs to be communicated in order to exist. With the same structures that Saussure said are inherent to all languages, it is likewise a language.

Myth, as language, is made up of “langue” and “parole,” that is, the ahistorical, synchronic framework as well as the particular diachronic elements that are included within it. Saussure’s langue and parole get a new dimension when Levi-Strauss notes that langue is a part of “reversible time,” while parole is a part of “non-reversible time.” He is saying that langue, being only the structure itself, may exist in the past, present, or future, but parole, as a particular instance, example, or occurrence, can only exist in linear time, which is unidirectional—you cannot turn the clock back. Once again, consider the following sentence: “The adjectival noun verbed the direct object adverbially.”

It takes time to read the entire statement because you read it word by word, left to right; this is non-reversible time. If you consider the phrase to be the structure of English instead of reading it, it exists in a single instant, every instant—yesterday, today, and tomorrow. That time is reversible.

Levi-Strauss argues that a myth is both historically specific—it is nearly always situated in the distant past—and ahistorical, which means that the tale it tells is ageless. Myth is parole as history; langue as timeless. In addition to langue and parole, Levi-Strauss claims that myth also exists on a third level, demonstrating that myth is a separate language and not only a subset of language. He uses the myth’s narrative to describe that level. The reason the narrative endures across all translations is what makes it unique. Levi-Strauss claims that myth may be translated, paraphrased, enlarged, and otherwise altered without losing its fundamental form or structure, in contrast to poetry, which is indefinable. Although he doesn’t say so, we may refer to the third factor as “malleability.”

Thus, Levi-Strauss contends that although myth as structure resembles language as structure, it is in fact distinct from language since it functions at a higher, more sophisticated level. Language and mythology both have the following traits in common:

1. It is composed of pieces that are assembled in accordance with guidelines.
2. Based on binary pairings or opposites, these units establish interactions with one another that serve as the framework for the structure.

The basic units of myth are not phonemes—the smallest unit of speech that separates one utterance from another, like a letter—morphemes—the smallest unit of relatively stable meaning

that cannot be divided, like a non-compound word—sememes—the meaning expressed by a morpheme—or even signifiers and signifieds. Rather, Levi-Strauss refers to these basic units of myth as “mythemes.” This is how myth differs from language (as Saussure defines it). Levi-Strauss’ method of analysis is different from Saussure’s because he focusses on sets of connections rather than individual interactions, or what he refers to as “bundles of relations.” Saussure was interested in analysing the relationships between signs, or signifiers, in the structure of language.

An example of this would be a musical score that has bass and treble clefs. There are two ways to read music: diachronically, which involves reading each page from left to right, and synchronically, which involves reading the notes in the treble clef and how they relate to the bass clef. Levi-Strauss refers to the “harmony” created by the relationship between the notes in the treble and bass clef as a “bundle of relations.”

This is the essence of Levi-Strauss’ approach. Consider a myth. Break it down into its most basic elements, or “mythemes.” Typically, a mytheme refers to a single event or point in the myth’s plot or narrative. Next, arrange these topics in a way that allows for both synchronic and diachronic readings. The myth’s structure is found on the synchronic (up-and-down) axis in reversible time, whereas the tale, or narrative, is found on the diachronic (left-to-right) axis in non-reversible time.

This is an illustration of a mytheme in action. Consider the typical mythological structure: a hero encounters a challenge, overcomes it, and achieves a (good) outcome. Now, each of you fill up your own details regarding this myth. Next, we enumerate on the board all the modifications we’ve made to this myth, including the protagonist, the challenge, the solution, and the outcome. Every version has the same structure, yet every variation is different.

Next, Levi-Strauss examines the vertical columns of variations, attempting to identify a common thread that unites them all. For instance, in class, we discussed challenges like wanting to cook chicken soup but not having any chickens, being hungry, having a class full of stupid pupils, and falling in love with someone who isn’t accessible. Every story contains an unfinished element or missing component that has to be filled in once the hero overcomes the challenge.

Each variation of our story attempts to resolve a cultural conundrum: the dichotomy between "incomplete" and "complete," according to Levi-Strauss.

Through his example of presenting the Oedipus story in this manner, Levi-Strauss starts to identify some patterns emerging in the synchronic bundles of connections that we may refer to as "themes." One motif that comes to me is the concept of struggling to walk straight. The topic is then taken further by Levi-Strauss, who interprets it as a manifestation of a conflict between the concepts of autochthonic (meaning indigenous or native; in this context, meaning self-generated) creation and chthonic (literally, from the underworld gods, but here implying an origin from something else). Then, he recognises similar tension—or structural binary opposition—in tales from various civilisations. According to Levi-Strauss, this is the myth's significance: it depicts specific structural relations—binary oppositions—that are issues shared by all civilisations.

This is when Levi-Strauss' analysis becomes subjective. What he perceives in the bundles of relations may be interpreted differently by us. For instance, we could see that there are various perspectives on walking straight in one column. We could read this as a concern about one's physical capabilities and limitations, which is a statement about one's fitness for survival as opposed to one's need for charity and kindness. Finally, we could read this tension—between selfishness and altruism—as the central theme the myth is expressing.

This is how literary interpretation can be affected by this structuralist approach. There are countless ways to interpret a myth or narrative once you've identified its mythemes, or its constituent parts, and arranged them according to Levi-Strauss' pattern. Following the explanation of this fundamental approach, Levi-Strauss discusses how to refine his system so that anthropologists might benefit from it. Because the information he covers is more pertinent to anthropology than it is to literary analysis, we don't need to worry too much about it. He discusses conducting a structural examination of every potential mythological variant in these pages.

This would be ideal since it would demonstrate that all variations actually have the same structure, supporting Levi-Strauss's original claim that myth is a language and that each form of a given tale can be explained by structural analysis. He analyses a Zuni story in great detail to

support his argument, applying the same techniques he used to analyse the Oedipus myth. He also examines a Pueblo narrative that has a comparable structure.

In summary, he says that the structural technique of myth analysis "enables us to perceive some basic logical processes which are at the root of mythical thought" and "brings order out of chaos" by offering a way to account for vast variations on a fundamental myth structure. For Levi-Strauss, this is crucial because he wants the study of myth to be rational and "scientific" in every way, free from the need for any arbitrary interpretative elements.

Essay

Claude Levi-Strauss' 1955 book "The Structural Study of Myth" is regarded as one of the most important contributions to the fields of anthropology and structural analysis. The programmatic paper "The Structural Study of Myth" by Levi-Strauss addresses how anthropology ought to approach the study of myths. Although Levi-Strauss' essay "The Structural Study of Myth" primarily serves as a guide for analysing myths, he does give several instances to show his structural model of myth analysis.

Levi-Strauss addresses a seeming paradox in mythology at the beginning of "The Structural Study of Myth": on the one hand, myths appear arbitrary as they defy logic and anything can happen in a narrative. However, Levi-Strauss points out that stories are presented similarly in numerous cultures, which conflicts with myths' seeming random character.

This paradox, in Levi-Strauss's opinion, indicates the direction of the appropriate technique for the study of myth. Myth is a universal framework that endures throughout time and society, despite the content being culturally and historically diverse. Levi-Strauss argues that anthropologists and myth studies ought to focus on the "deep structure" of the tale. Levi-Strauss is interested in the underlying structure that permeates collections of stories and even all myths, rather than the content or even the structure of a single narrative.

Levi-Strauss' "The Structural Study of Myth" is based on the fundamental idea that myth is language, or rather, language is myth. Language not only transmits myth, but it also performs similar duties to language, as de Saussure distinguished between "langue" and "parole" in The Nature of the Linguistic Sign. A myth also has its langue, according to Levi-Strauss, which is the

synchronous structure that permits the particular parole of a certain narrative. The framework of myths is constant, even though the details could change.

Similar to the language sign's inherent significance, the structural components of myths—what Levi-Strauss refers to as "mythemes"—depend on their alignment for meaning, much like the nature of a verbal sign. Each theme derives its significance from its place within the tale and how it interacts with other themes. As an underlying structure of myth, Levi-Strauss' "The Structural Study of Myth" explores how many mythemes assemble and are repeated. It is intended that the approach Levi-Strauss proposes for the study of myth would specifically address this issue.

A myth should be broken down into its mythemes, which are then categorised and arranged graphically in columns, according to Levi-Strauss. The diachronic evolution of the myth is shown by the mythemes chart's horizontal axis. Different takes on the same topic are shown in the vertical column. The anthropologist may thus see both chronological and thematic linkages thanks to the map of relations between mythemes that is obtained. The significance of the myth can only be understood by reading it while keeping both of these factors in mind.

UNIT – III

IRONY AS PRINCIPLE OF STRUCTURE – CLEANTH BROOKS

Author Introduction

Cleanth Brooks was an American literary critic and professor. He is best known for his contributions to New Criticism in the mid-20th century and for revolutionizing the teaching of poetry in American higher education. His best-known works, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947) and *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939), argue for the centrality of ambiguity and paradox as a way of understanding poetry. With his writing, Brooks helped to formulate formalist criticism, emphasising "the interior life of a poem" (Leitch 2001) and codifying the principles of close reading. Brooks was also the prominent critic of Southern literature, writing classic texts on William Faulkner, and co-founder of the influential journal *The Southern Review* (Leitch 2001) with Robert Penn Warren.

In the essay 'Irony as a Principle of Structure', Cleanth Brooks argues that meanings of universal significance which literature encodes in texts are suggested through the device of irony which the poet shows in the structure of a poem.

Summary

Cleanth Brooks' "Irony as a Principle of Structure" is a significant critical theory. He claims in this article that metaphor enables poets to illustrate a specific idea while conveying a deeper, more universal meaning. He claims that the cohesive arrangement of the poetic parts determines the poem's topic. Additionally, he claims that the meaning of a given remark varies depending on the context in which it is employed. He generates a plurality of meaning and defines irony as harmony between conflicting things. Here is a detailed description of all his reasons and how they apply to the poetry.

Metaphor is the contemporary poetic device rediscovery. Modern poets are able to address global issues by utilising metaphor in their works. The use of metaphor enables poets to highlight certain items, occasions, or experiences. In this poetry, "a red red rose" refers to a specific flower that releases scent; this serves to convey a more broad or universal degree of meaning. However, with the poet's assistance, the universal concept of "love" is suggested.

Poetry that uses metaphors runs the danger of making a specific, cryptic statement or expressing nothing at all. Because he is unable to make clear assertions, the poet must assume this danger. Direct assertions from a poet will result in poetry that is abstract and full of threats. It won't even be close to poetry. Brooks claims that an organic connection concept is implied by metaphor. In other words, poetry is made up of a variety of elements, including words, phrases, pictures, symbols, figure of speech, rhyme, rhythm, and metre. Each of these elements has a function in creating the meaning of the poem; they are all related to the central idea and rely on one another.

Poetry therefore has a logical framework. It is comparable to a kite, a plant, or a play in which several elements come together to create the overall impression. It appears as though the kite's tail navigates its purpose. It weighs the kite down, but ironically, it's a need that makes the kite rise, much as a plant is made up of several elements that work together to allow the plant to flourish as a whole. The stem, branches, roots, and leaves are all necessary for the plan to expand. The poetry has a hint of drama as well. The entire impact flows from every component of the play, and much as in a well-written poetry, there are no extraneous details or waste movements. Therefore, the little things add up to the great whole.

According to Brooks, context becomes the most significant factor because of the natural link between poetic structure and meaning. The link between words and the central idea of the overall meaning that poetry creates is referred to as context. It might be referred to as a poem's theme or subject. Poetic elements are inherent in all excellent poems because of their specific setting. The context of a given speech changes its intended meaning. Unexpected references give poetic statements additional meanings due of their context, not only by themselves. The meaning of a statement changes or is altered depending on the context in which it is used. A simple remark takes on a new significance when read in a literary setting. For instance. The phrase "ripeness is all" is used negatively in "King Lear." It is significant in a bad way. Edger wants to argue that there is no room for progress in old age. "To be or not to be" illustrates how complicated Hamlet's predicament is.

"The obvious wrapping of the statement by the context," according to Cleanth Brooks, is what irony is. The presser of the circumstance gives rise to irony. Brooks makes it quite evident that irony is a wrapping, or twisting. He intends to imply that an utterance's meaning might

become warped due to the context standard of one dimension. Irony, then, is a total inversion of meaning that is influenced by the surrounding circumstances and, most likely, the speaker's tone of voice. Irony provides more than one benefit.

Brooks asserts that context exerts pressure on irony and goes on to elucidate these influences through a poem. The relationships between the words that create meaning in a poem are defined by these forces. Irony is the conflict between a word's many meanings (ambiguity in meaning brought on by the connotative component of language), meanings that are compelled to coexist with other words and the context in which they are employed. In order to explain how context-driven irony is created—that is, when something is said, it is spoken by a specific dramatic character in a specific situation—Brooks draws a comparison between poetry and theatre.

Words are never standalone; they should always be understood in relation to their context, which includes the speaker and the setting of the poem. Brooks argues that irony arises from context and is crucial for meaning. A successful poem relies on the tensions generated by its setting. While harmony can emerge from certain combinations, meaning often arises from conflicts. Thus, Brooks suggests that meaning is shaped by contextual influences. The interplay between different elements of the poem creates its overall coherence.

Brooks feels that the structure of a poem requires precise, tangible details. The specifics serve as the metaphors, allusions, and units. According to Brooks, metaphors are vital even though they run the danger of hiding more important ideas since direct statements encourage abstraction and run the risk of drawing us out of poetry completely, whereas indirect statements work better in poetry. According to Brooks, poetry is a more efficient means of transmitting meaning than spoken communication because it uses metaphors, which guide us towards ideas indirectly rather than providing us with abstract concepts. Poetry typically deals with human subjects. It makes an effort to explain the state of humanity in terms of the causes and consequences of human behaviour.

According to Brooks, metaphors and symbols are the components of structure that give a poem its meaning. Plot and irony both utilise deception to convey meaning; they both reject the explicit expression of abstract concepts. To generate universal truths, both depend on an organic

unity of elements. Therefore, the artifact's structure has significance by design. In the opening paragraph of the article, Brooks claims that the modern poetic form is a rediscovering of the metaphor. The poet uses the metaphor so often that it serves as the particular via which he enters the universal. The poet derives broad meanings from specific details. However, these details shouldn't be selected at random. This demonstrates the significance of our ingrained linguistic patterns.

Brooks argues that specific, concrete details are essential for the form of a poem. These details serve as units, metaphors, and references. He asserts that while metaphors may obscure broader themes, they are crucial because direct statements can lead to abstraction, distancing us from the essence of poetry. Indirect expressions are more engaging. Poetry, in Brooks's view, effectively conveys meaning by using metaphors that guide us to ideas without resorting to abstract thoughts.

Brooks emphasises that poetry focuses on human experiences, reflecting the causes and effects of human actions through language, which is inherently a human construct. He posits that the structure of a poem is formed by metaphors and symbols that convey meaning. Irony and plot also play significant roles in creating meaning through indirectness, relying on the interconnectedness of elements to reveal universal truths.

Brooks opens his essay by noting that modern poetic techniques involve a rediscovery of metaphor, allowing poets to transition from the particular to the universal through specific details. However, he insists that these particulars should not be chosen randomly, highlighting the importance of conventional language habits. He points out that poets often take risks by expressing ideas indirectly, as direct statements can disrupt the poetic experience. Metaphors introduce a level of indirection that enriches poetry, while direct statements may detract from its essence.

This principle of indirection, which Brooks calls an "organic relationship," asserts that a poem is not merely a collection of beautiful images but a cohesive interplay between objects and ideas. He likens a well-crafted poem to a drama, where every element contributes to the overall effect, ensuring that nothing is superfluous.

Context plays a critical role in shaping meaning within poetry. Brooks illustrates this by examining Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where certain phrases gain depth and significance from their context. The words' meanings evolve based on the surrounding circumstances, demonstrating how context can imbue language with richness.

Brooks further explores the concept of irony, which can manifest in various forms: situational, dramatic, and verbal. Irony highlights the conflict between appearance and reality, creating a dynamic structure within a literary work. Brooks argues that irony is crucial for understanding poetry, as it encapsulates the nuances of context that affect meaning.

Brooks notes that not all statements hold their meaning regardless of context—many derive their significance from the circumstances in which they are expressed. In modern poetry, this is particularly important, as poets navigate a landscape of diminished belief in universal truths and a degradation of language itself.

Brooks concludes by emphasising that in poetry, statements gain their validity from their context. By examining the pressures exerted by context, he argues that poetry communicates insights grounded in concrete experiences rather than abstract generalizations, allowing for a deeper understanding of truth without losing its poetic essence.

Essay

Cleanth Brooks, a key figure in literary criticism, thoroughly examined the role of irony in poetry, arguing that it functions as a fundamental structural principle. In his essay, Brooks illustrates how irony shapes the meaning of poetic texts and reflects the complex interplay between language, context, and human experience. By delving into metaphor and irony, he highlights the organic unity of poetry, where each element is interconnected and contributes to the overall thematic coherence.

Central to Brooks's argument is the claim that poetry relies heavily on metaphor, enabling poets to transition from the specific to the universal. He asserts that modern poetic techniques represent a rediscovery of metaphor as a means of expressing deep truths. Rather than using direct statements that can lead to abstraction and distance, poets employ metaphors to

convey ideas indirectly. This method enriches the poem, inviting readers to engage with the text more profoundly.

Brooks underscores the importance of context in interpreting poetry. He argues that the meaning of a statement is significantly influenced by its surrounding circumstances. This dynamic relationship between context and content allows irony to thrive. For instance, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, certain phrases gain depth through their situational context, demonstrating how context enhances meaning and creates layers of significance.

Irony takes various forms—situational, dramatic, and verbal—each highlighting a conflict between appearance and reality. Situational irony occurs when the outcome of an action is contrary to what was intended, as seen in Macbeth's tragic downfall. Dramatic irony arises when the audience knows something the characters do not, creating tension. Verbal irony involves a disparity between what is said and what is meant, often reflecting sarcasm. Together, these forms of irony contribute to the poem's structural integrity, emphasising the complexity of human experiences.

Brooks's analysis of irony also offers critical insights into modernity. He notes a general decline in belief systems, leading to skepticism about universal truths. This disillusionment compels modern poets to utilize irony to express their ideas. In this context, poets confront the limitations of language, which has become worn and diluted over time. By employing irony, they can articulate the complexities of contemporary life, infusing their work with clarity and passion.

The relationship between irony and context is central to Brooks's thesis. He argues that meaning in poetry is not fixed but shaped by the pressures of context. For example, when a speaker states, "This is a fine state of affairs!" amidst chaos, the irony becomes evident. The literal meaning clashes with the actual situation, highlighting the speaker's frustration and disillusionment. Such examples demonstrate how context enhances the emotional weight of language, transforming simple statements into profound reflections on reality.

Brooks believes that poetry is fundamentally structured around irony, allowing the text to evolve its meaning dynamically. The influence of context enables a nuanced understanding of statements, revealing deeper implications beyond their literal interpretations. He emphasises that

poetry's coherence emerges from this intricate interplay of irony and context, creating a rich reading experience that encourages ongoing interpretation.

In discussing modern poetry, Brooks notes that poets must engage an audience accustomed to popular and commercial art. Consequently, irony becomes a tool for revitalization—restoring language's capacity for meaningful expression. He cites Randall Jarrell's *English Air Force* as an example of effective irony, where conflicting meanings coexist within the poem, reflecting the complexities of the human experience. Jarrell's work encapsulates the dualities of existence, revealing both just and unjust aspects of humanity through irony.

Ultimately, Brooks's examination of irony as a structural principle sheds light on the dynamic nature of literary interpretation. By positioning irony at the core of poetic meaning, he emphasises the necessity of understanding context and the interconnectedness of a poem's elements. Brooks encourages readers to engage with poetry as a living entity, where every word and image carries significance shaped by its context.

In summary, Cleanth Brooks's analysis of irony as a structural principle highlights the critical role of context in understanding poetry. Through his exploration, he shows that irony enriches poetic meaning, allowing for deeper engagement with the text. By using metaphor and delving into language's nuances, poets navigate the complexities of human experience, offering insights rooted in their specific contexts. Brooks's work remains a significant contribution to literary criticism, urging readers to appreciate the layered meanings found within poetic texts.

CREATIVE WRITERS AND DAY DREAMING – SIGMUND FREUD

Author Introduction

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a groundbreaking approach to understanding the human mind and behaviour. Freud introduced key concepts such as the unconscious, repression, and the significance of dreams, proposing that our thoughts and actions are often influenced by hidden desires and unresolved conflicts. His major works include *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), where he explores the meanings behind dreams, and *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905),

which examines human sexuality and its development. Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) critiques the tension between individual instincts and societal norms. His ideas, while controversial, have profoundly impacted psychology, literature, and art, shaping our understanding of human behaviour and the complexities of the mind. Freud's legacy continues to spark discussions in both psychology and broader cultural contexts.

Summary

This text was authored by Freud nine years after his renowned *Interpretation of Dreams*. Before he fully addresses symptom interpretation in the 1920s, he introduces the idea that we also dream while awake. In fact, symptoms demonstrate that we dream in our waking life—a concept later emphasised by Jacques Lacan in the 1970s. Daydreaming can be seen as a specific instance of waking dreams. Let's use this as our guiding principle.

Freud begins his essay by posing a question: what materials does the creative writer use to craft their art? While the answer is clearly language, Freud expands this idea by suggesting, "might we say that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own, or rather, rearranges the things of his world in a pleasing way?" This seemingly simple observation highlights Freud's point that everyone has the potential to be a poet, linking enjoyment and satisfaction with the act of world-building.

This notion is significant: through play, we construct our own worlds based on enjoyment as children, a process that remains relevant to so-called mature adults. Freud asserts, "it would be wrong to think he does not take that world seriously," indicating that even in a world of satisfaction, we believe in it and take it to heart. However, Freud notes that children differentiate between play and reality. This prompts a question: in contemporary society, do reality and play not increasingly blend, leading to a struggle to distinguish between them? This remains an open inquiry. Continuing with the creative writer in mind, Freud observes that "language has preserved this relationship between children's play and poetic creation." He raises two important points: first, the reduction of the world to language and satisfaction, and second, the role of representation in language.

The creative writer separates their imaginative play from reality to protect the space of enjoyment. Freud states, "the unreality of the writer's imaginative world has very important

consequences for the technique of his art; many things that would not bring enjoyment in reality can do so in the realm of fantasy, and even distressing experiences can turn into sources of pleasure…" This shows how the writer elevates language as a representation of reality—though this representation is inherently flawed.

Could we extend this understanding to the condition of all creative individuals? In early play, where roles are not strictly defined, enjoyment might stem from the failures of representation. This too is a question worth considering. Freud's insight emerges here: "he may one day find himself in a mental situation that blurs the lines between play and reality." Humor, for instance, serves this function.

Freud suggests that as individuals mature, they abandon some enjoyment in favor of representation: "as people grow up, they cease to play and seem to give up the pleasure they once derived from it." Yet, he adds a caveat: "whoever understands the human mind knows that hardly anything is harder for a person to give up than a pleasure once experienced. We never truly give up anything; we only exchange one pleasure for another." He emphasises, "what appears to be a renunciation is actually the formation of a substitute." This passage is critical: Freud clarifies misunderstandings from his earlier works, guiding the reader to recognize that we do not relinquish enjoyment but rather substitute it—though this substitution often signifies a failure of representation. Daydreaming becomes a substitute for the satisfaction of being close to desired objects: instead of real sandcastles, we imagine them.

The term "substitute" is crucial, as Freud later refers to "substitute satisfaction" as a "symptom." The point is that the adult who seems to have given up enjoyment has actually found new pleasure in substitutes, resulting in the development of symptoms. Fantasy, then, supports the symptom. Freud states later in the essay that "phantasies are the immediate mental precursors of the distressing symptoms reported by our patients." Freud makes an important observation: "a happy person never fantasizes, only an unsatisfied one." This aligns with Lacan's assertion that "the subject is happy," meaning that, at their core, all subjects experience happiness—even those whose unfulfilled lives lead them to seek substitute forms of happiness.

If we consider the idea of singularity, it emerges in the context of fantasy as a wish, connecting drive and desire. Freud notes: "Mental work is linked to some current impression that

arouses one of the subject's major wishes. From there, it recalls a memory of an earlier experience in which this wish was fulfilled, creating a situation related to the future that represents the fulfillment of the wish. This results in a daydream or fantasy that carries traces of its origin."

The final part of the essay connects daydreams and fantasies to dreams in general, reinforcing the idea that we essentially dream while awake, and symptoms represent another form of dreaming. Here, it becomes evident that fantasies, wishes, and symptoms are distortions or substitutions akin to the censorship found in dreams.

Essay

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, profoundly influenced the understanding of human psychology, particularly in relation to creativity and the subconscious mind. In his exploration of creative writing and daydreaming, Freud delves into the intricate relationship between play, fantasy, and artistic expression. His insights reveal how daydreaming serves as a vital mechanism through which writers generate ideas and navigate their emotional landscapes.

Freud begins by pondering the nature of creativity, asking what materials a creative writer employs to craft their art. He acknowledges that language is fundamental but extends this inquiry to examine the creative process itself. Freud posits that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, constructing a world of their own through imagination. This observation emphasises that creativity is not limited to adulthood; rather, it is rooted in the playful explorations of childhood. In this context, Freud suggests that play allows children to rearrange their environment in ways that bring them joy, highlighting a fundamental connection between enjoyment and creative expression.

This link between play and creativity is significant. Freud argues that while children engage in play, they also take their imaginative worlds seriously, fostering a belief in their creations. This duality underscores a profound truth about human psychology: we invest emotional energy in the worlds we create, whether in childhood or adulthood. Freud stresses that even though these worlds are crafted from imagination, they hold meaning and are approached with a sense of seriousness.

However, Freud also points out that children maintain a distinction between play and reality. This brings forth a crucial question for contemporary society: do we not often find ourselves in a world where reality and play intertwine? In an age marked by digital technology and immersive experiences, the boundaries between the two can blur, leading to an inability to differentiate between genuine experiences and those shaped by fantasy. This observation invites further reflection on the impact of modernity on our understanding of creativity.

Continuing his analysis, Freud explores how language preserves the relationship between children's play and poetic creation. He identifies two critical aspects: first, the reduction of the world to language and satisfaction; second, the role of representation in language. Creative writers, like children at play, utilize language to shape their imaginative worlds, but they also navigate the tension between representation and reality. Freud argues that the creative writer separates their imaginative play from the harshness of reality to protect the joy derived from that play.

In this context, Freud articulates a key point: the unreality of a writer's imaginative world significantly influences their artistic technique. Many experiences that would be distressing in reality can evoke pleasure within the realm of fantasy. For instance, a writer may explore themes of loss, pain, or conflict, transforming these experiences into sources of artistic expression. This elevation of language allows writers to create narratives that resonate with readers, while also providing a safe space for exploring complex emotions.

Freud raises an intriguing question about the condition of the creative writer. In the early stages of play, where roles are not rigidly defined, the enjoyment derived from the act of creation may stem from the inherent failures of representation. In this sense, could the pleasure of creativity be linked to the limitations of language itself? This question encourages us to consider how the imperfections of expression can foster deeper connections between writers and their audiences.

Freud's foresight is notable when he suggests that a creative individual may eventually find themselves in a mental state where the distinctions between play and reality dissolve. Humour, for example, can blur these lines, allowing for a playful engagement with serious

subjects. This interplay between humour and creativity illustrates how writers can navigate complex emotional terrain while still maintaining a sense of enjoyment in their work.

One of Freud's most significant claims is that as individuals mature, they often relinquish some of the pleasure derived from creative play in favour of more conventional forms of representation. He acknowledges that giving up such pleasures is challenging, as humans naturally cling to experiences that bring joy. Freud asserts, "We never truly give up anything; we only exchange one pleasure for another." This notion highlights the resilience of the human psyche, which constantly seeks new forms of satisfaction, often through substitutes.

Freud's discussion of daydreaming further elucidates this dynamic. He posits that daydreams serve as substitutes for the satisfaction of unmet desires. When adults engage in daydreaming, they create fantasies that allow them to navigate their wishes and desires in ways that reality cannot fulfil. Thus, daydreaming becomes an essential outlet for exploring emotions, desires, and creative impulses.

Moreover, Freud posits that behind every symptom of distress lies a fantasy. He notes that "phantasies are the immediate mental precursors of the distressing symptoms complained of by our patients." This relationship underscores the notion that creativity, whether expressed through writing or daydreaming, often arises from unresolved emotional conflicts. Writers, through their imaginative explorations, confront their internal struggles, transforming them into narratives that resonate with readers.

In conclusion, Freud's exploration of creative writers and daydreaming offers profound insights into the nature of creativity, play, and the subconscious mind. By emphasising the connections between childhood play, imagination, and artistic expression, Freud illuminates the psychological mechanisms that underlie the creative process. His assertion that daydreaming serves as a vital substitute for unmet desires reveals the intricate ways in which our fantasies shape our understanding of reality. Ultimately, Freud's work encourages us to appreciate the complexities of creativity, reminding us that the act of creation is not merely a reflection of reality but also a powerful means of navigating the depths of human experience.

UNIT – IV

FROM WORK TO TEXT – ROLAND BARTHES

Author Introduction

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a French literary theorist, philosopher, and critic known for his influential ideas on language, literature, and culture. His work helped shape the fields of semiotics and structuralism, emphasising how meaning is constructed through signs and cultural contexts. One of his major works, *Mythologies* (1957), analyses contemporary culture and the myths embedded in everyday life, revealing how media and popular culture shape perceptions. In *S/Z* (1970), Barthes offers a close reading of a short story by Balzac, demonstrating how texts can have multiple interpretations. His essay "The Death of the Author" (1967) argues that an author's intentions should not limit the interpretation of their work, shifting focus to the reader's role. Barthes' ideas have significantly influenced literary theory, cultural studies, and the way we understand texts, making him a key figure in 20th-century thought.

Summary

In "From Work to Text," Roland Barthes offers a significant rethinking of literature, shifting the focus from the traditional concept of "work" to the more dynamic idea of "text." This essay challenges established notions of authorship, interpretation, and how we engage with literature. Barthes argues that the relationships among the writer, reader, and observer change when we consider literature as a text, emphasising its fluidity and multiplicity.

Barthes begins by differentiating "work" from "text." A "work" is typically viewed as a completed product, a fixed entity meant for consumption, often associated with the author's intentions. Conversely, a "text" is open-ended and interactive, encouraging multiple interpretations and highlighting the reader's role in creating meaning. He argues that texts should not be seen merely as tangible objects. Attempts to categorise works and texts materially are misguided. Instead, texts possess a quality that allows them to transcend conventional literary classifications.

Barthes highlights the subversive nature of texts, which defy traditional hierarchies and genre distinctions. Unlike works, which can fit into fixed categories, texts exist in a space of

intertextuality, interconnected with other literary works. He asserts that originality in literature is an illusion; every text is woven from existing texts, complicating the process of classification.

This intertextuality suggests that texts cannot be confined to rigid genres, thriving instead in the spaces between them and inviting readers to explore their influences and references. Barthes also examines how texts relate to signs. He contrasts the fixed meanings in works with the fluidity found in texts. A work typically offers a singular interpretation, while the text embodies an ongoing deferral of meaning, where signifiers engage playfully with one another.

This perspective leads Barthes to describe the text as radically symbolic, with a complexity that invites readers to navigate the relationships between signifiers and signifieds, fostering a participatory form of engagement.

Another essential aspect of Barthes's argument is the irreducible plurality of the text. He contends that texts are not ambiguous but rich with meaning due to their multifaceted structures. This plurality arises from the complex web of signifiers that make up the text, including references and intertextual echoes.

Barthes emphasises that no sign within a text is entirely "pure" or "fully meaningful." Meaning emerges from the interplay of differences, positioning the text as a dynamic entity that resists singular interpretations.

Barthes critiques the emphasis on authorial intent and the concept of filiation, which refers to the lineage of literary influence. He argues that traditional literary criticism often prioritizes respect for the author and their intentions, viewing the work as a direct reflection of the author's authority.

However, Barthes believes the text can exist independently of its author. The author's presence is just one element within the text, with no ultimate authority over its interpretation. The author's biography becomes another text that lacks special status, shifting the focus from the author to the reader. Barthes makes a crucial distinction between consuming a work and experiencing a text. Works are typically seen as objects for passive consumption, while texts invite active engagement. He argues that texts cannot be consumed like works; instead, they require the reader's collaboration.

Through this engagement, the text becomes writable, as the reader interacts with its meanings and signifiers, creating a more dynamic relationship with the literature. A significant theme in Barthes's essay is the notion of pleasure. He differentiates between passive enjoyment from consuming a work and the deeper pleasure that comes from engaging with a text. While some works offer satisfaction at the consumption level, the text provides a form of "jouissance," or enjoyment that transcends boundaries.

This experience creates a social utopia where traditional relationships among authors, readers, and critics become fluid. The text's multiplicity of meanings and playful nature contribute to a sense of freedom in interpretation. At the beginning and end of his essay, Barthes stresses the importance of distinguishing his critical approach from traditional literary theories. He avoids creating a rigid meta-language that dictates how texts should be read, presenting his propositions as invitations to rethink the work-text relationship.

Barthes insists his arguments should be understood more grammatically than logically, allowing for flexibility in interpretation. By defining work and text in opposition, he establishes a clear framework for understanding their differences.

In "From Work to Text," Barthes provides a profound reevaluation of literary theory that challenges conventional views on authorship, meaning, and reading practices. His insights reveal the complexity and richness of texts, emphasising their subversive and plural nature. By shifting the focus from the author to the reader, Barthes advocates for a more interactive engagement with literature.

Ultimately, Barthes's essay encourages us to embrace the dynamic interplay of signifiers, the fluidity of meaning, and the active role of the reader in creating significance, enriching our understanding of literature and its broader cultural implications.

Essay

In his essay "From Work to Text," Barthes asserts that the dynamics among the writer, reader, and observer shift when there is a transition from viewing literature as a "work" to understanding it as a "text." He explores the distinctions between these concepts across various dimensions, including methodology, genre, signs, plurality, lineage, reading, and pleasure.

Barthes begins by emphasising that a text should not be seen as a tangible object that can be easily quantified. He argues against the notion of strictly categorising works as classic and texts as avant-garde. He posits that certain writings possess a tangible quality that defines them as “texts” rather than “works.” Barthes suggests that ancient works may contain elements of “text,” while many contemporary literary products do not embody this quality. He describes the Text as a “methodological field,” contrasting it with the physicality of a work, similar to Lacan’s differentiation between “reality” and “real.” The work is something you can hold, while the text is a dynamic process unfolding through language, where meaning is perpetually in flux and never fully realized.

Next, Barthes highlights the text’s subversive nature, which defies traditional hierarchies and genre classifications. Texts challenge established categories, often existing at the intersections of multiple genres, revealing that all literature is inherently intertextual and paradoxical—there is no true originality.

He then discusses how texts engage with signs. While a work tends to fix meaning under a specific interpretation, the text embodies a continual deferral of meaning. The signifier in the text plays with the gaps and overlaps between signifier and signified, resulting in a radical form of symbolism—structured yet open-ended.

Barthes also emphasises the plurality inherent in the text, which offers a multitude of meanings rather than a singular interpretation. This plurality arises not from ambiguity but from the interconnected web of signifiers, suggesting that no sign is ever entirely “pure” or definitive. The text’s identity is found in its differences, resisting monolithic interpretations.

Additionally, Barthes discusses the concept of filiation in relation to the work. He notes that literary scholarship often prioritizes respect for the work and the author’s intentions. However, the text can exist independently of its author, who becomes just one element within the textual fabric. The author’s biography is another text, lacking inherent authority over the work. In this framework, the reader plays a crucial role in interpreting the multiplicity of the text.

Barthes further distinguishes between the consumption of the work and the experience of the text. Works are typically viewed as objects for consumption, while texts invite active

engagement. Reading transforms into a collaborative process where the reader interacts with the text, making it writable and participatory.

Lastly, Barthes touches on the idea of pleasure. While some works provide passive enjoyment, the text offers a deeper pleasure tied to "jouissance," a form of enjoyment that transcends boundaries. The text creates a social utopia that disrupts traditional relationships among authors, readers, and critics.

Throughout his essay, Barthes is careful to differentiate his critical approach from traditional theories of "work." He aims to clarify the relationship between the two concepts without imposing a strict meta-language. Although he strives to avoid creating a definitive theory of the text, he recognizes that any attempt to articulate his ideas inevitably involves theorizing language.

CAPITALISM, MODERNISM AND POST MODERNISM – TERRY EAGLETON

Author Introduction

Terry Eagleton (1943 - present) is a British literary theorist, critic, and scholar known for his contributions to cultural and Marxist criticism. His work often examines the intersections of literature, politics, and ideology. One of his most notable books, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), provides a comprehensive overview of various literary theories and their historical contexts, making it accessible to students and general readers alike. In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), he explores the relationship between art and politics, arguing that aesthetic experiences are deeply intertwined with social structures. Eagleton's *The Event of Literature* (2012) analyses the nature of literature and its significance in society. Through his engaging style and critical insights, Eagleton has become an influential voice in literary studies, encouraging readers to consider the broader social and political implications of literature. His work continues to inspire discussions about the role of art in contemporary society.

Summary

In "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism," Terry Eagleton presents a critical analysis of the relationships between these three pivotal concepts, exploring how they shape contemporary culture, art, and ideology. His essay provides a historical overview, examining

how capitalism influences modern and postmodern thought, while also delving into the implications of these shifts for society at large.

Eagleton begins by defining capitalism as an economic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production and the pursuit of profit. He traces its historical development, emphasising that capitalism did not emerge in a vacuum but was born out of significant social and political changes, including the transition from feudalism to market economies and the Industrial Revolution. This transition marked a fundamental shift in societal structures, leading to the rise of new social classes, particularly the bourgeoisie, who gained significant economic power and influence.

Capitalism, according to Eagleton, is not merely an economic structure but a cultural and ideological force that shapes values, beliefs, and social practices. It promotes individualism, commodification, and competition, resulting in both economic growth and social alienation. While capitalism has led to advancements in technology and material wealth, it has also exacerbated social inequalities and contributed to environmental degradation. Eagleton emphasises that capitalism is inherently contradictory; it fosters creativity and innovation while simultaneously creating conditions of exploitation and alienation. This duality lays the groundwork for the cultural responses that follow, particularly modernism and postmodernism.

Transitioning to modernism, Eagleton presents it as a cultural and artistic movement that arose in response to the challenges posed by capitalism and the complexities of modern life. Emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, modernism reflects a profound disillusionment with traditional forms and conventions in literature, art, and architecture.

Key figures of modernism, such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and T.S. Eliot, sought to capture the fragmented experience of modern existence. They employed innovative narrative techniques, including stream-of-consciousness and non-linear storytelling, to convey the complexities of individual consciousness and societal change. Modernism emphasises the subjective experience, alienation, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world, marking a departure from the realist traditions that preceded it.

Eagleton critiques modernism for its tendency to become elitist and self-referential. While it aims to reflect the complexities of modern life, modernism often isolates itself from

broader societal issues, celebrating individual genius at the expense of collective concerns. This self-absorption, according to Eagleton, can alienate audiences and create a disconnect between art and everyday life.

Despite these shortcomings, modernism serves as a crucial response to the alienation and fragmentation of modernity, highlighting the struggles of individuals to find meaning and coherence in a world increasingly dominated by capitalist values. Eagleton explores the emergence of postmodernism as both a continuation and critique of modernism. Postmodernism gained traction in the mid-to-late 20th century, marked by skepticism toward grand narratives, ideologies, and the notion of objective truth. This skepticism reflects a broader disillusionment with the promises of modernity, including the idea of progress and the enlightenment's faith in reason.

Postmodern culture is characterized by fragmentation, decentralization, and a questioning of established norms. Eagleton identifies key features of postmodernism, such as pastiche, parody, and the blending of high and low culture. In postmodern art and literature, originality is often challenged, with creators embracing intertextuality and remixing existing forms and ideas.

While postmodernism critiques the certainties of modernism, Eagleton raises concerns about its potential to devolve into nihilism. In a postmodern world, meaning can become so dispersed that it risks losing significance altogether. He warns that this cultural landscape may reduce art and literature to mere surface-level signs, devoid of deeper meaning or political engagement. Eagleton suggests that while postmodernism can be liberating, allowing for diverse interpretations and cultural expressions, it can also lead to a sense of paralysis in the face of overwhelming plurality. The challenge lies in navigating this complexity without succumbing to despair or disengagement.

A central theme in Eagleton's analysis is the relationship between capitalism and postmodernism, particularly the rise of cultural capitalism. In the postmodern era, culture becomes commodified, with consumerism taking center stage. This shift leads to a focus on superficiality, where cultural products are produced and consumed in a manner similar to goods, reducing meaningful engagement with art and literature. Eagleton critiques the emphasis on aesthetics in postmodern culture, arguing that it prioritizes the aesthetics of consumption over

substantive engagement. As individuals navigate a landscape saturated with images and messages, they are often encouraged to consume passively rather than think critically. This commodification fosters a culture of distraction, where genuine engagement with cultural products is diminished.

Moreover, Eagleton highlights the role of technology in shaping postmodern culture. Digital media and the internet facilitate rapid dissemination and consumption of cultural products, democratizing access to culture while simultaneously reinforcing existing inequalities. He warns that this technological proliferation risks creating a homogenized global culture that erodes local identities and practices. Eagleton emphasises the political ramifications of capitalism, modernism, and postmodernism, asserting that each of these paradigms has profound effects on social relations and power dynamics. He argues that the individualism championed by capitalism can lead to social fragmentation and a lack of collective solidarity, hindering efforts for social change and justice.

In response to these challenges, Eagleton calls for renewed political engagement and activism. He advocates for a critical examination of both capitalist and postmodern ideologies, emphasising the need to reclaim a sense of collective purpose and shared values. He argues that art and culture should not merely reflect societal conditions but also serve as tools for resistance and transformation.

Eagleton points to various cultural movements and practices that challenge the status quo, urging a vision of culture rooted in social justice and community engagement. He believes that literature and art can play a vital role in fostering critical consciousness and mobilizing collective action, creating a more just and equitable society.

Another crucial aspect of Eagleton’s analysis is the role of intellectuals within the frameworks of capitalism, modernism, and postmodernism. He critiques the tendency of intellectuals to retreat into elitism and abstraction, often disengaging from pressing social and political issues. This detachment can limit their effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by contemporary capitalism.

Eagleton argues for a reimagined role for intellectuals—one that actively engages with and contributes to social change. He posits that intellectuals should not only analyse and critique

cultural phenomena but also participate in struggles for justice and equality. By connecting theoretical insights with practical activism, intellectuals can bridge the gap between culture and politics, fostering a more engaged and responsive cultural landscape.

Eagleton discusses the nature of cultural production in capitalist societies, where art and literature often become commodities. This commodification raises questions about the value of art and the criteria by which it is judged. In a capitalist framework, the worth of cultural products is frequently measured by their marketability rather than their intrinsic value or social significance.

Eagleton argues that this market-driven approach can distort the purpose of art, reducing it to a mere product of consumption. He highlights the importance of recognizing art's potential to challenge social norms, provoke thought, and inspire change. The commodification of culture can lead to a diminished capacity for art to engage with important social issues and to provoke critical reflection.

In light of the challenges posed by capitalism and postmodernism, Eagleton emphasises the need for a renewed commitment to finding meaning and significance in art and culture. He advocates for a critical engagement with cultural products that goes beyond surface-level consumption. This engagement requires active participation and a willingness to grapple with the complexities of meaning in a fragmented cultural landscape.

Eagleton encourages individuals to reclaim art as a space for critical reflection and social engagement. By doing so, they can resist the commodification of culture and foster a deeper understanding of the world around them. He believes that art can serve as a catalyst for change, inspiring individuals to challenge existing power structures and envision new possibilities.

In "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism," Terry Eagleton offers a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between these three concepts. He critiques the contradictions and limitations of modernism and postmodernism while emphasising the need for a politically engaged approach to culture. Eagleton's work serves as a call to action, urging individuals to critically engage with the cultural and ideological forces shaping their lives.

By understanding the complexities of capitalism and its impact on art and culture, readers are encouraged to reclaim their agency and responsibility in fostering a more just and equitable society. Eagleton's insights resonate with ongoing discussions about the role of art, literature, and culture in a rapidly changing world, making his analysis a vital contribution to contemporary cultural criticism.

Through this multifaceted exploration, Eagleton challenges us to rethink our relationship with culture, advocating for a perspective that integrates critical thought, community engagement, and social justice. His arguments remain relevant in an era where the intersections of culture, politics, and economics continue to shape our collective experience, urging us to navigate these complexities with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to social change.

Essay

Terry Eagleton's essay, "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism," first published in the New Left Review in 1983, presents a post-Marxist analysis of literature and its relationship with capitalism. He explores how capitalism has influenced artistic expression, resulting in the emergence of two distinct literary forms: modernism and postmodernism. Eagleton describes modernism as a movement that creates a critical distance from the prevailing social order, while postmodernism acknowledges its status as a commodity, highlighting the tension between its material existence and aesthetic structure. This commodification of art under capitalism prompts a deeper examination of modern and postmodern literature to understand their roles in society.

Capitalism is defined as an economic and political system where private ownership prevails, prioritizing profit over state control. It encompasses private property, wage labor, voluntary exchange, a price system, and competitive markets. Eagleton notes several characteristics of capitalism, including the widening gap between the rich and poor, minimal government intervention, and the potential for private ownership to lead to societal harm. Although there are benefits such as increased efficiency and consumer advantages, the influence of late capitalism on art and literature is significant. Art has become centered on its own commodified image, losing its previous role as a mirror of reality, as Eagleton argues that artistic representations now reflect a distorted social reality.

Modernism, according to Eagleton, emerges in response to the disintegration of traditions, the rise of technology, and a cultural shift toward individualism. It represents an international movement characterized by themes of doubt, personal introspection, and existential questioning. Modernist literature, as defined through de Man's deconstructivist lens, struggles to represent reality and simultaneously resists commodification, yet it remains embedded within the capitalist framework it critiques. This paradox highlights modernism's failure to fully engage with the real world.

Postmodernism, in contrast, emphasises culture's prominence and often employs parody and fragmented narratives. Writers in this movement blur the lines between high and low culture and favor playful, ironic approaches. The narrative structures are discontinuous, and the focus shifts toward self-consciousness in the artistic process. Unlike modernism, postmodernism acknowledges the commodification of art and reflects this in its aesthetics, suggesting that if art is indeed a commodity, it should embrace that identity.

Eagleton characterizes postmodernism as more cynical, marked by pastiche, grotesque elements, and a refusal to represent the world authentically due to its virtual nature. He argues that the absence of a coherent social content in art reflects the postmodern condition, which denies any substantial reality from which to be alienated. In conclusion, Eagleton assesses how literature reflects the characteristics of capitalism through these two literary genres, advocating for a critical and theoretical approach to understanding the interplay between literature and the socio-economic forces at play.

UNIT – V

THE DECONSTRUCTIVE ANGEL – M.H. ABRAMS

Author Introduction

Summary

At the beginning, Abrams outlines the background of his paper, noting that it follows his publication of *Natural Supernaturalism*. This led to discussions with Wayne Booth, an esteemed American critic known for *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, about the historical approaches in his book. J. Hillis Miller also engaged in this dialogue after reviewing the work.

Initially, Abrams and Booth agreed that pluralism—embracing multiple perspectives—is essential for understanding literary and cultural history, as it deepens insight. However, Abrams argues that Miller's deconstructive interpretation exceeds pluralism, rendering literary and cultural history unfeasible. According to Abrams, Miller's principles undermine the foundational assumptions of traditional human sciences.

Abrams highlights key assumptions he shares with traditional historians, which Miller seeks to challenge:

1. Historians consider written texts as primary sources, believing authors used their language purposefully, assuming readers with similar skills would understand their intent.
2. Historians interpret texts both in their current context and their original context, striving for an understanding that closely aligns with the author's intent.
3. Historians present their interpretations to the public, hoping that expert readers will reach similar conclusions. While some misinterpretations are expected, they should not undermine the overall integrity of the historical narrative. A history becomes fictional if most interpretations are incorrect.

Miller suggests that Abrams views literary texts as having a single, clear meaning that reflects reality. Abrams responds by expressing confusion about how Miller derived this

perspective. He contends that his understanding of language is not mimetic but rather functional and pragmatic, focusing on language as a tool for various human purposes.

While Abrams acknowledges that some passages can have multiple meanings, he insists that he can assert a specific interpretation with sufficient clarity. Other historians might offer different interpretations for various narratives, but the disagreement with Miller is deeper. Miller argues that Abrams's interpretations can never be correct because he aligns with Nietzsche's idea that any text can lead to countless interpretations. This notion challenges the idea of a single "correct" interpretation and is relevant to deconstructive theorists influenced by Nietzsche.

Derrida prioritizes writing over speech, viewing texts in a narrowly defined manner. His initial method critiques traditional language perspectives, emphasising that written texts consist of tangible marks on a page rather than illusions.

Abrams asserts that Derrida's shift from a traditional to a "graphocentric" model reduces language to mere marks on a page, stripping away norms and controls that guide meaning. This model eliminates the agency of the speaker or writer, treating them as mere constructs of language rather than intentional communicators. Derrida's perspective neglects the process by which we learn and engage with language, reducing authorship to just another mark on a page. Syntax is ignored, leading to an interpretation of texts as a random sequence of words rather than a structured conveyance of meaning.

Derrida's notion of the "sign" provides meaning to the markings on a page. A sign has two aspects: the signifier and the signified, but their meanings may not always be apparent. Saussure's idea of difference—how signs derive meaning from their distinctions—plays a crucial role for Derrida, leading to a dynamic interpretation of meaning.

Derrida introduces "trace" as an elusive concept that refers to the residual meanings associated with a sign, which persist over time. This trace complicates the quest for definitive meaning since any attempt to define a sign merely replaces it with another sign. Thus, the pursuit of fixed meaning becomes a continuous deferral, encapsulated in Derrida's term "differance," which highlights the infinite play of significations, leaving ultimate meanings perpetually absent within a web of differences.

Derrida concludes that “no sign or chain of signs can possess a definite meaning.” Abrams contends, however, that Derrida arrives at this conclusion through a process rooted in an origin, foundation, and purpose—essentially a teleological approach. Derrida had previously deconstructed these very concepts. His foundational beliefs are based on graphocentric premises that confine us to a “closed chamber of texts,” urging us to abandon our typical experiences of language in speaking, hearing, reading, and understanding.

In this chamber, meanings become mere echoes, a repetitive reverberation of signs that lack genuine presence, intent, or referent, creating a void filled with nonsensical buzz. Traditional interpretation seeks to determine an author’s intent, while Derrida advocates for embracing the endless play of meanings available in a text. He encourages readers to avoid a nostalgic longing for lost certainties and instead adopt a Nietzschean perspective—celebrating the playful nature of language in a world of signs devoid of error or absolute truth, open to active interpretation.

Derrida’s vision portrays an “unknowable something” that can only present itself as a formless, monstrous presence. Miller differentiates between two types of structuralist critics: the canny and the uncanny. These critics believe in a structured, rational approach to criticism, complete with established procedures and measurable outcomes. In contrast, uncanny critics like Miller reject the quest for impossible certainties. Miller aims to reveal the self-deconstructive nature of the texts he analyses, highlighting the endless play of indeterminate meanings.

For Miller, texts consist of “innocent black marks on a page,” infused with traces of meaning. He employs various strategies to maximize potential interpretations while minimizing constraints. Two of these strategies are:

Miller uses the terms “interpretation” and “meaning” very broadly, merging linguistic expressions with any metaphysical concepts or facts. He treats diverse areas as equal “texts” to be interpreted, neglecting that language is a cultural construct designed to convey meaning within a community. He makes no distinctions about the norms applicable to different works or passages, while Abrams asserts that he understands specific meanings, like Lear’s intention in *King Lear*.

Miller, like Derrida, ignores any limitations on meaning based on an author's intent or the context of a word's usage at the time of writing. He argues that words carry meanings derived from their entire historical trajectory, including their etymology, allowing for a multitude of interpretations. This leads to the conclusion that any text is a complex interplay of conflicting meanings, rendering it "indeterminable" and "unreadable." He asserts, "all reading is misreading," suggesting that every interpretation can be shown to be a misreading based on the text itself.

Abrams questions the validity of this interpretation approach, asking if all criticism amounts to mere misinterpretation, why should we engage in interpretation at all? Miller addresses this through metaphors like the Cretan labyrinth and a spider's web, suggesting that interpretation is an intricate journey that ultimately leads to a dead end.

Abrams reflects on Miller's view that major authors' works are both interpretable and ultimately indecipherable, guiding readers deeper into a labyrinth until they reach an impasse—a point where interpretation falters. This impasse, or "uncanny moment," occurs when the critic, attempting to deconstruct a text, realizes they have merely engaged in the ongoing play of meanings inherent to the text itself.

Miller refers to their approach as "deconstruction," describing it as a careful navigation through each text's complexities. The deconstructive critic aims to uncover an "alogical element" within the text that, when examined, can unravel the entire structure or expose foundational flaws. This process reveals that the text has already undermined its own foundations, either knowingly or unknowingly. Deconstruction, therefore, doesn't dismantle a text but demonstrates that it has already deconstructed itself.

The "uncanny moment" in interpretation is akin to a sudden "mise en abyme," where the very foundations of meaning collapse, revealing a void. In this experience, the text's signs both expose and conceal an abyss, leading to a dizzying awareness of underlying nothingness.

Miller asserts that the deconstructive critic seeks the "alogical element" in a text, which, when identified, unravels its entirety. This method is effective because it is inherently fruitful; every deconstructive reading ultimately leads to the same point of aporia, regardless of the texts being analysed.

Abrams argues that deconstructive criticism diminishes the richness and uniqueness of literary works, reducing them to mere linguistic constructs. Engaging with their work offers insights and a playful exploration of language. However, this comes at the cost of an unsettling experience, as readers frequently confront the abyss, with the shock of discovery quickly becoming familiar.

Abrams provides an example of Miller's "rhetoric, punning, and figuration." In this example, he intertwines the analogies of labyrinth, web, and abyss, suggesting that Ariadne's thread not only leads out of the maze but is, in fact, part of the labyrinth itself. Attempting to interpret a text only adds more complexity; escaping the labyrinth creates further entanglements, akin to the ink flowing from a writer's pen, tethering them over a void.

Abrams reflects on Miller being caught in this "labyrinthine web" of textual meanings. He notes that Miller attempts to untangle this web through writing, but this act only generates more lines vulnerable to deconstruction. In a somewhat sarcastic tone, Abrams cites Miller's comment about the despair of Ariadne, who is said to have hanged herself with her thread after being abandoned by Theseus.

Abrams seeks a way to respond to the bleak vision of literature and philosophy presented through language. He finds resonance in William Blake's encounter with the Angel in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, who reveals a terrifying abyss. Yet, once the vision fades, the poet finds solace by the river, attributing the experience to the Angel's metaphysics. Miller, as a "deconstructive angel," seems not entirely serious about deconstruction, as he doesn't consistently embrace its implications. He operates as a double agent, navigating two sets of linguistic rules: one as a deconstructive critic and another as a clear communicator of ideas.

Abrams clarifies that despite Miller's deconstructionist stance, he conveys concrete thoughts effectively, expecting his audience to understand his discourse. Before presenting his ideas, Miller transforms his thoughts into written form, which he then articulates. This writing can later be read, allowing readers to re-convert it back into their own interpretations.

While deconstructive criticism can be applied to Miller's work, readers who do not engage with it can still grasp the text. Reading Miller's paper is more beneficial than listening to it because it allows for a more deliberate interaction with the text. In closing, Abrams

acknowledges that his disagreements with Miller will persist, just as Miller will not find Abrams' arguments compelling. However, mutual understanding can be fostered if both parties strive to comprehend each other's perspectives. Ultimately, the belief that language can convey meaning is essential for the dialogue they share.

Essay

M.H. Abrams, a prominent literary critic and theorist, has significantly influenced the field of literary studies through his insightful exploration of interpretation, particularly in his essay "The Deconstructive Angel." In this essay, Abrams engages with the complexities of deconstruction, a philosophical approach often associated with Jacques Derrida, and examines how it reshapes our understanding of texts, meaning, and the act of interpretation itself. This exploration reveals not only the inherent instability of meaning in literature but also the broader implications for criticism and scholarship.

At its core, deconstruction is an analytical method that seeks to uncover the multiple meanings embedded within a text. It challenges the notion of a singular, fixed interpretation, asserting that meaning is always contingent upon context, language, and the interplay of various textual elements. In "The Deconstructive Angel," Abrams positions deconstruction as both a critique and a tool for literary analysis, allowing readers to engage with texts in a dynamic and multifaceted way.

Abrams argues that traditional literary criticism often aims to uncover a stable meaning or to affirm an author's intent. However, deconstruction complicates this approach by suggesting that texts are inherently unstable and resistant to definitive interpretation. This instability arises from the reliance on language itself, which is filled with ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions. Through the lens of deconstruction, Abrams illustrates how meaning is perpetually deferred and how interpretations can vary widely depending on the reader's perspective and the socio-cultural context.

One of the key insights of Abrams's essay is the redefined role of the reader in the interpretive process. In deconstruction, the reader is not merely a passive recipient of meaning but an active participant in its creation. The interaction between the reader and the text generates a multiplicity of interpretations, each shaped by the reader's experiences, biases, and cultural

background. This participatory approach aligns with poststructuralist thought, which emphasises the subjective nature of understanding and the idea that no single interpretation can claim absolute authority.

Abrams further posits that the act of interpretation is akin to a negotiation between the reader and the text. Each reading reveals new layers of meaning, often leading to insights that challenge conventional understandings. By embracing the fluidity of interpretation, readers can explore the complexities and contradictions within a text, thus enriching their engagement with literature. This process not only democratizes literary analysis but also reflects the diverse ways in which texts can resonate with different audiences.

The metaphor of the “deconstructive angel” serves as a powerful symbol in Abrams’s essay. The angel represents the duality of deconstruction: it is both a guardian of meaning and a harbinger of uncertainty. On one hand, the deconstructive angel illuminates the nuances of a text, shedding light on hidden meanings and inviting deeper reflection. On the other hand, it undermines the certainty of those meanings, revealing the potential for misinterpretation and the inherent instability of language.

Abrams suggests that the deconstructive angel encourages readers to embrace this uncertainty rather than resist it. By acknowledging the fluidity of meaning, readers can engage in a more nuanced exploration of texts, one that embraces ambiguity and complexity. This approach challenges the tendency to seek closure or definitive answers in literary analysis, promoting instead a continual process of questioning and reinterpretation.

The insights presented in “The Deconstructive Angel” have profound implications for the field of literary criticism. Abrams’s exploration of deconstruction invites critics to reconsider their methodologies and the assumptions underlying traditional literary analysis. By recognizing the multiplicity of meanings and the active role of the reader, critics can adopt a more inclusive and dynamic approach to literature.

Moreover, Abrams’s argument raises essential questions about the authority of the critic. If meaning is not fixed and interpretation is subjective, then the critic’s role shifts from that of an arbiter of truth to a facilitator of discourse. This shift opens up avenues for diverse interpretations and encourages a dialogue among readers, critics, and scholars.

M.H. Abrams's "The Deconstructive Angel" offers a compelling examination of the complexities of interpretation in literature. By engaging with the principles of deconstruction, Abrams highlights the fluidity of meaning, the active role of the reader, and the implications for literary criticism. His metaphor of the deconstructive angel serves as a reminder that while literature may offer a myriad of meanings, it is through the engagement with those meanings that we deepen our understanding of texts and the human experience they encapsulate. Ultimately, Abrams's work calls for a more nuanced, reflective, and open-ended approach to literary analysis—one that embraces uncertainty as a vital component of the interpretive process.