

## Theory before Theory by Peter Barry

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Aristotle's *Poetics* was the first literary theory. In this work, Aristotle "offers famous definitions of tragedy, insists that literature is about character, and that character is revealed through action, and he tries to identify the required stages in the progress of a plot." Around 1580, Sir Philip Sidney wrote his groundbreaking "Apology for Poetry." In this work, he made the radical claim that literature was different from other forms of writing in that it "has as its primary aim the giving of pleasure to the reader, and any moral or didactic element is necessarily either subordinate to that, or at least, unlikely to succeed without it." Samuel Johnson was another important figure in the history of critical theory. Johnson's in depth commentary on Shakespeare was the first time one had given "intensive scrutiny" to a non-sacred text. The Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley all engaged in a great detail of literary criticism. Notable Victorian literary critics include George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and Henry James.

The three major literary critics in the first part of the twentieth century were I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis (both of whom were from Cambridge) and T.S. Eliot. In his *Practical Criticism* (published in 1929), Richards claimed that readers should focus on a text's actual words and not its historical context. One of Leavis' major contributions was to claim that literature should be moral, that it should strive to instill its readers with values. T.S. Eliot made three major contributions. First, he claimed that a "dissociation of sensibility" (that is, a radical separation of thought from feeling) "occurred in the seventeenth century." Second, he advocated the idea of impersonality, which claims that one should view poetry, "not as a pouring out of personal emotion and personal experience, but as a transcending of the individual by a sense of tradition which spoke through, and is transmitted by, the individual poet." Third, he advocated the objective correlative, which claims that "the best way of expressing an emotion in art is to find some vehicle for it in gesture, action, or concrete symbolism, rather than approaching it directly or descriptively." In other words, the artist should try to *show* and not *tell* emotions.

There are two "tracks" in the "development of English criticism." The "practical criticism" track (which "leads through Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold to T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis") focuses on "the close analysis of the work of particular writers, and gives us our familiar tradition of 'close reading.'" "The other track is very much 'ideas-led' rather than 'text-led': it tends to tackle big general issues concerned with literature—How are literary works structured? How do they affect readers or audiences? What is the nature of literary language? How does literature relate to the contemporary and to matters of politics and gender? What can be said of literature from a philosophical point of view?" This second track is interested with many of the same issues that literary critics have been since the 1960s.

Liberal humanism is the type of criticism that "held sway" before "theory" emerged in the 1960s. Barry describes ten tenets of liberal humanism. First, good literature transcends the culture in which it was written; it speaks to people throughout all ages. Second, a text "contains its own meaning within itself. It doesn't require any elaborate process of placing it within a context, whether this be" socio-political, literary-historical, or autobiographical. Third, one should strive to approach a text with an open mind, "without priori ideological assumptions, or political pre-conditions." Fourth, "Human nature is essentially unchanging." Therefore, "continuity in literature is more important and significant than innovation." Fifth, every person has a unique "essence," which transcends his "environmental influences." Though one can "change and develop" this essence ("as do characters in novels"), "it can't be transformed—hence our uneasiness with those scenes (quite common, for instance, in Dickens) which involve a 'change of heart' in a character, so that the whole personality is shifted into a new dimension by force of circumstance—the miser is transformed and changes his ways, or the good man or woman is corrupted by wealth."

Sixth, "The purpose of literature is essentially the enhancement of life and the propagation of human values," but not in a preachy, propaganda-like way. Seventh, "Form and content in literature must be fused in

an organic way, so that the one grows inevitably from the other. Literary form should not be like a decoration which is applied externally to a completed structure.” Eighth, writers should be sincere and honest. For example, he should avoid clichés, or “over-inflated forms of expression.” In so doing, the writer “can transcend the sense of distance between language and material, and can make the language seem to ‘enact’ what it depicts, thus apparently abolishing the necessary distance between words and things.” Ninth, “What is valued in literature is the ‘silent’ showing and demonstrating of something, rather than the explaining, or saying, of it.” According to this view, “words should mime, or demonstrate, or act out, or sound out what they signify, rather than just representing it in an abstract way. This idea is state with special fervency in the work of F.R. Leavis.” Tenth, the “job of criticism is to interpret the text, to mediate between it and the reader. A theoretical account of the nature of reading, or of literature in general, isn’t useful in criticism.”

In the 1960s, scholars began to rejection liberal humanism in favor of “critical theory.” In the Sixties, Marxist criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, linguistic criticism, and feminist criticism all emerged. The Seventies saw the rise of structuralism and post-structuralism. In the Eighties, “history, politics, and context were reinstated at the centre of the literary-critical agenda.” New historicism and cultural materialism. “Both of these take what might be called a ‘holistic’ approach to literature, aiming to integrate literary and historical study while at the same time maintaining some of the insights of the structuralists and post-structuralists of the previous decade.” The major movements that arose in the Nineties were postcolonialism and postmodernism

Barry describes five “recurrent ideas in critical theory.” First, theory is *anti-essentialist*. “Many of the notions which we would usually regard as the basic ‘givens’ of our existence (including our gender identity, our individual selfhood, and the notion of literature itself) are actually fluid and unstable things, rather than fixed and reliable essences.” These notions are socially constructed, “that is, dependent on social and political forces and on shifting ways of seeing and thinking.” “There is no such thing as a fixed and reliable truth (except for the statement that this is so, presumable).” Second, theory claims that all interpreters are biased: “all investigators have a thumb on one side or other of the scales. Every practical procedure...presupposes a theoretical perspective of some kind.” Third, theory claims that language doesn’t merely “*record* reality;” rather, “it shapes and creates it, so that the whole of our universe is textual. Further...meaning is jointly constructed by reader and writer. It isn’t just ‘there’ and waiting before we get to the text but requires the reader’s contribution to bring it into being.” Fourth, “The meanings within a literary work are never fixed and reliable, but always shifting, multi-faceted and ambiguous. In literature, as in all writing, there is never the possibility of establishing fixed and definitive meanings: rather, it is characteristic of language to generate infinite webs of meaning, so that all texts are necessarily self-contradictory, as the process of deconstruction will reveal.” Fifth, the idea of “human nature” is rejected, “since it is usually in practice *Eurocentric* (that is, based on white European norms) and *androcentric* (that is, based on masculine norms and attitudes. Thus, the appeal to the idea of a generalised, supposedly inclusive, human nature is likely in practice to marginalise, or denigrate, or even deny the humanity of women, or disadvantaged groups.”

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## Structuralism

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Structuralism which emerged as a trend in the 1950s challenged New Criticism and rejected Sartre's existentialism and its notion of radical human freedom; it focused instead how human behaviour is determined by cultural, social and psychological structures. It tended to offer a single unified approach to human life that would embrace all disciplines. Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida explored the possibilities of applying structuralist principles to literature. Jacques Lacan studied psychology in the light of structuralism, blending Freud and Saussure. Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* examined the history of science to study the structures of epistemology (though he later denied affiliation with the structuralist movement). Louis Althusser combined Marxism and Structuralism to create his own brand of social analysis.

Structuralism, in a broader sense, is a way of perceiving the world in terms of structures. First seen in the work of the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and the literary critic Roland Barthes, the essence of Structuralism is the belief that "things cannot be understood in isolation, they have to be seen in the context of larger structures they are part of", The contexts of larger structures do not exist by themselves, but are formed by our way of perceiving the world. In structuralist criticism, consequently, there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work towards understanding the larger structures which contain them. For example, the structuralist analysis of Donne's poem *Good Morrow* demands more focus on the relevant genre (alba or dawn song), the concept of courtly love, etc., rather than on the close reading of the formal elements of the text.

The fundamental belief of Structuralism, that all human activities are constructed and not natural or essential, pervades all seminal works of Structuralism. Beginning with the trailblazers, Levi Strauss and Barthes, the other major practitioners include A. J. Greimas, Vladimir Propp, Terence Hawkes (Structuralism and Semiotics), Robert Scholes (Structuralism in Literature), Colin MacCabe, Frank Kermode and David Lodge (combined traditional and structuralist approaches in his book *Working with Structuralism*). The American structuralists of the 1960s were Jonathan Culler and the semioticians C. S. Peirce, Charles Morris and Noam Chomsky.

With its penchant for scientific categorization, Structuralism suggests the interrelationship between "units" (surface phenomena) and "rules" the ways in which units can be put together). In language, units are words and rules are the forms of grammar which order words.

In literature, an illustration of this can be seen in fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, etc. In these stories, the units are Princess, — stepmother/ witch and, prince, and rules are stepmothers/witches are evil, princesses are victims, and princes and princesses have to marry. The units and rules may differ, but the underlying structures are the same for all fairy tales. Structuralists believe that the underlying structures which organize rules and units into meaningful systems are generated by the human mind itself and not by sense perception. Structuralism tries to reduce the complexity of human experiences to certain underlying structures which are universal, an idea which has its roots in the classicists like Aristotle who identified simple structures as forming the basis of life. A structure can be defined as any conceptual system that has three properties: "wholeness" (the system should function as a whole), "transformation" (system should not be static), and "self-regulation (the basic structure should not be changed).

Structuralism in its inchoate form can be found in the theories of the early twentieth century Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (*Course in General Linguistics*, 1916), who moved away from the then prevalent historical and philological study of language (diachronic) to the study of the structures, patterns and functions of language at a particular time (synchronic). Saussure's idea of the linguistic sign is a seminal concept-in all structuralist and poststructuralist discourses. According to him, language is not a naming process by which things get associated with a word or name. The linguistic sign is made of the union of "signifier" (sound image, or "psychological imprint of sound") and "signified" (concept). In this triadic view, words are

“unmotivated signs,” as there is no inherent connection between a name (signifier) and what it designates (signified).

Saussure’s theory of language emphasizes that meanings are arbitrary and relational (illustrated by the reference to 8.25 Geneva to Paris Express in *Course in General Linguistics*; the paradigmatic chain hovel-shed-hut-house-mansion-palace, where the meaning of each is dependent upon its position in the chain; and the dyads male-female, day-night etc. where each unit can be defined only in terms of its opposite). Saussurean theory establishes that human being or reality is not central; it is language that constitutes the world. Saussure employed a number of binary oppositions in his lectures, an important one being speech/writing. Saussure gives primacy to speech, as it guarantees subjectivity and presence, whereas writing, he asserted, denotes absence, of the speaker as well as the signified. Derrida critiqued this as phonocentrism that unduly privileges presence over absence, which led him to question the validity of all centres.

Saussure’s use of the terms *Langue* (language as a system) and *Parole* an individual utterance in that language, which is inferior to *Langue*) gave structuralists a way of thinking about the larger structures which were relevant to literature. Structuralist narratology, a form of Structuralism espoused by Vladimir Propp, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes and Gerard Genette illustrates how a story’s meaning develops from its overall structure *It*, (*langue*) rather than from each individual story’s isolated theme (*parole*). To ascertain a text’s meaning, narratologists emphasize grammatical elements such as verb tenses and the relationships and configurations of figures of speech within the story. This demonstrates the structuralist shift from authorial intention to broader impersonal linguistic structures in which the author’s text (a term preferred over “work”) participates.

Structuralist critics analyse literature on the explicit model of structuralist linguistics. In their analysis they use the linguistic theory of Saussure as well as the semiotic theory developed by Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. According to the semiotic theory, language must be studied in itself, and Saussure suggests that the study of language must be situated within the larger province of semiology, the science of signs.

Semiology understands that a word’s meaning derives entirely from its difference from other words in the sign system of language (e.g.: rain not brain or sprain or rail or roam or reign). All signs are cultural constructs that have taken on their meaning through repeated, learned, collective use. The process of communication is an unending chain of sign production which Peirce dubbed “unlimited semiosis”. The distinctions of symbolic, iconic and indexical signs, introduced by the literary theorist Charles Sande Peirce is also a significant idea in semiology. The other major concepts associated with semiotics are “denotation” (first order signification) and “connotation” (second order signification).

Structuralism was anticipated by the *Myth Criticism* of Northrop Frye, Richard Chase, Leslie Fiedler, Daniel Hoffman, Philip Wheelwright and others which drew upon anthropological and physiological bases of myths, rituals and folk tales to restore spiritual content to the alienated fragmented world ruled by scientism, empiricism and technology. Myth criticism sees literature as a system based on recurrent patterns. Though Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) echoes the formalist emphases of New criticism, it also to literary history as a repetitive and self-contained cycle, where basic symbolic myths like deluge myth and trickster myth recur.

The French social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to cultural phenomena like mythology, kinship relations and food preparation. He applied the principles of *langue* and *parole* in his search for the fundamental mental structures of the human mind. Myths seem fantastic and arbitrary yet myths from different cultures are similar. Hence he concluded there must be universal laws that govern myths and all human thought. Myths consist of 1) elements that oppose or contradict each other and 2) other elements that “mediate” or resolve those oppositions (such as trickster / Raven/ Coyote, uniting herbivores and carnivores). He breaks myths into smallest meaningful units called *mythemes*. According to Levi-Strauss, every

culture can be understood, in terms of the binary oppositions like high/low, inside/outside, life/death etc., an idea which he drew from the philosophy of Hegel who explains that in every situation there are two opposing things and their resolution, which he called “thesis, antithesis and synthesis”. Levi-Strauss showed how opposing ideas would fight and also be resolved in the rules of marriage, in mythology, and in ritual.

In interpreting the Oedipus myth he placed the individual story of Oedipus within the context of the whole cycle of tales connected with the city of Thebes. He then identifies repeated motifs and contrasts, which he used as the basis of his interpretation. In this method, the story and the cycle part are reconstituted in terms of binary oppositions like animal/ human, relation/stranger, husband/son and so on.

Concrete details from the story are seen in the context of a larger structure and the overall network of basic dyadic larger structure is then seen as an ov pairs which have obvious symbolic, thematic and archetypal resonance. This is the typical structuralist process of moving from the particular to the general placing the individual work within a wider structural content.

A very complex binary opposition introduced by Levi-Strauss is that of bricoleur (savage mind) and an engineer (true craft man with a scientific mind). According to him, mythology functions more like a bricoleur, whereas modern western science works more like an engineer (the status of modern science is ambivalent in his writings). In Levi-Strauss’s concept of bricolage, what is important is that the signs already in existence are used for purposes that they were not originally meant for. When a faucet breaks, the bricoleur stops the leak using a cloth, which is not actually meant for it. On the other hand the engineer foresees the eventuality and he would have either a spare faucet or all the spanners and bolts necessary to repair the tap.

Derrida, the poststructuralist, opposes Levi-Strauss’s concept of bricolage in his *Structure, Sign and Play*, saying that the opposition of bricolage to engineering is far more troublesome that Levi-Strauss admits and also the control of theory and method, which Levi-Strauss attributes to the engineer would seem a very strange attribution for a structuralist to make.

Roland Barthes, the other major figure in the early phase of structuralism (later he turned to Post Structuralism), applied the structuralist analysis and semiology to broad cultural phenomena. His work embodies transition from structuralist to poststructuralist perspectives. Certain works of his have a Marxist perspective and some others deal with the concept of intertextuality, a coinage by his student and associate Julia Kristeva. His early works like *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) and *Mythologies* (1957) derived inspiration from Saussure, Sartre and Brecht. His structuralist works include *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of i Narratives* (1966), and *Death of the Author* (1968), *S/Z* (1970), *From Work to Text*, *Elements of Semiology* (1964), *The Pleasure of the Text* are some of the seminal poststructuralist works.

In *Mythologies* he examines modern France from the standpoint of a cultural theorist. It is an ideological critique of products of mass bourgeois culture, like soaps, advertisements, images of Rome etc., which are explained using the concept of ‘myth’. According to Barthes, myth is a language, a mode of signification. He reiterates Saussure’s view that semiology comprises three terms: signifier, signified and sign, in which sign is a relation between the signifier and signified. The structure of myth repeats this tri-dimensional pattern. Myth is a second order signifying system illustrated by the image of the young Negro in a French uniform saluting the French flag, published as the cover page of the Parisian magazine, *Paris Match*, which reveals the myth of French imperialism at the connotative level.

Roland Barthes underlies that the very principle of myth is “to transform history into nature”. Ideology and culture as kinds of propaganda work best when they are not recognized as such because they contribute to the construction of what people think of as “common sense.” Barthes’ *Death of the Author* (1968) reveals his deconstructionist and anti-humanist approach as it deposes the Romantic idea of an author, symbolically male and end of all meanings. The death of the author is followed by the birth of the reader; not just the reader but the scriptor, an idea which has echoes of Eliot’s theory of impersonality.

In his *S/Z* (a book which sits on the fence between structuralism and poststructuralism) Barthes' method of analysis is to divide the story (Balzac's *Sarrasine*) into 561 lexias or units of meaning, which he classifies using five 'codes': Proairetic, hermeneutic, cultural, semic and symbolic, seeing these as the basic underlying structure of all narratives. In this book appears the substantial reference to the readerly (lisible) and writerly (scriptable) texts. In *The Pleasure of the Text* he distinguishes between plaisir (pleasure) and jouissance (bliss). The complexity and heterogeneity of structuralism, which is reflected even in the architecture of this period (e.g., structuralist artefacts like Berlin Holocaust Memorial, Bank of China Tower, etc.) paved the way to poststructuralism which attacked the essentialist premises of structuralism. Poststructuralism argues that in the very examination of underlying structures, a series of biases are involved. Also, structuralism has often been criticized for being ahistorical and for favoring deterministic structural being forces over the ability of individual people to act. As the political turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s (especially the student uprising of May 1968) began affecting the academy, issues of power and political struggle moved to the centre of people's attention. In the 1980s deconstruction and its emphasis on the fundamental ambiguity of language—rather than its crystalline logical structure—became popular, which proved fatal to structuralism.

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### Psychoanalytic Criticism

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Psychoanalytic criticism is the type of psychological criticism based on the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. It deals with the work of the literature as the reflection of a psychology of the writer motivated by the sexual urges. Sex is always at the center of everything that influences and determines the way of thinking, doing and treating other people. While expressing those desires, the writer does not say directly what s/he desires for but s/he often takes the help of symbols. Metaphors, images and characters as the means of his/her expression. Therefore the job of a critic is to attempt to explore and analyze deep psychological urges expressed by the writer through his/her text.

Sigmund Freud pioneered the technique of psychoanalysis. His theories are directly or indirectly concerned with the nature of the unconscious mind. After 1950s, psychoanalytic critics began to consider the work of art and creative writing as the expression of repression. For Freud creative writing is one of the proper ways of disclosing sexual passion and desires. Among different means of expression, writing satisfies author and well explains his unconscious mind. Psychoanalytical critic believed that human beings control and guided by are conscious. Unconscious origin with the process of human growth. Sexual desire is common both to male and female whereas males also wish for higher ambitions. Erotic wish is developed within a bodily organism.

Psychoanalytic criticism argues that literally text like dreams; express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author. Literally, work is the reflection of the human mind and the human mind is filled with so many sexual desires. All literary works project human psychology. Freud had developed an idea that human mind has three different components: The Id, the ego, and the superego. The id represents the unconscious part of the human mind. The ego is a conscious part which regulates and opposes the unconscious part. The super ego balances both id and the ego. It makes moral judgments that have been formed by our parents, our schools or our religious institutions. The ego and the superego control human desires. The repressed desires emerge only in dreams and in creative activity that produces a work of literature.

## **Psychoanalysis:**

It is the branch of psychology that explores, interprets and analyzes the human psyche. It explains the inner psyche of human beings. It describes and explains its various aspects their functioning and motivation to the human behavior. It is also used as the method of treating the neurotic patients talking with them and finding out the root cause of suffering. In this way, psychoanalysis helps us to better understand the human behavior and it can be helpful to understand the literary text. It is mainly based on the psychoanalytic principle developed by Sigmund Freud. In psychoanalytic critics suggest that the superficial pleasure of the work releases to deeper psychic pleasure and their by liberate tension. Thus reading a text knows the psychic of the author. Among the psychoanalysis in the recent years, Lacan has had the greatest influence in literary theory. He reinterprets Freud in the light of structural linguistics and his perhaps the best known in theoretical circles. He came with the idea that unconscious is structured like a language.

Like other literary criticism, psychoanalytic criticism is useful in deriving meaning from the analysis of linguistic symbols and codes. It inspires one to view the literary text as an outlet of dream or deeper human psychic. It is revenant to argue that literary work cannot be separated from the unconscious of the human psyche. Nowadays this approach is functioning as one of the appropriates of literary analysis.

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## **Marxist Criticism**

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**DEFINITION:** Marxist criticism is a type of criticism in which literary works are viewed as the product of work and whose practitioners emphasize the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate, and even challenge the prevailing social order. Rather than viewing texts as repositories for hidden meanings, Marxist critics view texts as material products to be understood in broadly historical terms. In short, literary works are viewed as a product of work (and hence of the realm of production and consumption we call economics).

Marxism began with Karl Marx, the nineteenth-century German philosopher best known for *Das Kapital* (1867; *Capital*), the seminal work of the communist movement. Marx was also the first Marxist literary critic, writing critical essays in the 1830s on such writers as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and William Shakespeare. Even after Marx met Friedrich Engels in 1843 and began collaborating on overtly political works such as *The German Ideology* (1846) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), he maintained a keen interest in literature. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels discuss the relationship between the arts, politics, and basic economic reality in terms of a general social theory. Economics, they argue, provides the base, or infrastructure, of society, from which a superstructure consisting of law, politics, philosophy, religion, and art emerges.

The revolution anticipated by Marx and Engels did not occur in their century, let alone in their lifetime. When it did occur, in 1917, it did so in a place unimagined by either theorist: Russia, a country long ruled by despotic czars but also enlightened by the works of powerful novelists and playwrights including Anton Chekhov, Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Russia produced revolutionaries like Vladimir Lenin, who shared not only Marx's interest in literature but also his belief in its ultimate importance. Leon Trotsky, Lenin's comrade in revolution, took a strong interest in literary matters as well, publishing *Literature and Revolution* (1924), which is still viewed as a classic of Marxist literary criticism.

Of those critics active in the Soviet Union after the expulsion of Trotsky and the triumph of Stalin, two stand out: Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukács. Bakhtin viewed language—especially literary texts—in terms of discourses and dialogues. A novel written in a society in flux, for instance, might include an official, legitimate discourse, as well as one infiltrated by challenging comments. Lukács, a Hungarian who converted to Marxism in 1919, appreciated pre-revolutionary realistic novels that broadly reflected cultural "totalities"

and were populated with characters representing human "types" of the author's place and time. Perhaps because Lukács was the best of the Soviet communists writing Marxist criticism in the 1930s and 1940s, non-Soviet Marxists tended to develop their ideas by publicly

Based on the socialist and dialectical theories of Karl Marx, Marxist criticism views literary works as reflections of the social institutions out of which they are born. According to Marxists, even literature itself is a social institution and has a specific ideological function, based on the background and ideology of the author. In essence, Marxists believe that a work of literature is not a result of divine inspiration or pure artistic endeavor, but that it arises out of the economic and ideological circumstances surrounding its creation. For Marxist critics, works of literature often mirror the creator's own place in society, and they interpret most texts in relation to their relevance regarding issues of class struggle as depicted in a work of fiction. Although Marx did not write extensively on literature and its place in society, he did detail the relationship between economic determinism and the social superstructure in various texts, including *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (1859), where he stated: "The mode of production of material life determines altogether the social, political, and intellectual life process. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness." Thus, although he did not expound in detail on the connections between literature and society, it is agreed among most scholars that Marx did view the relationship between literary activity and the economic center of society as an interactive process.

Although Marx and Friedrich Engels detailed theories of Socialism early in the twentieth century, it was not until the 1920s that Marxist literary theory was systematized. The greatest impetus for this standardization came after the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. The resulting socialist form of government and society, although uncertain about the length of time it would take for the new economic standards to create a new culture, believed that such a change was imminent. In the meantime, Socialist Realism was accepted as the highest form of literature, guiding both literary creation and official literary criticism in Russia. In the years since then, Russian literary theory has modified its extreme socialist stance to acknowledge that literary creation is a result of both subjective inspiration and the objective influence of the writer's surroundings. Outside of the Soviet Union, one of the most influential Marxist critics was Georg Lukács. Born in Hungary, Lukács joined the Communist Party in 1918 and later migrated to Russia. He has defined his Marxist theories of literature and criticism in such works as *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (1963), and remains central to the study of Marxist criticism today.

In addition to being the guiding principle behind most literary works in communist and socialist Russia, Marxism also greatly influenced Western writers. Many writers, including Richard Wright, Claude McKay, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and James Joyce, were deeply influenced with Marxist and socialist theories of the day, and much of this reflection is evident in their writings of the time. In stories such as "Long Black Song" and "Down by the Riverside," Wright explores fundamental Marxist ideas. In the case of Claude McKay, Marxist theory provided a framework for issues of racial inequality and justice that were often addressed in his works. Following the failure of the Communist revolution, Marxist critics and writers were faced with the realization that Socialism had failed as a practical ideology. This sense of failure is reflected in such works as Mavis Gallant's *What Is to Be Done?* (1983) and Earle Birney's *Down the Long Table* (1955). Both texts explore the failure of Marxist philosophy in the modern world, and in his essay discussing these writers, Christian Bök notes that while both stories are about people yearning for a socially responsible society, the writing is permeated with a sense of failure regarding the effectiveness of this vision.

In recent years, literary criticism has expanded in scope to address issues of social and political significance. Marxist critics such as Raymond Williams and Fredric Jameson have expanded their realm of study to include cultural and political studies in their interpretations of literature. In this regard, Marxist critics, along with feminists, have begun studying literary criticism as an aspect of cultural sciences, notes Michael Ryan in his essay on the state of contemporary cultural and literary studies.



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## Deconstruction

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Jacques Derrida's philosophy is a complex literary critical method called Deconstruction. Deconstruction is concerned primarily with the overturning of dominating biases in language. Heavily influenced by Marx and Saussure, Derrida wished to use deconstruction to battle inequality. Through literary criticism, Derrida would fight his battle.

His first line of reasoning the need of deconstruction emerged from the assumption that all concepts come in binaries that are opposed to one another. Language privileges one concept over another. This assumption is that words such as "male" and "female" or "good" and "evil", are in binary opposition where one term, usually the first, is in dominance over the second term. According to Derrida, this shows a great inequality in Western/Modernist thinking.

Derrida's second line of reasoning followed from the assumption that the identity or meanings of words could not be understood except in relation to what they are not. For example, I cannot understand "dog" unless I think of all the things that "dog" is not. "Dog" is not "horse" nor "bog" nor "fog" nor "human", *ad infinitum*. Because we cannot ever discover all the words in *différance* to the identity of "dog", we must constantly use violence to impose our subjective meaning or identity on the word "dog".

To overcome this inequality, Derrida suggested that texts, and thereby language, must be deconstructed. The method of deconstruction begins with the toppling the inherent power structures found within the binary oppositions. This is done by equalizing the "inferior" and "superior" terms in opposition, then placing the "superior" term as merely an expression of the "inferior" term. "Male" is really an expression of "female" and "good" is really an expression of "evil". Once the terms are interpreted as such, Derrida's second line of reasoning concerning *différance* kicks in. The newly equalized terms are revealed to be themselves meaningless and subjectively imposed by violence as identity of words are overturned by *différance*.

Deconstruction, form of philosophical and literary analysis, derived mainly from work begun in the 1960s by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, that questions the fundamental conceptual distinctions, or "oppositions," in Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts. In the 1970s the term was applied to work by Derrida, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Barbara Johnson, among other scholars. In the 1980s it designated more loosely a range of radical theoretical enterprises in diverse areas of the humanities and social sciences, including—in addition to philosophy and literature—law, psychoanalysis, architecture, anthropology, theology, feminism, gay and lesbian studies, political theory, historiography, and film theory. In polemical discussions about intellectual trends of the late 20th-century, *deconstruction* was sometimes used pejoratively to suggest nihilism and frivolous skepticism. In popular usage the term has come to mean a critical dismantling of tradition and traditional modes of thought.

The oppositions challenged by deconstruction, which have been inherent in Western philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks, are characteristically "binary" and "hierarchical," involving a pair of terms in which one member of the pair is assumed to be primary or fundamental, the other secondary or derivative. Examples include nature and culture, speech and writing, mind and body, presence and absence, inside and outside, literal and metaphorical, intelligible and sensible, and form and meaning, among many others. To "deconstruct" an opposition is to explore the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering assumed (and sometimes explicitly asserted) in the text and other aspects of the text's meaning, especially those that are indirect or implicit or that rely on figurative or performative uses of language. Through this analysis,

the opposition is shown to be a product, or “construction,” of the text rather than something given independently of it.

In the writings of the French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, society and culture are described as corrupting and oppressive forces that gradually develop out of an idyllic “state of nature” in which humans exist in self-sufficient and peaceful isolation from one another. For Rousseau, then, nature is prior to culture. Yet there is another sense in which culture is certainly prior to nature: the idea of nature is a product of culture, and what counts as “nature” or “natural” at any given historical moment will vary depending upon the culture of the time. What this fact shows is not that the terms of the nature/culture opposition should be inverted—that culture is really prior to nature—but rather that the relation between the terms is not one-sided and unidirectional, as Rousseau and others had assumed. The point of the deconstructive analysis is to restructure, or “displace,” the opposition, not simply to reverse it.

For Derrida, the most telling and pervasive opposition is the one that treats writing as secondary to or derivative of speech. According to this opposition, speech is a more authentic form of language, because in speech the ideas and intentions of the speaker are immediately “present” (spoken words, in this idealized picture, directly express what the speaker “has in mind”), whereas in writing they are more remote or “absent” from the speaker or author and thus more liable to misunderstanding. As Derrida argues, however, spoken words function as linguistic signs only to the extent that they can be repeated in different contexts, in the absence of the speaker who originally utters them. Speech qualifies as language, in other words, only to the extent that it has characteristics traditionally assigned to writing, such as “absence,” “difference” (from the original context of utterance), and the possibility of misunderstanding. One indication of this fact, according to Derrida, is that descriptions of speech in Western philosophy often rely on examples and metaphors related to writing. In effect, these texts describe speech as a form of writing, even in cases where writing is explicitly claimed to be secondary to speech.

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The above material is retrieved from:

<https://scholasticinquiry.wordpress.com/2013/03/05/a-short-summary-of-jacques-derrida-and-deconstruction/>  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/deconstruction>

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## Feminism

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Feminism started with the idea that human rights should be given to women. This idea was put forward by some philosophers in the 18th and 19th centuries such as Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill. Later feminists in the early 20th century also said that women should be allowed to vote in a democracy. Many women felt very strongly that they should be allowed to vote and there were many protests. These women were called Suffragettes. This is because they were fighting for Universal suffrage which means everybody is able to vote. The Suffragettes staged many protests for their rights. Some women even committed suicide to show how wrong it was that they could not take part in politics. After women received the vote, feminism worked to make all of society more equal for women.

Not all female politicians have been welcomed by feminists, with Margaret Thatcher, Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann being clear examples. Feminism is generally acknowledged to have "waves" as different time periods focused on different aspects of feminism, often working off the ideas presented by the wave before.

**First wave (approx. 1830s – early 1900s):** In technical terms, the first wave of feminism could be dated earlier to include pre-nineteenth century women's rights movements. In particular, the French Revolution of 1789 is often attributed as the beginning of the first demands for women's rights. This went on to inspire Mary Wollstonecraft, whose book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* was published in 1792. It is widely

recognized as one of the earliest significant works of feminist literacy. However, first wave feminism is usually dated as occurring between the mid to late nineteenth century and early 1900's. During the first wave, women began to realize that they must first gain political power before they could bring about social change. This wave focused on gaining the right to vote (universal suffrage). Later, the focus shifted to include sexual, economic, and reproductive concerns.

During the inter-war years, the feminist movement declined. Anti-feminism was on the rise, focusing on the issue of women and work. Women were being 'persuaded' to return to their traditional roles in the home and give up their war jobs. There were also issues within the organized ranks of feminism itself. The ideologies and priorities of certain groups were changing. Some felt that equality with men had been reached and shifted their focus onto the needs of women as women, such as the subjects of birth control, family allowance, and protective legislature. This caused the split into the dominant groups of equality feminism and new feminism. New feminists focused on the role of traditional women in the home and as mothers. Equality feminists encouraged women to look beyond the home and fought for equality with men in every aspect of life. Equality feminists opposed protective legislature, such as maternity leave, purely on principle.

The topic of protective legislature eventually led to the divide of first wave feminism. Middle-class feminists tended to oppose protective legislature, whereas working class feminists largely supported it. This split between the previously dominant equality feminism and the rising new feminism marks the end of the first wave of feminism.

**Second wave (1960s-1980s):** Second wave feminism is marked by the rise of political concerns. Where the first wave of feminism dealt with women in the workforce, as well as the right to own property and vote, the second wave of feminism lobbied for 'liberation' from a patriarchal society. The key to second wave feminism was the struggle over the female body itself - how it was represented and the significance attached to the reality of biological differences.

The famous "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" declaration made by Simone de Beauvoir led to new thinking on the way gender was perceived as a construction, rather than something inherent. Second wave feminism was also characterized by the problematization of equality. Questions arose about what gaining equality would achieve, due to the societal roles men and women were still expected to fill. This led to the call for extreme change in order to revolutionize the very fabric of a patriarchal society. This was the beginning of the radical, Marxist, and socialist feminist groupings. It also marked a shift in the politics of liberal feminism, focusing more on 'sexual politics', such as the family, abortion, rape, domestic violence, and sexuality.

**Third wave (1990s – present):** Third wave feminism is generally described as the feminism of a younger generation who acknowledge both the effect and the limitations of the ideologies presented by second wave feminism. This new generation argues that the conditions which prompted second wave feminism no longer exist and therefore, feminism needs a revamping in order to be applicable to modern day. It also argues that second wave feminism catered too much to a small group of people, namely white, middle-class, heterosexual women.

Third wave feminists largely seem to have grown up with feminism as a strong concept in society, thus influencing them from a young age. It is taught in schools and is also prominent in the media. Third wave feminists largely focus on issues surrounding individual self-expression. This includes how identity is formed and communicated through things such as appearance, sexuality, and intersectionality. Third wave feminism was also created in order to include a larger grouping of people, recognizing women from different cultural backgrounds, religions, sexualities, ethnicities, and abilities to name a few.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Fourth wave (approx. 2008 – present):** Some say that a fourth wave of feminism is already upon us, prompted by the increase in internet culture. This wave is similar to the third wave but is distinguished by more advanced technology and broader ideas of equality. This wave stands more in solidarity with other social justice movements.

Fourth wave feminism uses the internet and its "call-out" culture to challenge misogyny and sexism in popular media such as television, literature, advertising, etc. This has caused companies to change how they market to women in order to avoid being "called out". Another part of fourth wave feminism is the existence of people who reject the word *feminism* because of "assumptions of gender binary and exclusionary subtext: 'For women only'". In 21st century mushrooming online communities for focused on men as a counterpart to feminism is known as mansphere.

#### **Types of feminism/feminist theories:**

**Liberal feminism** drew its strength from the diversity of liberal thought following the Enlightenment. The basis of liberal feminism is the emphasis on the power of the individual. If everyone individually stands up for what is right, discriminatory practices will change. Liberals also value education, arguing that equal education of men and women will lead to equality in society. Liberal feminists would be more likely to accept the argument (to a degree) that certain positions in society (such as the home and the workplace) are better suited to the 'traditional' gender placements.

**Socialist or Marxist feminism** are similar in that they both believe revolution is the answer to change. They both link social conditions with capitalism and believe that overthrowing the current system is the only way to get what you want. Like liberal feminists, socialist or Marxist feminists acknowledge that men are necessary as part of the movement for change.

**Radical feminism**, particularly in the USA, developed from the civil rights and new left clusters. Radical feminists were largely fed up with the male-dominated left wing radicalism and formed the Women's Liberation Movement. This movement was formed in order to create woman-centered politics and to escape from male-oriented politics. They believed this could only be done in a safe women-only space, and this led to the policy of separatism for which radical feminism is best known for. Radical feminists are often misunderstood and seen as "man-hating" because of the way their women-oriented politics seem to reject male input.

**Evangelical feminism** or '**Christian feminism**' was developed from religious movements. Evangelical feminists work to protect and spiritually reform those who need it, such as women and children from outside the church. These feminists believe that everyone is equal under one God and strive to bring that equality to the church and their individual lives.

**Equality feminism** is a subsection of the feminist movement. Equality feminism's focus on the similarities between the sexes is on the basis that men and women's abilities are indistinguishable from their biology. This type of feminism encourages the broadening of horizons, encouraging women to look beyond the home. Its ultimate goal is for the sexes to be completely equal in every part of life.

**New feminism** is a philosophy similar to equality feminism. It focuses on how the differences between men and women complement each other, rather than one sex's biology causing a superiority over the other. New feminism, unlike equality feminism, recognizes the different strengths and roles given to men and women. New feminism advocates for equality in how men and women are treated in their individual roles in society. Its basic concept is the emphasis placed on important differences being biological rather than cultural. Women should be supported as child bearers, both economically and culturally, but this should not be a role that is forced upon them. The main aim is to emphasize the importance of women and men as individuals and that in all senses (legal, social, economic), they should be equal despite their natural differences.

**Global Feminist Thought** is primarily the movement of women's rights on a global scale. Women are impacted in different communities around the world and have common problems they face on a day-to-day basis; usually at home or in the work force. Although different cultural locations have different experiences that

will shape their experiences and perceptions, they have common themes. Global feminists tend to focus on nationality (like race, gender and class) and they reach out to help those in developing and third world countries, as well as address oppression created through histories of colonialism and imperialism. It works to end capitalism, imperialism, sexism and racism, along with having everyone considered equal on a global view. It encourages feminists to confront the problems they are facing and reach out for help, as they are not the only ones experiencing that particular problem.

**Anti-feminism:** writers such as Camille Paglia, Christina Hoff Sommers, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Daphne Patai oppose some forms of feminism, though they identify as feminists. They argue, for example, that feminism often promotes misandry (hatred of men) and the elevation of women's interests above men's, and criticize radical feminist positions as harmful to both men and women. Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge argue that the term "anti-feminist" is used to silence academic debate about defects of feminism like lack of intersectionality and visible separatism.

**Criticism:** Identified reasons why some people do not like feminism:

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- People do not like feminism because they think that women are already equal or more important in the eyes of law. Philoandrist's often say that society in general is not equal for men and a version of that is what women experience. Critics say basic tenets like equity and equality in outcome (egalitarian humanism) is a striving factor among men as it is with women.
  - Analysis of feminist theories suggest that in its mid to high levels the topic boils down to aggressive misandry with its separatist and otherness positions rather than being collaborative or supportive. Some say this is reflected in rights in child custody and divorce. Philogynists say this to be just the toxic side of things.
  - The level of binary thinking with wrong attributions is considered to be a factor. Some argue that women are not regarded as equal to men due to biological differences, the antithetical disregard between women: white vs. women of color, Privilege theory: disregard of ableism existence among men as among women (Angela Merkel, Melinda Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Tarja Halonen, etc.), viewing women as generally weak and forcing empowerment, etc. Some areas are: the treatment and role of women in the military, denial of ordination of women in churches (Ephesians 5:21) and on pregnancy.
  - Some people consider feminism denies strength exhibited by females through maternal and care aspects or discourages these aspects by terming them closely to weakness or slavery.
  - Some people argue that feminism is a showcase of existential crisis between matriarchal and patriarchal systems. It is reflected in radical feminism which defines liberation as successful totalitarian and forceful overturn of time-honored traditions, religious beliefs, gender roles, relationships, society, culture, power, authority dynamics, and economic structures.
  - Some theorists consider that conscious and unconscious bias is rampant within human beings, such state of oppression is common and an understanding to halt them in destructive forms is what equality should be about.
  - Some people say feminism from its supportive nature is distorted and used for propaganda's like heterosexuality is confinement and distinct female sexuality is liberated only through celibacy, autoeroticism, or lesbianism.

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The above material is retrieved from:

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## Post-Colonial Criticism

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A critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse on the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands and South America, postcolonialism concerns itself with the study of the colonization (which began as early as the Renaissance), the decolonization (which involves winning back and reconstituting the native cultures), and the neocolonising process (an aftermath of postmodernism and late capitalism, when multinational corporations control the world). Focusing on the omnipresent power struggles between cultures and the intersection of cultures which results in multiculturalism and poly-valency of culture, Postcolonialism analyses the metaphysical, ethical and political concerns about cultural identity, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, subjectivity, language and power.

Influenced by the poststructuralist and postmodern idea of decentering, postcolonial literary criticism undermines the universalist claims of literature, identifies colonial sympathies in the canon, and replaces the colonial metanarratives with counter-narratives of resistance, by rewriting history and asserting cultural identities through strategies such as separatism, nativism, cultural syncretism, hybridity, mimicry, active participation and assimilation. Backed by an anti-essentialist notion of identity and culture, it critiques cultural hierarchies and the Eurocentrism of modernity. The major theoretical works in postcolonial theory include *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) by Franz Fanon, *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said, *In Other Worlds* (1987) by Gayatri Spivak, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft et al, *Nation and Narration* (1990) by Homi K Bhabha, and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by Edward Said. In literature, indigenous people from previously colonised and marginalised countries have increasingly found their voices, attempting to assert their own visions, tell their own stories and reclaim their experiences and histories.

With the objective of locating the modes of representation where Europeans constructed natives in politically prejudiced ways, post colonial criticism intends to unveil such literary figures, themes and representatives that have enforced imperial ideology, colonial domination and continuing Western hegemony. It endeavours to probe beneath the obvious and apparently universal/aesthetic/humanist themes in order to reveal their racial, gendered, imperial assumptions. Postcolonial critics reinterpret and examine the values of literary texts, by focussing on the contexts in which they were produced, and reveal the colonial ideologies that are concealed within. Such approaches are exemplified in Chinua Achebe's rereading, of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Edward Said's rereading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Sara Suleri's rereading of Kipling's *Kim*, Homi K Bhabha's rereading of Forster's *A Passage to India*. They seek to identify the gaps and fissures within the discourse that provide the native with means of resistance and subversion, and the dissenting colonial with means of articulating opposition.

### **Key concepts in Postcolonialism:**

**Othering** involves two concepts — the “Exotic Other” and the “Demonic Other.” The Exotic Other represents a fascination with the inherent dignity and beauty of the primitive/undeveloped other, as delineated in Yeats' Byzantium poems; while the Demonic Other is represented as inferior, negative, savage and evil as is described in novels like *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India*.

**Diaspora** refers to people who have been displaced or dispersed from their homelands, and who possess and share a collective memory and myth, and the nostalgic reminiscence of “home” (“imaginary homelands,” to use Rushdie's term) or an inherited ideology of “home” becomes a personal identity as well as a collective identity of members of a particular community. They are not rooted in one location, and live in the memories of their “Imagined homelands.” In the new geographical location, they negotiate their culture and that of the host nation. Indian diasporic experience, for instance, has been extensively documented by authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Menon Marath, Dom Moraes, Farrukh Dhondy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, and many others. Diasporic theorists such as Avtar Brah and Robin Cohen propose the idea of a home as a

mythic one, a place of desire in the diasporic imagination, a place to which there can be no return, despite the possibilities of visiting the place that is seen as the place of origin.

**Hybridity/ Syncretism:** The Schizophrenic state of the migrant as s/he attempts to combine the culture of origin with that of the host country, without abandoning either is called ‘Hybridity’ or ‘Syncretism’. The central theme in postcolonial diasporic literature is the negotiation of two identities — the split consciousness of being both, yet neither completely; the multiple identities or solidarities; or in extreme cases, reassertion of native cultural identity as manifest in cultural fundamentalism. Hybridity in postcolonial studies has been influenced by the work of political theorists like Will Kymlicka who posits a “multicultural citizenship” in the globalised world. This leads to the emergence of new identities where the original identity, historical experiences and memories are not abandoned but is constructively merged with the host culture, to move beyond the “constructed” limits of both, forging solidarities against essential racial oppression. Cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall have argued for “new ethnicities” that deny ideas of essential black or essential white identity, proposing a “real heterogeneity of interests and identities.”

**Double Consciousness:** A major concept formulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, double consciousness echoes Frantz Fanon’s contention of the divided self in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the black always sees himself through the eyes of the white. Du Bois described double consciousness as “two souls, two thoughts... in one dark body”, which Meena Alexander later altered as “many souls, many thoughts... in one dark body”— pointing to the migrant’s experience in multiple subject positions — a recurrent theme in the writings of Ben Okri, Amitav Ghosh, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, Caryl Phillips and others.

**Subaltern:** Subaltern is a term introduced by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the working class, and used and popularized by Gayatri Spivak in the postcolonial context, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* In this essay, Spivak raises issues about the voice of the subaltern in rebellion against the colonizer, and the authenticity of the voice of the subaltern — whether s/he speaks or is spoken for? Thus Spivak ridicules the hypocrisy of postcolonial discourses that claim to raise the voices of hitherto unheard, while they inadvertently serve to perpetuate the marginality and the subalternity of the oppressed. Spivak’s essay was a critique of the work of the Subaltern Studies group including Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Shahid Amin and others.

**Mimicry:** Mimicry demonstrates an ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonized subject mimics the colonizer by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, language, attire, values etc. In doing so, he mocks and parodies the colonizer. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized. Homi Bhabha notes that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced “as almost the same, but not quite” — it contains both mockery and a menace; it reveals the limitations in the authority of the colonial discourse, almost as though the colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.

**History:** Writing in the wake of decolonization, after long years of imperial suppression and effacement of identity, the writers of the Third World nations are increasingly interested and keen on writing about their native histories, problems of colonization; they have written case studies of cultural colonization, native identity and anti-colonial resistance. Anti-colonial writing of the first phase is thus of the culturalist nationalist variety — embodied in movements like Negritude, Africanite, and African Aesthetic. These struggles were aimed at liberating themselves at the individual as well as the colonial level, from colonial attitudes and forms of thinking. The postcolonial obsession with history, closely linked with the overarching goal of decolonization, addresses issues such as 1) interrogating the effects of colonialism, especially in terms of cultural alienation; 2) the anti-colonial struggles of the Third World and the rise of nationalism; 3) the creation of mimic men in the colonial culture; 4) the appropriation of history by the colonial master; 5) attempts to retrieve and re-write their own histories by the formerly colonized cultures; and 6) modes of representations. Retrieving history for a postcolonial culture invariably includes an intense awareness that native history without colonial contamination is not possible. The Subaltern Studies project seeks to discover, beneath the layers of colonial historiography,

the local resistance to colonialism. It is a history from below, utilizing resources in native languages and non-colonial forms of history-recording such as folksongs, ballads etc.

**Nation:** The postcolonial writers are conscious of their role in nation-building. In postcolonial literature, the nation-building project seeks to erase the colonial past by rejecting and resisting the Western constructions of the “other” as primitive, savage, demonic etc. and by seeking to retrieve a pre-colonial past that would help them redefine a nation and project a destiny and future. However, the postcolonial methodologies and epistemologies are almost always mediated and manipulated by Western ones, and the native realizes that the destiny of the postcolony is not as ideal as had been dreamt of earlier. Postcolonialism brings with it a new process of exclusion, marginalization and “subalternisation”, as Gyanendra Pandey argues, “Minorities are constituted along with the nation”, and a continuation of colonialism through the formation of elites. Literature of postcoloniality that constitutes nationhood emphasizes the modes of constructing, imagining and representing the nation, the role of locality, space, community, religion, ritual, cultural identity and the politics of nativism in the making of a national identity.

**Race:** According to Michael Banton, race is a concept that has been the basis of discrimination and disempowerment. Race has become a central category in social, political and cultural theory. Critical race studies, which includes studies of race in literature and culture, ethnicity studies, studies of minority literatures, and specific traditions in literature and philosophy, explicitly addresses questions of race and racial discrimination. Issues of race and ethnicity lead to collective, communal identities and have a larger political and social significance. The political reading/ critical practice of racial studies has had significant impact within Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Black British Studies, Asian American Studies etc. The race turn has also been instrumental in the development of cultural movements like Black Arts and Harlem Renaissance. W.E.B. Du Bois in his writings like *The Souls of Black Folk* criticizes the scientific racism — Eugenics, Social Darwinism and Nazism — which gives rise to “biological discrimination!” He also argued that racism was socially constructed, that it emerged through social discourses and practices and was not scientifically demonstrable.

**Gender:** Postcolonial gender discourse discusses the double colonization of women by both imperialism and patriarchy. In postcolonial literature, gender and sexuality have become prominent themes in the last decades of the 20th century. Gender and the role of women in the postcolonial countries have been the focus in the writings of Anita Desai, Ama Ata Aidoo, Suniti Namjoshi, Buchi Emecheta, and Nawal El Saadawi. The linkage between gender and the racial/ethnic identities has been the subject of numerous autobiographical writings by native Canadian and African-American women like Gloria Anzaldua and Maria Campbell. Postcolonial gender studies examine how class, caste, economy, political empowerment and literacy have contributed to the condition of women in the Third World countries, another interesting area of study is the impact of “First World Feminism” on Third World writers while exploring the possibilities of Third World Feminism.

**Black Feminism:** The domination of the black male in the civil rights movement and the white woman in the feminist propaganda necessitated the emergence of Black Feminism detailing the inextricable connection between sexism and racism. Alice Walker’s *Womanism*, Angela Davis’ *Women, Race and Class* and Kimberle Crenshaw’s *Identity Politics* discusses the marginalized, intersectional plight of the Black women. The Black feminist lesbian organisation, Combahee River Collective, started by activists like Barbara Smith, is ideologically separated from “white feminism.” The CRC questions conventional social hierarchy with the white man at the centre and began creating theory which spoke of the combination of problems, sexism, racism etc. that they had been battling.

**Neocolonialism** refers to the continuing economic dominance and exploitation of the “politically-free” Third World countries by the European imperial powers. Neocolonialism is most often achieved not merely through state control by Euro-American powers, but by a nexus between politicians, bankers, generals, and the Chief Executive officers. International aid and developmental initiatives are very often aligned with economic



policy diktats that disable Third World economies. Neocolonialism, therefore, is a more dangerous form of colonialism.

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## Multiculturalism

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Multiculturalism describes the existence, acceptance, or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction, usually considered in terms of the culture associated with an ethnic group. This can happen when a jurisdiction is created or expanded by amalgamating areas with two or more different cultures (e.g. French Canada and English Canada) or through immigration from different jurisdictions around the world (e.g. Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, and many other countries).

Multicultural ideologies and policies vary widely, ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, to a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which people of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group to which they belong.

Multiculturalism that promotes maintaining the distinctiveness of multiple cultures is often contrasted to other settlement policies such as social integration, cultural assimilation and racial segregation. Multiculturalism has been described as a "salad bowl" and "cultural mosaic". Two different and seemingly inconsistent strategies have developed through different government policies and strategies. The first focuses on interaction and communication between different cultures; this approach is also often known as interculturalism. The second centers on diversity and cultural uniqueness which can sometimes result in intercultural competition over jobs among other things and may lead to ethnic conflict. Cultural isolation can protect the uniqueness of the local culture of a nation or area and also contribute to global cultural diversity. A common aspect of many policies following the second approach is that they avoid presenting any specific ethnic, religious, or cultural community values as central.

The idea of multiculturalism in contemporary political discourse and in political philosophy is about how to understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity. The term "multicultural" is often used as a descriptive term to characterize the fact of diversity in a society, but in what follows, the focus is on its prescriptive use in the context of Western liberal democratic societies. While the term has come to encompass a variety of prescriptive claims, it is fair to say that proponents of multiculturalism reject the ideal of the "melting pot" in which members of minority groups are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture in favor of an ideal in which members of minority groups can maintain their distinctive collective identities and practices. In the case of immigrants, proponents emphasize that multiculturalism is compatible with, not opposed to, the integration of immigrants into society; multiculturalism policies provide fairer terms of integration for immigrants.

Modern states are organized around the language and cultural norms of the dominant groups that have historically constituted them. Members of minority cultural groups face barriers in pursuing their social practices in ways that members of dominant groups do not. Some theorists argue for tolerating minority groups by leaving them free of state interference (Kukathas 1995, 2003). Others argue that mere toleration of group differences falls short of treating members of minority groups as equals; what is required is recognition and positive accommodation of minority group practices through what the leading theorist of multiculturalism Will Kymlicka has called "group-differentiated rights" (1995). Some group-differentiated rights are held by individual members of minority groups, as in the case of individuals who are granted exemptions from generally

applicable laws in virtue of their religious beliefs or individuals who seek language accommodations in education and in voting. Other group-differentiated rights are held by the group qua group rather than by its members severally; such rights are properly called “group rights,” as in the case of indigenous groups and minority nations, who claim the right of self-determination. In the latter respect, multiculturalism is closely allied with nationalism.

Multiculturalism has been used as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of a wide range of marginalized groups, including African Americans, women, LGBT people, and people with disabilities (Glazer 1997, Hollinger 1995, Taylor 1992). This is true of the debates in the 1980s over whether and how to diversify school curricula to recognize the achievements of historically marginalized groups. Contemporary theories of multiculturalism, which originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, tend to focus their arguments on immigrants who are ethnic and religious minorities (e.g. Latinos in the U.S., Muslims in Western Europe), minority nations (e.g. Catalans, Basque, Welsh, Québécois), and indigenous peoples (e.g. Native peoples in North America, Australia, and New Zealand). As we shall see, the variety of prescriptive claims go beyond the issue of representation in school curricula.

**Characteristics of Multiculturalism:**

1. Shows the characters as unique individuals
2. Portrays all people as being respected for being themselves not for their outstanding abilities to gain approval
3. Shows the characters as physically diverse
4. Allows the reader to identify with the characters
5. Accurately portrays culture
6. Describes social issues and problems frankly and accurately
7. Has problems resolved without intervention from the dominant race or culture
8. Shows all characters as equal
9. Glorifies all people's achievements
10. Presents accurate events and information
11. Describes the setting authentically
12. Seeks to rectify historical distortions and omissions
13. Provides legitimate dialog
14. Void of all bias and stereotypes
15. Author accurately identifies with or is a member of the culture portrayed
16. Culture is portrayed multidimensionally
17. Appropriate detail of insider perspective is provided as a natural part of the piece

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<http://socialsciences.in/article/multiculturalism-and-india>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism/>

<http://www.homeofbob.com/literature/genre/multicultural/index.html>

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## Eco-Criticism

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Eco-criticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation. Eco-criticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works, both published in the mid-1990s: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination*, by Lawrence Buell.

Ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analyzed. One of the main goals in ecocriticism is to study how individuals in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of criticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. It is hence a fresh way of analyzing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that is known by a number of other designations, including “green (cultural) studies”, “ecopoetics”, and “environmental literary criticism.”

Western thought has often held a more or less utilitarian attitude to nature —nature is for serving human needs. However, after the eighteenth century, there emerged many voices that demanded a reevaluation of the relationship between man and environment, and man’s view of nature. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, developed the notion of “Deep Ecology” which emphasizes the basic interconnectedness of all life forms and natural features, and presents a symbiotic and holistic world-view rather than an anthropocentric one.

Earlier theories in literary and cultural studies focussed on issue of class, race, gender, region are criteria and “subjects” of critical analysis. The late twentieth century has woken up to a new threat: ecological disaster. The most important environmental problems that humankind faces *as a whole* are: nuclear war, depletion of valuable natural resources, population explosion, proliferation of exploitative technologies, conquest of space preliminary to using it as a garbage dump, pollution, extinction of species (though not a human problem) among others. In such a context, literary and cultural theory has begun to address the issue as a part of academic discourse. Numerous green movements have sprung up all over the world, and some have even gained representations in the governments.

Large scale debates over “dumping,” North versus South environmentalism (the necessary differences between the environmentalism of the developed and technologically advanced richer nations—the North, and the poorer, subsistence environmentalism of the developing or “Third World”—the South). Donald Worster’s *Nature’s Economy* (1977) became a textbook for the study of ecological thought down the ages. The historian Arnold Toynbee recorded the effect of human civilisation upon the land and nature in his monumental, *Mankind and Mother Earth* (1976). Environmental issues and landscape use were also the concern of the Annales School of historians, especially Braudel and Febvre. The work of environmental historians has been pathbreaking too. Richard Grove et al’s massive *Nature and the Orient* (1998), David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha’s *Nature, Culture, Imperialism* (1995) have been significant work in the environmental history of India and Southeast Asia. Ramachandra Guha is of course the most important environmental historian writing from India today.

Various versions of environmentalism developed. Deep ecology and ecofeminism were two important developments. These new ideas questioned the notion of “development” and “modernity,” and argued that all Western notions in science, philosophy, politics were “anthropocentric” (human-centred) and “androcentric” (Man/male-centred). Technology, medical science with its animal testing, the cosmetic and fashion industry all came in for scrutiny from environmentalists. Deep ecology, for instance, stressed on a “biocentric” view (as seen in the name of the environmentalist group, “Earth First!!”).

Ecocriticism is the result of this new consciousness: that very soon, there will be nothing beautiful (or safe) in nature to discourse about, unless we are very careful.

**Eco-critics ask questions such as:**

- (1) How is nature represented in the novel/poem/play?
- (2) What role does the physical-geographical setting play in the structure of the novel?
- (3) How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? That is, what is the link between pedagogic or creative practice and actual political, sociocultural and ethical behaviour towards the land and other non-human life forms?
- (4) How is science—in the form of genetic engineering, technologies of reproduction, sexualities—open to critical scrutiny terms of the effects of science upon the land?

**The essential assumptions, ideas and methods of ecocritics may be summed up as follows:**

- (1) Ecocritics believe that human culture is related to the physical world.
- (2) Ecocriticism assumes that all life forms are interlinked. Ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere.
- (3) Moreover, there is a definite link between nature and culture, where the *literary* treatment, representation and “thematisation” of land and nature influence *actions* on the land.
- (4) Joseph Meeker in an early work, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1972) used the term “literary ecology” to refer to “the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species.”
- (5) William Rueckert is believed to have coined the term “ecocriticism” in 1978, which he defines as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.”

**Ecocriticism** is the study of literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary point of view, where literature scholars analyze texts that illustrate environmental concerns and examine the various ways literature treats the subject of nature. Some ecocritics brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation, though not all ecocritics agree on the purpose, methodology, or scope of ecocriticism. In the United States, ecocriticism is often associated with the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), which hosts biennial meetings for scholars who deal with environmental matters in literature. ASLE publishes a journal—*Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE)*—in which current international scholarship can be found.

Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that is known by a number of other designations, including "green (cultural) studies", "ecopoetics", and "environmental literary criticism" and is often informed by other fields such as ecology, sustainable design, biopolitics, environmental history, environmentalism, and social ecology, among others.

**Definition:** In comparison with other 'political' forms of criticism, there has been relatively little dispute about the moral and philosophical aims of ecocriticism, although its scope has broadened rapidly from nature writing, romantic poetry, and canonical literature to take in film, television, theatre, animal stories, architectures, scientific narratives and an extraordinary range of literary texts. At the same time, ecocriticism has borrowed methodologies and theoretically informed approaches liberally from other fields of literary, social and scientific study.

Cheryll Glotfelty's working definition in *The Ecocriticism Reader* is that "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" and one of the implicit goals of the approach is to recoup professional dignity for what Glotfelty calls the "undervalued genre of nature writing". Lawrence Buell defines "'ecocriticism' ... as [a] study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis".

Simon Estok noted in 2001 that "ecocriticism has distinguished itself, debates notwithstanding, firstly by the ethical stand it takes, its commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than simply as an object of thematic study, and, secondly, by its commitment to making connections".

More recently, in an article that extends ecocriticism to Shakespearean studies, Estok argues that ecocriticism is more than "simply the study of Nature or natural things in literature; rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function—thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise—of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in documents (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material worlds". This echoes the functional approach of the cultural ecology branch of ecocriticism, which analyzes the analogies between ecosystems and imaginative texts and posits that such texts potentially have an ecological (regenerative, revitalizing) function in the cultural system. As Michael P. Cohen has observed, "if you want to be an ecocritic, be prepared to explain what you do and be criticized, if not satirized." Certainly, Cohen adds his voice to such critique, noting that one of the problems of ecocriticism has been what he calls its "praise-song school" of criticism. All ecocritics share an environmentalist motivation of some sort, but whereas the majority are 'nature endorsing', some are 'nature skeptical'. In part this entails a shared sense of the ways in which 'nature' has been used to legitimise gender, sexual and racial norms (so homosexuality has been seen as 'unnatural', for example), but it also involves skepticism about the uses to which 'ecological' language is put in ecocriticism; it can also involve a critique of the ways cultural norms of nature and the environment contribute to environmental degradation. Greg Garrard has dubbed 'pastoral ecology' the notion that nature undisturbed is balanced and harmonious, while Dana Phillips has criticised the literary quality and scientific accuracy of nature writing in "The Truth of Ecology". Similarly, there has been a call to recognize the place of the Environmental Justice movement in redefining ecocritical discourse.

In response to the question of what ecocriticism is or should be, Camilo Gomides has offered an operational definition that is both broad and discriminating: "The field of enquiry that analyzes and promotes works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature, while also motivating audiences to live within a limit that will be binding over generations". He tests it for a film (mal)adaptation about Amazonian deforestation. Implementing the Gomides definition, Joseph Henry Vogel makes the case that ecocriticism constitutes an "economic school of thought" as it engages audiences to debate issues of resource allocation that have no technical solution. Ashton Nichols has recently argued that the historical dangers of a romantic version of nature now need to be replaced by "urbanatural roosting", a view that sees urban life and the natural world as closely linked and argues for humans to live more lightly on the planet, the way virtually all other species do.

**In literary studies:** Ecocritics investigate such things as the underlying ecological values, what, precisely, is meant by the word nature, and whether the examination of "place" should be a distinctive category, much like class, gender or race. Ecocritics examine human perception of wilderness, and how it has changed throughout history and whether or not current environmental issues are accurately represented or even mentioned in popular culture and modern literature. Scholars in ecocriticism engage in questions regarding anthropocentrism, and the "mainstream assumption that the natural world be seen primarily as a resource for human beings" as well as critical approaches to changing ideas in "the material and cultural bases of modern society". Other disciplines, such as history, economics, philosophy, ethics, and psychology, are also considered by ecocritics to be possible contributors to ecocriticism.

While William Rueckert may have been the first person to use the term *ecocriticism* (Barry 240) in his 1978 essay entitled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*, ecocriticism as a movement owes much to Rachel Carson's 1962 environmental exposé *Silent Spring*. Drawing from this critical moment, Rueckert's intent was to focus on "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature". Ecologically minded individuals and scholars have been publishing progressive works of ecotheory and criticism since the explosion of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. However, because there was no

organized movement to study the ecological/environmental side of literature, these important works were scattered and categorized under a litany of different subject headings: pastoralism, human ecology, regionalism, American Studies etc. British Marxist critic Raymond Williams, for example, wrote a seminal critique of pastoral literature in 1973, *The Country and the City*.

Another early ecocritical text, Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1974), proposed a version of an argument that was later to dominate ecocriticism and environmental philosophy; that environmental crisis is caused primarily by a cultural tradition in the West of separation of culture from nature, and elevation of the former to moral predominance. Such anthropocentrism is identified in the tragic conception of a hero whose moral struggles are more important than mere biological survival, whereas the science of animal ethology, Meeker asserts, shows that a "comic mode" of muddling through and "making love not war" has superior ecological value. In the later, "second wave" ecocriticism, Meeker's adoption of an ecophilosophical position with apparent scientific sanction as a measure of literary value tended to prevail over Williams's ideological and historical critique of the shifts in a literary genre's representation of nature.

As Glotfelty noted in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, "One indication of the disunity of the early efforts is that these critics rarely cited one another's work; they didn't know that it existed...Each was a single voice howling in the wilderness."<sup>[13]</sup> Nevertheless, ecocriticism—unlike feminist and Marxist criticisms—failed to crystallize into a coherent movement in the late 1970s, and indeed only did so in the USA in the 1990s.

In the mid-1980s, scholars began to work collectively to establish ecocriticism as a genre, primarily through the work of the Western Literature Association in which the revaluation of nature writing as a non-fictional literary genre could function. In 1990, at the University of Nevada, Reno, Glotfelty became the first person to hold an academic position as a professor of Literature and the Environment, and UNR has retained the position it established at that time as the intellectual home of ecocriticism even as ASLE has burgeoned into an organization with thousands of members in the US alone. From the late 1990s, new branches of ASLE and affiliated organizations were started in the UK, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand (ASLEC-ANZ), India (OSLE-India), Taiwan, Canada and Europe.

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