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Semester-II : CC6

Critical Theories-I

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Preface

Dear students,

This book contains Self-instructional Materials on the Critical Theories-I for Semester II. You are advised to read the syllabus prescribed for the course carefully. The syllabus includes some important critics and theorists from Plato to Todorov. As it is not possible to print the entire essays in this book, each unit contains a very detailed summary of the text prescribed for your study. You are advised to read each text prescribed in the syllabus.

Each unit is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' exercises, which are simple questions requiring answers in a word, a phrase or a sentence each. The purpose of these Self-check exercises is to make you go back to the main unit and get your answers for these questions on your own. The model answers are, of course, given at the end of each unit. But you should not look them up before you have tried to write your own answers.

Each unit gives you a list of reference books. You should find time to visit a library of your centre/college to have a look at the original essays.

There are exercises given at the end of each unit, which contain broad-answer type questions which you have to face in the final examination. Try to write answers to these questions with the help of the material in the units. Write answers in your own English, and try to refer to the books.

We wish you best luck in your final examination.

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Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2023-24 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

Unit-1

A) Plato – From Phaedrus (370 BCE)

The present unit is divided into the following sections :

A) Plato-From Phaedrus (370 B.C.E.)

B) Horace-Ars Poetica (10 B.C.E.)

1.0 Objective –

(After Studying this Unit you will be able to :

1. understand the thoughts of the prescribed critical and literary theorists from Western tradition.
2. comprehend the historical development of critical and literary thought.
3. develop critical insights to look at literature produced in various ages across the globe.
4. explain the key terms used in literary theories
5. understand the relationship of the author, readers and context

1.1 Introduction

Before understanding the concepts proposed by Plato, it is better to clarify the definition of literary criticism and literary theory. Literary criticism is basically evaluation of a literary work. It helps the readers to comprehend the text with ease. It increases the pleasure of reading a text. The function of literary criticism is to interpret, and assess a literary text. It is essentially an opinion formation on texts supported by evidence, relating to theme, style, setting, and cultural, historical and political context. It includes its classification of genre, structure and judgment of a text. It is a systematic study of literature, its interpretation, and appreciation. Etymologically, the word ‘criticism’ is derived from the Greek word ‘krisis’, which means ‘judgment’ ‘separation’, and ‘selection.’ The main purpose of criticism is to elicit the implicit meanings from the text. The innate meanings present in the text are significant to understand and interpret a literary text. It examines the merits and demerits of the text to evaluate its worth. Understanding a text without literary criticism or literary theory is challenging. Literary criticism helps the readers for better understanding the text. The productive outcome of understanding a text

depends on the knowledge of literary criticism. A. N. Jennifer's rightly differentiated between literary criticism and literary theory in his book *History of Literary Criticism*. He writes: "Broadly, texts of literature have two levels of meaning – the literal and the super literal. The super- literal meanings of texts of literature are ideological implication of the same, which criticism tries to resolve. To put it in other words Literary theory is defined as a type of literary analysis that helps readers evaluate literature. Literary criticism is the viewpoint or lens that a literary critic, one who evaluates the quality of literature, uses to reflect on the works'. Both are essential for establishing scholarly interpretation of the text. It is an excellent tool for engaging students in the elements and techniques of literature, such as character and plot development, and recognizing points of view, themes, and setting in narrative form and features. Literary theory refers to several principles derived from internal analysis of literary texts. It is a school of thought or style of literary analysis that gives readers a means to critique the ideas and principles of literature. Another term for literary theory is hermeneutics, which applies to the interpretation of a piece of literature. The idea of separation of good poetry from bad poetry for the ideal state is initiated by Plato. It is the beginning of literary criticism.

2. Plato (427B.C.-348 B.C.):

Plato is primarily not a critic, but he is an acknowledged idealistic philosopher. He is interested in philosophical enquiry, which forms the basis of his celebrated *Dialogues*.

3. Phaedrus:

Plato composed the work *Phaedrus* approximately between the years 375 and 365, during the same period in which Plato composed the *Republic*, another text in which he raises criticism of representational, arts, including literature. *Phaedrus* is a sequence of three speeches: Phaedrus' reading of Lysias' speech, followed by Socrates' two speeches. In the latter half of the dialogue, the scene shifts from a presentation of rhetoric to an extended discussion about rhetoric. By the time Plato composed the work *Phaedrus*, he was using Socrates' dramatic encounters with other characters to stage a presentation of his own philosophy. Socrates is hardly a mere mouthpiece for Plato, and for the sake of consistency, the Reading Guide to this text refers to the statements and ideas of Socrates. Readers should be aware, however, that the positions outlined in the dialogue represent Plato's thought as much as that of his teacher and have become part of the philosophical tradition called Platonism.

Socrates encounters Phaedrus, a young student of rhetoric, outside the Athens city. He comes to know that Phaedrus has just come from hearing Lysias, a famous orator, Socrates is interested in hearing Lysias's speech for himself. He persuades Phaedrus, who's carrying a copy of Lysias's speech, to read it aloud. Lysias's speech is addressed to a young man, arguing that it's better to have a sexual relationship with someone who's not in love with you than with someone who is. A primary reason for this, according to Lysias, is that people in love aren't in their right mind, and they act under the compulsion of madness rather than according to free choice. Lysias also tries to persuade his listener that the long-term social advantages are greater when a relationship is grounded in friendship rather than passion. Socrates was not happy with the argument of young scholar. Further he argues that Socrates speaks as a man trying to persuade a younger man to sleep with him even though they're not in love. He defines love as a form of madness that occurs when desire overpowers one's better judgment. This madness causes lovers to deprive their beloved of good things out of jealousy, even keeping them from philosophy, that source of greatest happiness. Love eventually spends itself and fizzles out, leaving both men in a worse condition than they were before. When Socrates realized his argument may displease the gods. Later he starts over with a second speech. He completely changes tactics by arguing that it's wrong to reject the advances of a lover on the ground of the lover's madness. When madness is given by the gods, it is a praiseworthy thing. The very best "madness" is love.

Phaedrus in the beginning is about the topic of love, the discussion in the dialogue revolves around the art of rhetoric and how it should be practiced, and dwells on subjects as diverse as metempsychosis (the Greek tradition of reincarnation) and erotic love, and the nature of the human soul shown in the famous Chariot Allegory. Phaedrus claims that to be a good speechmaker, one does not need to know the truth of what he is speaking on, but rather how to properly persuade, persuasion being the purpose of speech making and oration. This work is written in the form of scholarly exchanges between himself and his teacher Socrates. He propounds Plato's ideas on philosophy. Plato, an idealist presents his theories in the form of dialogues with an eye on the social needs of the state. He carries several of his philosophical discussions by the way of conversations from the Republic down to *Ion*, *Cratylus*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Philebus* and *Laws*. Socrates and Phaedrus then discuss rhetoric and the difference between good and bad speaking, since Phaedrus admits that Socrates's second speech is superior to Lysias's

speech, but he can't explain why. Socrates begins by establishing that rhetoric must be concerned with the truth, not just with what appears to be persuasive. Next, he explains that, if rhetoric is a "leading of the soul by means of speech," then it's important for a speaker to understand the nature of the soul.

Socrates is skeptical of myths at the beginning, by the end he is willing to use any myth, so long as it contains truth. This does not necessarily undermine his philosophic speculations, insofar as philosophy sometimes involves a touch of madness or requires something other than pure reason. Mythmaking is a neutral art that can lead either to truth or falsehood depending on the degree to which a myth is taken literally or metaphorically.

In the end, Socrates and Phaedrus discuss the aptness of writing speeches. Writing is a relatively new and ambivalent technology in Socrates' opinion. It promotes the appearance of wisdom while undercutting the reality of it. This is because writing is silent and lifeless, unable to respond to inquiry or challenge. Philosophical dialectic is superior, because it's adapted to each specific soul and, through interaction, guides that soul toward wisdom.

Plato's theories of literature, which rely on the ethics, argue that poetry is an imitation of life that appeals to the emotions of man rather than reason, therefore it is insignificant. He asserts that poets should be expelled from the state as their influence could be harmful. His pronouncements deriding art, artists and poetry are firmly refuted by his pupil Aristotle in *Poetics*. Plato considers the poet either a prophet or a madman, and in some cases both. In *Phaedrus*, Plato declares that the poet is looked upon as an individual who is possessed. He uses a language that is different from ordinary men and converses in a divinely enthused frenzy. The poet therefore cannot be judged by the standards used for normal men. Further he continued his argument in *Ion*, where he claims that the poet is an inspired singer through whom God speaks. The poet is only a passive tool in the hands of God, who practices his art at the behest of God's will. Plato notices that a magnetic chain is developed among God, the poet and a rhapsodist or the singer and the spectators are enamoured at the performance of the artist. In *Phaedrus* he gives the readers the impression that the poet speaks what is true and beautiful and hence his speech is equal to the words of God. Plato focuses on the moral responsibilities of the poet, which suggests that his position is much inferior to the philosopher because the poet appeals only to the emotions of the people and not to their intellect. This is dangerous for the society. The poet misleads the people because he does not express reality in

his works, but only provides an imitation of it. This idea is developed by Plato in the *Republic* as his second important theory of poetry called the theory of imitation.

The first half of the *Phaedrus* dialogue contains explicit reflections on rhetoric; for example, Socrates draws the distinction between what we would call the “form” and the “content” of a discourse. Lysias' speech is a rhetorical set-piece. The other two are rhetorical as well. All three are justly viewed as rhetorical masterstrokes by Plato, but for different reasons. The first is a brilliantly executed parody of the style of Lysias (an orator and speech writer of significant repute). The second speech simultaneously preserves aspects of its fictional frame (the first was a paradoxical sounding address by a “non-lover” to a “beloved”), develops that frame (the non-lover is transformed into a concealed lover), and deepens the themes in an impressive and philosophically enlightening way. The third (referred to as the “palinode” or recantation speech) contains some of the most beautiful and powerful images in all of Greek literature. It is mostly an allegory cast in the form of a myth, and tells the story of true love and of the soul's journeys in the cosmos human and divine. That is, the rhetoric of the great palinode is markedly “poetic.” Especially noteworthy for present purposes is the fact that the theme of inspiration is repeatedly invoked in the first half of the dialogue; poetic inspiration is explicitly discussed.

The themes of poetry and rhetoric, then, are intertwined in the *Phaedrus*. It looks initially as though both rhetoric and poetry have gained significant stature, at least relative to their status in the *Ion*, *Republic*, and *Gorgias*. I will begin by focusing primarily on rhetoric, and then turn to the question of poetry, even though the two themes are closely connected in this dialogue.

Rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*:

The second “half” of the dialogue does not discuss the nature of love thematically, at any length, but it does in effect propose that discourse prompted by the love of wisdom—philosophy—is true rhetoric. As the conversation between one “lover of speeches” and another evolves, the three rhetorical speeches of the first part of the dialogue are examined from the perspective of their rhetorical artlessness or artfulness. Poetry is once again cast as a kind of speech making and, very importantly, Socrates declares that “It's not speaking or writing well that's shameful; what's really shameful is to engage in either of them shamefully or badly. The proffering of discourses is not in and of itself shameful; what then constitutes honorable speech making?”

Poetry is itself a kind of persuasive discourse or rhetoric has already been mentioned. It comes as no surprise to read that Socrates indicts rhapsodes on the grounds that their speeches proceed “without questioning and explanation” and “are given only in order to produce conviction”. This echoes the *Ion*’s charge that the rhapsodes do not know what they are talking about. Inspiration comes up numerous times in the *Phaedrus*. Frenzy, madness, and possession are invoked repeatedly almost from the start of the dialogue, in connection with Phaedrus allegedly inspiring recitation of Lysias’ text, and as inspiring Socrates’ two speeches. More serious is the distinction between ordinary madness and divine madness, and the defense of the superiority of divine madness, which Socrates’ second speech sets out to defend. In particular, he sets out to show that the madness of love or eros “is given us by the gods to ensure our greatest good fortune”. The case is first made by noting that three species of madness are already accepted: that of the prophets, that of certain purifying or cathartic religious rites, and the third that inspiration granted by the Muses that moves its possessor to poetry. As noted, it begins to look as though a certain kind of poetry (the inspired) is being rehabilitated.

And yet when Socrates comes to classify kinds of lives a bit further on, the poets (along with those who have anything to do with *mimesis*) rank a low sixth out of nine, after the likes of household managers, financiers, doctors, and prophets. The poet is just ahead of the manual laborer, sophist, and tyrant. The philosopher comes in first, as the criterion for the ranking concerns the level of knowledge of truth about the Ideas or Forms of which the soul in question is capable. This hierarchy of lives could scarcely be said to rehabilitate the poet. The *Phaedrus* quietly sustains the critique of poetry, as well as (much less quietly) of rhetoric.

The problem Socrates sees with writing is that it is a ‘copy of a copy’, twice removed from the true Form corresponding to whatever phenomena it attempts to represent. Additionally, because a piece of writing can travel far from its source (which for Plato appears to be the human voice of which it is a physical copy), it cannot be trusted to convey the message as faithfully as the speaker could in person. This attack on writing and emphasis on the voice and its supposed proximity to the source of truth earns Plato the charge of phonocentrism from the twentieth-century philosopher Jacques Derrida.

4. Section – 1 Check your progress –

Answer the following questions with true or false

1. Literary criticism is basically evaluation of a literary work.
2. The main purpose of criticism is to elicit the implicit meanings from the text.
3. texts of literature would two levels of meaning – the literal and the surreal
4. Plato is primarily a critic but not an acknowledged idealistic philosopher.
5. Aristotle composed the work *Phaedrus*.
6. *Phaedrus* is a sequence of three speeches: Phaedrus' reading of Lysias' speech, followed by Socrates' two speeches.
7. Plato's view poetry is an imitation of life that appeals to the emotions of man rather than reason, therefore it is insignificant.
8. Plato considers the poet either a prophet or a madman, and in some cases both.
9. Poet uses a language that is different from ordinary men and converses in a divinely enthused frenzy.
10. Plato focuses on the moral responsibilities of the poet, which suggests that his position is much inferior to the philosopher because the poet appeals only to the emotions of the people and not to their intellect.

5. Section –2 Answer the following in one or two paragraphs

1. Explain views of Plato on Poetry?
2. Explain the Plato's views on the poet?
3. What is the idea of poetry according to Plato?
4. Comment on 'critique of writing'?
5. Explain rhetoric and its implications?

6. Summary:

Plato's *Phaedrus* is a rich and enigmatic text that treats a range of important philosophical issues, including metaphysics, the philosophy of love, and the relation of language to reality, especially in regard to the practices of rhetoric and writing. Plato calls poetry mimesis, imitation, representation, and the product of enthousiasmos, inspiration, possession. Socrates in the *Phaedrus* calls mania "madness". This idea of insane creativity has become familiar not only to Plato's readers but even as a commonplace among people ignorant of Plato, visible in the cliché ' about a fine line between genius and insanity. Themes appearing in the

Phaedrus include rhetoric, madness, writing, discourse, love, anamnesis, the nature and hierarchy of the gods, the Theory of Forms, myth, logos, doxa, truth, discourse, dialectic, beauty, and friendship.

In Phaedrus, the ancient philosopher Socrates uses an extended metaphor to describe the human soul as “a winged pair of horses and their charioteer.” He explains that, while gods’ horses are of good stock, everyone else’s “horses” are of mixed stock—one of the horses is noble and good, while the other has the opposite nature. “Perfectly winged” souls sail above the earth and govern the cosmos, but souls who have lost their wings fall... The correct approach to eros and rhetoric is a sign of a philosophic soul. But the central goal of philosophy is wisdom.

7. Terms to Remember -

Eros/Love : Lysias's speech deals with a particular kind of love relationship: the sexually charged affiliation of an older man and a younger man who is just entering public life. This homoerotic and homosocial form of male bonding was an important dimension of Athenian society; the older man served as a kind of mentor to the younger, assisting him in developing social skills and making political contacts.

Rhetoric: As an orator and logographer, Plato defines rhetoric as the persuasion of ignorant masses within the courts and assemblies. Rhetoric, in Plato's opinion, is merely a form of flattery and functions similarly to culinary arts, which mask the undesirability of unhealthy food by making it taste good.

Metaphysics: It is a branch of philosophy which deals with explaining the essence, origin and meaning of all existence.

Writing : the problem Socrates sees with writing is that it is a "copy of a copy", twice removed from the true Form corresponding to whatever phenomena it attempts to represent.

8. Answers to Check your progress – Section 1

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 2. True | 3. False | 4. False | 5. False |
| 6. True | 7. True | 8. True | 9. True | 10. True |

9. Exercise –

1. Explain Socrates views on love, rhetoric and writing?
2. Comment on “propriety and impropriety of... writing.”
3. Explain the relationship of love and rhetoric according to Socrates?
4. Comment on the speeches delivers in the Phaedrus?

5. What is the role of myth in Phaedrus?
6. Comment on the views of Socrates on writing?
7. What are the views of Socrates on madness?

Discuss philosophy as a guiding principle behind eros and rhetoric

10. Reference for further study

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B) HORACE – ARS POETICA (10 B.C.E.)

1. Introduction

“Ars Poetica” is a manifesto for how poetry should be written (and read). It is a practical documentation on writing poetry. It addresses a wide range of issues of craft regarding translation, emotional affect, playwriting, and the dangers of publishing. He rightly said “a word once sent abroad can never return”. He also writes about engaging critical feedback, and the comportment of a poet through a series of cryptic but confident statements.

2. Horace (65 BCE – 8BCE)

Horace is a famous Latin poet. His full name is Quintus Horatius Flaccus. He is known for his lyrics and satires. He was a very popular writer during the period of Emperor Augustus, the first emperor of Rome. Augustan period was glorious in all aspects, especially in literature. The popular and renowned Roman writers such as Virgil, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid and Livy belong to this great age. Horace first published his Satires in two books in 35 B.C.

3. ‘Ars Poetica’, or ‘The Art of Poetry’:

Ars Poetica is a poem written by Horace. He advises poets on the art of writing poetry and drama in this poem. It is an epistle presented as an informal letter to members of the Piso family. Originally written in dactylic hexameter. Horace maintains an intimate tone while sharing many of the notions that continue to frame our approach to poetry, including *ut pictura poesis*. Abercrombie rightly observes, “Perhaps no poem of comparable length has provided so many phrases that have become the common property of international culture. Ars Poetica made its great influence during the Middle Ages and the Neo-classical age. It was the Bible of classicism in England”.

Horace elaborately explores the art of writing poetry and he explains, “As is painting, so is poetry: some pieces will strike you more if you stand near, and some, if you are at a greater distance: one loves the dark; another, which is not afraid of the critic’s subtle judgment, chooses to be seen in the light; the one has pleased once the other will give pleasure if ten times repeated...” Horace places particular emphasis on the importance of decorum in poetry, and on the necessity of “join the instructive with the agreeable.” He urges poets to keep their audience in mind at all times. He advises the writers that “either follow tradition, or invent such fables as are

congruous to themselves.” Horace’s advice in the *Ars Poetica* is consistently practical and addresses a wide range of issues of craft regarding translation, emotional affect, playwriting, the dangers of publishing (“a word once sent abroad can never return”), engaging critical feedback, and the comportment of a poet. The entire concept may be put in the following lines. (a) A poem demands unity, to be secured by harmony and proportion, as well as a wise choice of subject and good diction. Meter and style must be appropriate to theme and to character. The *Ars Poetica* has “exercised a great influence in later ages on European literature, notably on French drama”, and has inspired poets and authors since it was written.

Ars Poetica is divided into three parts, they are namely i. poesis (subject matter); ii. poema (form), and iii. poeta (the poet). All these three parts focus on the art of writing poetry, its nature, function, language, poetic style, and drama. Horace is deeply influenced by Greeks which is reflected in his writing. Horace never endorses poetry a process of imitation. The mere imitation is not enough for a poet who often uses fiction and mingles facts with fancy. The function of poetry was both to delight and instruct: Poets desire either to improve or to please. The charm consists not in mere beauty or form but the poet's power to touch the reader's heart and soul.

Horace is of the opinion that the subject matter of poetry should be simple. It has to be created from familiar material and uniform. It is with full of wholeness. Horace writes that he who chooses his subject wisely will find that neither words nor lucid arrangement will fail him, for sound judgment is the basis and source of good writing. This observation reminds the unity of action in the structure of the plot proposed by Aristotle. Horace believes that poetry has settled kinds with a metre appropriate to each other and assumed a natural affinity between the metre and the subject – matter.

Horace proposes his theory of poetic diction effectively. According to Horace Poetic diction can never be altogether established and stationary affair. The function of language in poetry is to express the experience of man. Poetry exists to express experiences. It is continually changing since it is continually adding to itself. The language of poetry must keep pace with the growth of experience, if it is to be truly expressive. Language is like a tree; its words are like leaves. As the years go on, the old leaves fall, and new leaves take their place; but the tree remains the same. Horace's observations on poetic diction are like those of Aristotle. Following Aristotle, he also emphasizes the right choice of words and their effective arrangement in composition. A poet is free to use both familiar and new words. New

words continually go on coming to the poet like new leaves to the tree. The poet must not rely wholly on the vocabulary of his predecessors; he must coin new words of his own.

Horace wished that the writer should observe the settled forms and shades of style in poetry. He pointed out some of the shortcomings of style. 'I endeavour to be brief and become obscure; sinew and spirit desert the searcher after polish: one striving for grandeur becomes bombastic; whosoever is excessively cautious and fearful of the tempest crawls along the ground, and he who yearns after too prodigal a variety in his theme— he paints a dolphin in the forest, or a wild boar amid the waves. If the poet does not have genuine artistry, the effort to avoid an imperfection leads him into graver butchery'.

'Homer has shown us in what metre may best be written the deeds of kings and great captains, and sombre war. Verses of unequal length were first used for laments, later also for the sentiment that attends granted beseeching. The Muse has given to the lyre the celebration of the gods and their offspring, the victorious boxer, the horse, first in the race, the amorous yearnings of youth, and the unrestrained pleasures of wine. If one does not know and cannot observe the conventions and forms of poems, he does not deserve to be called a poet. Comic material, for instance, is not to be treated in the verses of tragedy; similarly, it would be outrageous to narrate the feast of Thyestes in verse proper to common daily life and almost to comedy.' Sincerity of Emotion 'It is not enough for poems to have beauty; they must also be pleasing and lead the listener's soul whither they will. If you would have me weep, you must first express grief yourself.

In *Ars Poetica* the treatment of drama is casual and most of his ideas are borrowed from Aristotle. No systematic theory of drama is presented on a larger basis. Only fragmentary and casual views are expressed, e.g. 'Either follow tradition or invent a consistent story. But the conventional features of traditional characters should be preserved.' 'If in your tale you represent the renowned Achilles, let him appear restless, passionate, inexorable, and dauntless.' 'If you commit a new theme on the stage and venture to create a new character, the first impression be preserved to the end and let his nature be consistent. "Let not Medea murder her children in front of the audience nor impious Atreus cook human flesh in the public nor Procne be changed into a bird. Let a play be neither shorter nor longer than five acts and let no god intervene unless some problem arises that demands to be solved. The number of actors should not be more than three and the chorus should form an integral part of

the action and its songs should advance and subserve the interest of the plot." "Let it support the good and give them kindly counsel, restrain the wrathful and favour those who fear to sin; let it praise the fare of a simple table, salutary justice and Law and Peace with open gates". Horace studies drama under three heads: plot, characterization and style. Plot should be borrowed from familiar material; the chorus should be an integral part of the plot; characters should behave consistently and naturally; iambic metre was most suitable for drama. Dramatic speech should observe propriety: it should suit the character, its sex, its age; its station in life, its circumstances, its moods. A god will speak differently from a mortal, a man from a woman, an aged man from a heated youth, a prosperous merchant from a poor farmer, a man in grief from a man in joy, an angry fellow from a playful one. if you utter words ill-suited to your part, I shall either doze or smile.' In all this Horace closely follows Aristotle.

4. Section – 1 Check your progress –

Answer the following questions with true or false

1. What is the theme of arts poetica?
2. Who is Horace?
3. Whom does Horace write the art poetica?
4. Who said “As is painting, so is poetry”
5. Who said “a word once sent abroad can never return”
6. What re the three parts Horace addresses in Ars Poetica?
7. What is the opinion of Horace on subject matter while writing poetry?
8. What is the opinion of Horace on Poetic diction?
9. What is the function of language in poetry?
10. What is the focus of writer according to Horace? one must have as a writer?

5. Section –2 Answer the following questions in one or two paragraphs

1. What are the vies of Horace on poetry?
2. Comment on the subject matter in poetry?
3. Explain poetic diction.
4. What are the views of Horace on drama?

5. Write a note on plot, characterization and style.

6. **Summary:**

Ars Poetica or The Art of Poetry is a verse epistle which deals with the art of writing poetry and drama. It was written in hexameter verse as an Epistle to Lucius Calpurnius Piso family. It consists of 476 lines containing nearly 30 maxims for young poets. *Ars Poetica* seems formless and unsystematic, but a closer examination shows a definite and well-marked scheme of treatment. The subject matter falls into three well-marked divisions: 1. Poesis: or the discussion of the subject matter of poetry. 2. Poema: or form. 3. Poeta: or poet. Poesis is the first part of *Ars Poetica* in which Horace discusses the subject matter of poetry.

Horace writes that a poem must have organic unity. The poet is free to indulge his fancy, but he must not create monsters or impossible figures. He must not lapse into absurdity. As in painting, so in a poem, all parts must be vitally connected with one another. There must exist a harmonious relationship between the parts and the whole. The subject should be chosen wisely. It must suit both the style and the powers of the poet and it should be simple and consistent. A wise discretion must be exercised in the use and choice of words. Sometimes a happy phrasing gives the most familiar word an air of novelty. A poet is free to coin new words and revive old ones, but this should be done with much discretion, only when absolutely necessary. Any word, old or new, which has the stamp of present usage, is permissible. There can be no stereotyped rules or conventions regarding the language of poetry. Language is like a tree, and words are leaves, which wither every year, and are succeeded by new ones. Usage is the only final arbiter or the final court of appeal. The poet may revive obsolete words, and thus give them currency. But all this should be done in moderation. Each particular genre should stick to the meter allotted to it by the ancient Greeks. For epic poetry, they used the iambic hexameter; for poems of complaint, elegiac verse, for tragedy or comedy, iambic verse, and hymns to the gods, odes to victory, and love poems, measures of a lyrical kind. This practice must be followed by every poet. Poema is the second part of *Ars Poetica*. It is the most thoroughly handled of the three parts. In this part, drama as a form of poetry is discussed at length to the exclusion of the lyric and the epic. The plot should be based on old familiar stories, and novelty may be imparted by skillful treatment. New themes may be invented, but for their successful treatment, the poet requires great skill and art. When an old story is chosen, a slavish imitation of all details is not necessary, but care should be taken that the reshaping process is free from

inconsistencies and absurdities. Comic themes should not be treated in the lofty vein of tragedy, nor tragic themes in the low vein of comedy. As regards plot construction, it is good to follow the example of Homer, and plunge straight into the middle. (in medias res) The beginning should be simple and straightforward. All unnecessary details should be avoided. All incidents should have a logical connection. Characters must be consistent. Those drawn from tradition must preserve their traditional traits. The qualities of various characters must fit their respective ages. Thus children should be shown as quick to anger and quick to cool, boys fond of sport, reckless, fickle and high-spirited; the men of riper years as businesslike, ambitious and worldly-wise; and the old men always as critics of the new times and full of praises for the past, almost sluggish and cynical. The dramatic style must vary by character, mood, and circumstance. Different tones must be associated with different moods and personalities. This is essential for verisimilitude. The dramatist must know what to represent on the stage and what to report to the audience. Ugly and horrible incidents should happen off the stage. A play should not have more or less than five acts. There must not be more than three characters in any one scene. The fourth character should never be introduced. The gods should not intervene in the action unless it is absolutely essential. The denouement should be the natural outcome of the incidents which have preceded, not the result of chance. The Chorus should form an integral part of the play. Its songs should forward the action of the play, and it, must “back the good, and give sage counsel.” It must check and control the passionate. The meter in which a long syllable is preceded by a short one is called an Iambic meter. The syllables should be in groups of six. Spondees may be occasionally used for a change, “to make the movement sedate and slower.” the Greek models should be strictly followed. The poet who wants to achieve excellence must, “read them by day, and think of them by night.” The art of poetry requires labor, long and persistent; polished workmanship is the outcome of incessant toil. A poem should be revised, blotted, and pruned several times until it attains artistic excellence and polish. It may be shown to some wiser and more skillful person and his advice taken. The poet must not be in a hurry to publish his work, “he should let it stand for over a decade”. The fountain source of good writing is a sound judgment which can best be found in the writings of Socrates. If the material is sound and is chosen wisely, apt words will follow without difficulty. A poet must be a keen observer of men and manners. He should constantly study the book of life and draw thence, “language true to life”. Excessive greed and love of money come in the way of good writing. Nobility and dignity of the soul are necessary. A poet should

instruct, or please, or may combine both these functions. But for the sake of pleasing, he should not indulge in romantic extravagances and absurdities. Fictions made to please must keep close to the truth of things. He should aim at mixing pleasure with profit. He should be brief, and avoid all superfluity, for only then would the people pay attention to his instruction. The poet who mixes the sweet with the useful has everybody's approval. Such a book enriches the publisher and prolongs the fame of the author. Minor faults in poetry may be forgiven, because, "Even Homer nods". A poet should, however, try to avoid faults as much as he can. If there is much that shines in a poem, a few blemishes will not offend the reader. Poetry has great power and appeal. Great poets have been great prophets. So a poet should not feel ashamed of his office; he should be proud of his calling. It is frequently discussed whether a poet achieves greatness through nature or art. Both are essential for good poetry. Abundant wit or natural ability without sound workmanship, or mere workmanship without wit or inborn ability, is of no avail, Both wit and training are necessary,

7. Terms to Remember -

Poesis: or the discussion of the subject matter of poetry. It is the first part of *Ars Poetica* in which Horace discusses the subject matter of poetry

Poema: or form. It is the most thoroughly handled of the three parts. In this part, drama as a form of poetry is discussed at length to the exclusion of the lyric and the epic.

Poeta: or poet. The art of poetry requires labor, long and persistent; polished workmanship is the outcome of incessant toil. A poem should be revised, blotted, and pruned several times until it attains artistic excellence and polish. It may be shown to some wiser and more skillful person and his advice taken. The poet must not be in a hurry to publish his work, "he should let it stand for over a decade". Poetry has great power and appeal. Great poets have been great prophets. So a poet should not feel ashamed of his office; he should be proud of his calling.

Characterization: The poet must be true to Types. Characters must be consistent and they are drawn from tradition. They must preserve their traditional traits. The qualities of various characters must fit their respective ages. Thus children should be shown as quick to anger and quick to cool, boys fond of sport, reckless, fickle and high-spirited; the men of riper years as businesslike, ambitious and worldly wise; and the old men always as critics of the new times and full of praises for the past, almost sluggish and cynical.

The dramatic style: The dramatic style must vary by character, mood, and circumstance. Different tones must be associated with different moods and personalities. This is essential for verisimilitude. A play should not have more or less than five acts. There must not be more than three characters in any one scene. The fourth character should never be introduced. The gods should not intervene in the action unless it is absolutely essential. The denouement should be the natural outcome of the incidents which have preceded, not the result of chance. The Chorus should form an integral part of the play. Its songs should forward the action of the play, and it, must “back the good, and give sage counsel.” It must check and control the passionate. The meter in which a long syllable is preceded by a short one is called an Iambic meter. The syllables should be in groups of six. Spondees may be occasionally used for a change, “to make the movement sedate and slower.” the Greek models should be strictly followed. The poet who wants to achieve excellence must, “read them by day, and think of them by night.”

8. Answers to Check your progress –

1. The art of writing poetry or the purpose of writing poetry
2. Horace is a famous Latin poet.
3. It is an epistle presented as an informal letter to members of the Piso family.
4. Horace
5. Horace
6. i. poesis (subject matter); ii. poema (form), and iii. poeta (the poet).
7. Horace is of the opinion that the subject matter of poetry should be simple.
8. Poetic diction can never be altogether established and stationary affair.
9. The function of language in poetry is to express the experience of man. Poetry exists to express experiences.
10. Horace wished that the writer should observe the settled forms and shades of style in poetry.

9. Exercise –

1. How does ars Poetica exhibit the art of writing poetry
2. Examine the tools of writing poetry according to Horace?
3. What is the importance of poetic diction?

4. Comment on the structure of *Ars Poetica*?

10. Reference for further study

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Unit-2

LONGINUS' *ON SUBLIMITY* AND KUNTAKA'S *THE VITAL FORCE OF LITERARY LANGUAGE*

The present unit is divided into the following sections :

A) Longinus - From 'On Sublimity'

B) Kuntak - From The Vital Force of Literary Language

As we have studied the views of **Plato** and **Horace** from their texts *Phaedrus* and *Ars Poetica* in Unit 1. In Unit 2, we will study **Longinus' *peri hupsousi.e.On Sublimity*** and Kuntaka's *The Vital Force of Literary Language*. Both Longinus from Graeco-Roman tradition and Kuntaka from Sanskrit tradition have significant place as critic. The influence of Longinus as well as Kuntaka has been observed for several centuries in literary criticism.

Both Longinus and Kuntaka are relevant today. Therefore, it is necessary to study their critique on language, literature, aesthetics, and creativity.

The objectives of the chapter are given in the next section below.

2.0 Objectives of the chapter

After readings this unit, you will be able-

- To know about Longinus as a critic
- To understand the views of Longinus on *sublimity* in the context
- To study Sanskrit critic Kuntaka
- To understand Kuntaka's essay *The Vital Power of Literary Language*
- To compare Longinus and Kuntaka, the two critics from different time, place, space, and traditions, and their analogous views on literary art, its creation, and its effect on the readers.

Firstly, we will discuss the theory of Longinus in Part A of Unit 2, and then we will proceed to the discussion of Kuntaka's theory in the second part of the chapter.

A. ON SUBLIMITY

LONGINUS

2.1 Introduction

There are different views about the critic Longinus and about his work *On Sublimity*. We will try to understand some of the arguments below and then we will proceed to study Longinus' essay *On Sublimity*. Though there is much controversy about the name of Longinus and his work, many scholars defend Longinus as the author of the critical essay *On Sublimity*. First and foremost, there are three variations of his name: Longinus, Dionysius Longinus, and Cassius Longinus. Dionysius being Greek prefix with Latin name Longinus was not acceptable to many scholars. It is also thought that Longinus might be born with the Greek name Dionysius and changed his name as Cassius after. To keep these controversies aside, we will refer him as "Longinus" only throughout the essay as it is preferred in much of the literature.

Another controversy is whether the famous treatise *On Sublimity* is produced by a single author or by several authors collectively. However, many scholars ascribe the work to Longinus. *On Sublimity* is an incomplete work and much of its part is lost. It is in epistolary form. It has fascinated critics of the modern period because of its treatment of *sublime* as a quality of the soul or spirit rather than as a matter of mere technique. We will try to know briefly about Longinus.

There are two views about the time of Longinus: First Century and Third Century. However, it seems that he lived in the first century based on the evidence. Longinus was a famous philosopher and critic, born in Athens in the first century. He was preceptor and minister to Zenobia, who was the wife of Cedentus and Queen of Palmyra. The emperor Aurelian, having besieged the Queen in her capital, after having defeated her troops at Antioch, Longinus persuaded her to defend it to the utmost. At last, the city was taken, and the brutal emperor tortured the philosopher to death, because he stood so bravely in the cause of liberty. He wrote many treatises; but only that *On the Sublime* has reached the present times. It is one of the most valuable remains of Grecian Antiquity.

It is said that Longinus was allied to Plutarch, and that Porphyry was one of his pupils. He was put to death in 273 A.D. Longinus – a philosopher, rhetorician, and critic – is believed to be lived between 213 A.D. and 273 A. D. He attended classes of the leading Platonists at Alexandria.

Despite these views, eighteenth century scholars concluded that the manuscript *On Sublimity* or *On the Sublime* is not written after 100 A.D. after the systematic

evaluation of the documentary evidence. Thus, they supported the idea that Longinus lived in **the first century**, and not in the third century.

On the Sublime is conventionally attributed to Longinus and dates from the first century. It was the most influential rhetorical text and has subsequently exerted a pronounced influence on literary criticism since the seventeenth century in the similar classical heritage derived from Aristotle and Horace. It has fascinated critics of the modern period on account of its treatment of the sublime as a quality of the soul or spirit rather than as a matter of mere technique. In the later classical period and the Middle Ages, the treatise appeared to be little known. It was initially published during the Renaissance by Robortelli in 1554. It was subsequently translated into Latin in 1572 and then into English by John Hall in 1652. In modern times the concept of the sublime owed its resurgence to a translation in 1674 by Nicolas Boileau, the most important figure of French neo-classicism. The sublime became an important element in the broad Romantic reaction in Europe against neo-classicism as well as in the newly rising domain of aesthetics in the work of thinkers such as Immanuel Kant.

There is only one surviving manuscript of *On the Sublime*, with a third of the text missing, and it is not known for certain who the author was. Despite of these, the importance of the treatise compels modern scholars to study it. We will try to know the content of the manuscript and its relevance briefly.

2.2 Presentation of the topic

The title of the treatise *On the Sublime*, originally in Greek, indicates the essentials of a noble and impressive style. As mentioned earlier, the treatise is written in epistolary (Letter) form. The treatise begins with the salutation to his friend, “My Dear Postumius Terentianus. As one-third of its portion is lost, it is an incomplete and fragmentary work. It is addressed to Longinus’ friend Postumius Terentianus. There are no chapters mentioned in the original text. However, the treatise can be divided into six parts. These parts of the treatise will give you the synoptic idea. In his translation, Havell (1890) has given these parts as below.

I. The Work of Caecilius. Definition of Sublime.

Whether Sublimity falls within the rules of Art.

II. [The beginning lost]. Vices of the Style as opposed to the Sublime: Affectation, Bombast, False Sentiment, Frigid Conceits. The cause of such defects.

III. The true Sublime, what it is, and how it is distinguishable.

IV. Five Sources of Sublime (how Sublimity is related to Passion).

- (i) Grandeur of Thought
 - a. As the natural outcome of nobility of soul. Examples
 - b. Choice of the most striking circumstances. Sappho's Ode.
 - c. Amplification. Plato compared with Demosthenes, Demosthenes with Cicero
 - d. Imitation
 - e. Imagery
- (ii) Power of moving the Passions (omitted here, because dealt with in a separate work).
- (iii) Figures of Speech
 - a. The Figure of Adjuration. The Art to conceal Art.
 - b. Rhetorical Question
 - c. Asyndeton
 - d. Hyperbaton
 - e. Changes of Number, Person, Tense, etc.
 - f. Periphrasis
- (iv) Graceful Expression
 - a. Choice of Words
 - b. Ornaments of Style
- (1) On the use of familiar words
- (2) Metaphors; accumulated; extract from the *Timaeus*; abuse of Metaphors; certain tasteless conceits blamed in Plato.

[Hence arises a digression on the spirit in which we should judge of the faults of great authors. Demosthenes compared with Hyperides, Lysias with Plato. Sublimity, however far from faultless, to be always preferred to a tame correctness.]
- (3) Comparisons and Similes [lost].
- (4) Hyperbole
- (v) Dignity and Elevation of Structure
 - a. Modulation of Syllables
 - b. Composition

V. Vices of Style destructive to Sublimity.

- (i) Abuse of Rhythm
- (ii) Broken and Jerky Clauses
- (iii) Undue Prolixity
- (iv) Improper use of familiar words. Anti-Climax. Example from Theopompus.

VI. Why this age is so barren of great authors—whether the cause is to be sought in a despotic form of government, or, as Longinus rather thinks, in the prevailing corruption of manners, and in the sordid and paltry views of life which almost universally prevail.

Longinus' essay *On the Sublime* is chiefly concerned with the question of literary style and literary criticism. Longinus has selected some texts of the previous authors or critics to appreciate their noble or elevated style as well as he denounces some previous authors or critics for their ordinary style. Mathew Arnold later also used the similar method. Both Longinus and Arnold emphasize the importance of tradition or history of great literature.

Longinus initially states that *sublime* consists “in consummate excellence and distinction of language, and ... it alone gives great poets and historians their pre-eminence... For the effect of genius is not to persuade the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves”. He adds further that “what inspires wonder casts a spell upon us and is always superior to what is merely convincing and pleasing”. Longinus dramatically distinguishes between other compositional skills and the sublime. He explains that the inventive skill and appropriate use of facts, for example, are expressed through an entire composition. But the sublime, he says, appears like a bolt of lightning, scattering everything before it and revealing the power of the speaker “at a single stroke”.

Whether art comes from innate genius or from conscious application of methodology or rules? Like Horace, he considers both nature and methodology important for the creation of art. He argues that nature is responsible for all kinds of production, but genius is not random and unsystematic. It is based on ‘good judgement’ supplied by rules of art.

As stated earlier, Longinus gives the definition of *Sublimity* and how the great authors achieved it in their literature. According to him elevation of tone is innate, but art can regulate the use of natural gifts. He simultaneously talks about life and

art. As man ought to profit by his advantages, a writer of genius out to profit by the help of art.

Further, he gives a short account of defects of style as opposed to sublimity. He mentions tumidity, puerility, misplaced passions, and frigidity as vices of the style. And then he explains that true sublimity should avoid false imitation. The first fault is “tumidity” when the artist or poet aims too high and, instead of achieving ecstasy, merely lapses into “folly” producing “bombastic” effects. “Tumidity” comes from trying to outdo the sublime. The opposite is ‘over-elaboration’ that turns into “frigidity”. Longinus states that “puerility” can be ignored as a fault. He then explains that the emotions must be appropriate to the situation, else these will become “subjective” or personal and will not be shared by the audience. The audience will not be engaged with such emotions. He calls all these faults “improprieties in literature” and these should be avoided to achieve sublimity. He clarifies further that the virtues and vices come from the same sources. With mere intention and inappropriate methodology, sublimity cannot be achieved.

But how to avoid these faults? Longinus notes that the poet should have ‘a clear knowledge and appreciation’ of what sublime is. How can one achieve sublimity without knowing it? He will understand it with experiential knowledge gradually. Such experiential knowledge is supported later by the critics such as Arnold, Leavis, etc. He tells us that the true sublime ‘elevates us’ it ‘uplifts us with pride possession’ and ‘we are filled with joyful pride’. The genuine sublime should be distinguished from ‘outward show of grandeur’ which turns to be ‘empty bombast’.

Next, he gives five major sources of *sublimity*. The first and most important of these sources of sublimity is **grandeur of thought** i.e. “full-blooded” or robust ideas. Noble writers should have the power to bear great conceptions first. Great or elevated thoughts may be formed on writer’s knowledge of great literature of earlier times (it is a kind of imitation) as well as writer’s imagination. Besides imagination, his choices and grouping of the most striking circumstances are important.

The second source of sublimity is **vehement and inspired passion**. He considers passionate thought as the most significant for a work of art. Longinus has not explained it clearly in the treatise, he kept this topic for another work. Though he has written several other works, these works might have been destroyed.

The third is **figure of speech**. It includes both, figure of thought and figure of speech. Figure of speech pertains to verbal expression while figure of thought to

ideas. As students of literature, we are aware that figures of speech are used in prose and poetry, and they play a significant role. Longinus mentions these as: adjuration, rhetorical question, asyndeton, and hyperbaton. Longinus mentions that the figure is at its best when it escapes attention. It suggests that the figure of speech should be applied appropriately and effortlessly.

The fourth source of sublimity is **graceful expressions or diction**. The author should choose proper and striking words. Longinus mentions that the proper words give life or 'living voice' for the dead matter. In the fourth source, he adds metaphor, simile, and hyperbole and their suitable use in a work of art.

The fifth source, Longinus mentions, is an **arrangement of words**. Some examples are provided by the author to explain. He concludes that using too few or too many words is one of the vices. The fifth source is generalized and can be attained in combination of the previous four sources.

Longinus further cites the example of Homer. Those passages in Homer, according to Longinus, are sublime "which represent the divine nature in its true attributes, pure, majestic, and unique". He also quotes expressions from Old Testament expressing "a worthy conception of divine power". Great writers, he says, achieve sublimity through their grandeur of thought, by expressing a vision of the universe that is morally and theologically elevated. He cites Homer's *Iliad* for its dramatic action and sustained energy in it 'which is brimful of images drawn from real life'. He also cites *Odyssey* of Homer as narrative. He relates his idea of sublimity to dramatic action rather than narrative. Similarly, he prefers reality over romance for the sake of sublimity. He also takes into account the unity or the organic whole. Sublimity lies in 'a single idea' according to him. Great writers then remain consistent with their main ideas throughout the work of art. Amplification to him is 'accumulation of all aspects and topics inherent to the main subject and strengthening the argument'.

Longinus mentions a path, as shown by Plato, that leads to sublimity - path of imitation of great historians and poets of the past. He calls that is not theft but rather like "taking an inspiration from fine characters...moulded figures". Plato himself borrowed a lot from Homer. We can compare Mathew Arnold's *Touchstone Method* that suggests the similar inspiration to be taken from the great writers of the past. Tradition is also important to the critics like Eliot as he mentions it in his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.

Longinus mentions another path to sublimity - that of the path of 'imagination'. He observes that "weight, grandeur, and energy" are basic components of sublime that are largely produced by the use of images. He states that having inspired by strong emotions, you should bring your descriptions so vividly before the eyes of your audience with imagination. He distinguishes the use of imagination in poetry and prose or oratory. Though the purpose in both poetry and prose or oratory is the same, he notes, the imagination in poetry shows more romantic exaggeration and exceeds the limits of creditability while the imagination in prose or oratory is always one of reality and truth. Thus, he described natural genius, imitation, and imagination as paths to achieve sublimity. These collectively come in two sources of sublimity i.e. *the grandeur of thought* and *vehement and inspired passion*. He then writes about the use of figure of speech. He gives example of Demosthenes and his use of "apostrophe" or oath in his speeches like:

You were not wrong, men of Athens, in undertaking that struggle for the freedom of Greece... no, by those who bore the brunt at Marathon.

By this, Longinus says, Demosthenes transforms his argument "into a passage of transcendent sublimity and emotion". Use of figure of speech allows the orator to move the audience. Other figures cited by Longinus are accumulation, variation, and climax: these figures range over changes of case, tense, person, number, and gender. Such changes can produce a "sublime and emotional effect". These figures show us that emotion is an important aspect in sublime.

Longinus refers Demosthenes, Horace and Plato as 'demi-gods' for their 'single touch of sublimity' despite of their other faults. Longinus mentions that 'it is proper that art should always assist Nature. Their co-operation may thus result in perfection'.

2.3 Summary of Longinus 'On sublimity':

Despite its authorship and date of composition, the Ancient Greek text *On Sublimity* has remained influential from several centuries in literary criticism. Its concerns are writing, reading, and oratory. Longinus expects inspired passion and noble thought to achieve sublimity in work of art that will rank as lofty or elevated than other ordinary works. Longinus approach is author centered. According to him, sublimity is the echo of the noble mind. We can experience ecstasy by reading great writers or listening to the great orators. Though one-third part of the treatise is missing, the organized thought still exists in it. Alexander Pope mentioned that

Longinus “is himself that great Sublime he draws”. Longinus differs from the Platonic idea that “poets should be banned”, further Longinus mentions that Plato does not practice what he preaches. Next, he also differs from Horace who gives precedence to rhetoric and techniques in *Ars Poetica* than the author’s genius. We can find parallels between Aristotle and Longinus as both note the formal techniques and psychological effects of literature and give precedence to emotions. Aristotle talks about the effect of tragedy on the audience and the *Catharsis* of their emotions, while Longinus considers the psychology of the author as well as the psychology of the audience. Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, and notably Immanuel Kant studied and discussed Longinus and his work *On Sublimity* in greater detail. Of course, there are some limitations to the work of Longinus according to postmodern perspectives. They believe that Longinus has neglected linguistic determination of structures and focused more on authors feelings and audience response to the text.

Longinus’ views are broad, his knowledge is encyclopedic. He has studied Greek, Latin, and Hebrew literature of previous times. He says, ‘Art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature attains its end when she contains art within her’. His comparative technique is also noteworthy. He has quoted more than 50 authors in his treatise. Homer is the most quoted author in it. Herodotus, Plato, and Demosthenes are often quoted after Homer. His admiration for noble literature has incidentally accomplished even more for Sappho than for Homer. He has also considered correctness, standard of taste, and comparative method. His comparative method provides him with an advantage over Plato and Aristotle. They have not presented their arguments after comparing so many previous literary works.

Longinus resembles Plato more than Aristotle. He speaks rather of ‘transport’ or ‘inspiration’ than of ‘purgation’ or ‘the universal’. Plato’s *Poetics* as well as Longinus’ *On the Sublime* are incomplete. His catholicity has its influence on his writing. In those days, as a critic he has taken a neutral position, keeping aside the emotions, to appreciate literature: its advantages as well as disadvantages. Longinus follows the formal structure of the textbook. After preliminaries, he explains the major themes. He delineates five sources of *sublimity* and characterizes each of the sources. The details regarding the second source are not found due to the loss of portion. He maintains the discussion of *sublimity* throughout his treatise. We find organic unity in themes like *imagery*. Though there are some digressions, we find the exposition, explanation, and end after the climax. As he himself talks about unity of

structure (arrangement of words) and theme, we find him succeeded in the treatise (see Innes 2006).

Longinus compares nature and art, imagination and imitation, and imagination and reality. He focuses on the skillful use of figure of speech and arrangement of words with great thought and inspired emotion. He includes literature, art, politics, oratory, law, and such topics for his discussion. Finally, he argues that sublimity is to change our percept to the world.

2.3.1 Check your progress: Part I

Que 1. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct option.

1. Longinus can most appropriately be described as _____.
a. poet b. playwright c. critic d. novelist
2. Longinus was believed to be lived in the _____ century.
a. first b. second c. fourth d. fifth
3. *On Sublimity* is a treatise conventionally attributed to _____.
a. Socrates b. Plato c. Aristotle d. Longinus
4. *Sublime* can be described as _____.
a. elevated thoughts b. lofty ideas
c. ecstatic literary experience d. all the above
5. *On Sublimity* was originally written in _____.
a. Latin b. Greek c. French d. English
6. *On Sublimity* is written in _____ form.
a. Speech b. Letter c. Debate d. Sermon
7. Longinus described _____ sources of sublimity.
a. two b. three c. four d. five
8. _____ is not included by Longinus as a source of sublimity.
a. Imitation b. Grandeur of thought
c. Passionate ideas d. Graceful diction

9. The treatise *On Sublimity* is addressed to _____
a. Horace b. Caecilius c. Terentianus d. Sappho
10. _____ is the most quoted author by Longinus in his treatise.
a. Homer b. Plato c. Aristotle d. Porphyry

B. THE VITAL FORCE OF LITERARY LANGUAGE

KUNTAKA

2.4 Life and Work of Kuntaka

Sanskrit literary criticism is known as *Alankārśāstra*. Bharata's *Natyaśāstra* discusses drama and dramaturgy. His major contribution to criticism is *rasa theory*. Other important figures are Bhāmaha, Rudraṭa, Daṇḍin, Vāmana, Maṃmaṭa, Ānandavardhana, Kuntaka, among others.

As Prof. Tutun Mukharjee mentions, there are eight schools of Indian Poetics. These are as follows: *Rasa* (aesthetic pleasure) School, *Alankar* (poetic figure) School, *Riti* (style) School, *Guna* (attribute) School, *Dhvani* (suggestion) School, ***Vakrokti* (obliquity) School**, *Anumana* (inference) School, and *Auchitrya* (propriety) School. In the second part of this unit, we discuss the *Vakroktib* by Kuntaka.

Rājānaka Kuntaka's time was a great time for Indian Poetics. He lived between Anandvardhan of 9th Century and Abhinavagupta of 11th Century. It seems that he lived approximately between 950 A.D. to 1050 A.D. i.e. mid-tenth century to mid-eleventh century. He is a literary critic of Sanskrit Poetics. The concept of *Vakrokti* was discussed from 6th and 7th centuries, a full-fledged *Vakrokti* theory was proposed by Kashmiri critic Rājānaka Kuntaka.

Kane mentions that the *Vakrokti-Jivata* had been known for many years only through quotations and references in other Alankār works such as *Sāhityadarpana*. He has secured a copy of S. K. De who published two chapters based on Madras manuscripts. It consists of *Kārikās*, *Vṛtti*, and *examples*. It has four chapters.

Dr. Sushil Kumr De, the significant modern scholar of Indian Poetics has published a fragmentary edition in 1923 of the first two chapters of *Vakrokti-Jivata* based on two transcripts (an incomplete work) he obtained from the Government Library, Madras. The manuscript of Government Library, Madras has been considered as an important document containing Kuntaka's *Vakrokti-Jivata*. The pity

was that the original Malayalam palm-leaf manuscript has been irrecoverably lost mentioned by Krishnamoorthy.

In 1923, S. K. De obtained, with great difficulty, another manuscript from *Jaina Bhandars at Jeselmere* which was also incomplete but satisfactory in terms of its preservation. By collating these two manuscripts, S. K. De published the revised and enlarged edition in 1928. He printed the third edition mechanically without modifications keeping the numerous errors. Dr. Nagendra of Delhi University came up with another edition of *Vakrokti-Jivita* in Hindi in 1955. It has not many merits either from the previous editions. Krishnamoorthy got manuscript of Chapter III and IV from Adyar Library, Madras. He studies other available sources as well and produced a more authoritative edition in 1977.

The name of the author of *Vakrokti-Jivita* is given as *Kuntalakain* all the three colophons of Madras manuscripts. According to Krishnamoorthy, this is also observed once in Kerala manuscript, however this variation i.e. *Kuntalaka* should be ignored and *Kuntaka* should be considered as author's name following the testimony of writers such as Mahimbhatta, Hemachandra, Manikyacandra, Somesvara, Vidyadhara, Bhatta Gopal, Tripurari, etc.

The name of the work is *Vakrokti-Jivita* as above writers mentioned Kuntaka as *Vakrokti-Jivita-kari* i.e. maker of *Vakrokti-Jivita*. Though *Kavyalankaris* attached to it as its subtitle, it is convention to name *Kavāylankar* to all works on poetics. Thus, the title of the work is confirmed after Kuntaka's quote from his discussion in *Karika's* (I: 42) as below:

विचित्रो यत्र वक्रोक्तिवैचित्र्यं जीवितायते

Krishnamoorthy ascertains further that 'we may be pretty certain in the view of certain citations that *Vakrokti-Jivita* was the specific title given to his work by our author' i.e., Kuntaka. The date of the work is around 950 A.D. as Kuntaka cited variously to Anandhvardhana and Rajshekhara profusely and not cited Abhinavgupta (whose works dated between 980 A.D. to 1020 A.D.). All modern scholars agreed that Kuntaka must have been a Kashmirian. From Krishnamoorthy's remark we understand that Kuntaka has not originally coined the term *Vakrokti* and the arguments related to it, but some of such thoughts also existed before him. He mentions, 'that these ideas were all there in an inchoate [undeveloped] form before Kuntaka wrote his systematic treatise, viz, *Vakrokti-Jivita*.

2.5 Kuntaka's Theory of Obliquity

The term *Vakrokti* is comprised of two terms *Vakra* 'oblique' and *Ukti* 'utterance'. Kuntaka's treatise *Vakrokti-Jivita* has four parts. In Chapter 1 of the first part, Kuntaka clarifies the subject that he is dealing with **Poetry and Criticism**. It begins with salutations to Lord Shiva. After a few shlokas, he offers prayers to the Goddess of speech. He reiterates the subject of his book as poetry and its beauty. After the prayer, he indicates his work's important elements, namely, the title, the theme, and the purpose served by it. It shows Kuntaka's systematic treatment. He writes, "In order to set forth the nature of beauty conducive to **extraordinary** delight, a **fresh** study of poetry is offered here, like an added ornament to it". Kuntaka is deliberate to state that it is fresh study, and you will not find the matter in the previous studies.

Kuntaka says, "A poetic composition created with an eye of beauty is not only a means for the inculcation of values like righteousness, but also a delight to the hearts of the *elite*". Thus, poetry delights the hearts of the elite. It captures the heart of the noble. He mentions that the accepted values of life are four-fold: righteousness '*dharma*', wealth '*arth*', enjoyment '*kām*', and emancipation '*moksha*' towards whose acquisition poetry serves as a useful means. Like elite, poetry is also useful for winning the pleasures of servant-folk, friends, superiors, and so forth. In daily affairs, beauty is found in good poetry only, he adds. Kuntaka mentions that the four-fold values can be taught by other branches of knowledge, however poetry teaches them indirectly and it allows reader to enjoy the beauty of it and gives delight along with its reading or appreciation.

Then he gives full definition of poetry as, "poetry is that **word and sense together** enshrined in a style revealing the **artistic creativity of the poet** on the one hand and giving **aesthetic delight to the man of taste** on the other". He considers all the three significant factors such as the artist, the art, and the audience or the reader. Kuntaka has explained the creative process of poetry with proper and meaningful words. Moreover, he shows the aesthetic effects of poetry on the readers. While discussing the definition of poetry, he considers poet, the creative process and its output or product of creativity i.e. poetry, and the readers and the effects of poetry on them. Kuntaka further compares "an ordinary poet so poor in imagination and so weak in skilled speech that he shows off only his craze for verbal alliterations. There is not even an iota of beauty in the content". His poetry possesses no beauty at all.

Kuntaka says, “neither beautiful ‘word’-form alone, nor beautiful content alone can constitute real poetry”. The ornaments of expression and the ornaments of thought are basic requirements of poetry. Thus, the position stands that word and meaning constitute poetry in their **unity**. According to Kuntaka, words and meaning both have their distinct existence in poetry and come to be adorned by something different from themselves. The fact of the matter is that the very process of poetic utterance is constituted by the artistic turns assumed by words and meanings”. The poetic process itself, in this sense, is the real ornamentation. For, it is extremely delighting in itself. He then states that “the Sāhitya or mutual coherence between word and meaning in respect of beauty is nothing but a unique poetic usage, involving neither more nor less than the exact form of word and meaning required to make the whole beautiful”.

Next, he describes three poetic styles ‘*mārga*’: the elegant ‘*sukumāra*’, the brilliant ‘*Vichitra*’, and the mixed ‘*madhyama*’. He explains the characteristics or excellences ‘*gūṇa*’ of each style. He mentions, “Such are the three styles perfected only by a few poets in their earnest quest after perfection, after long, assiduous practice. The attainment of even a modest grounding in them has brought great reputation to them”.

As stated earlier, first chapter deals with words and meaning and their use in the context of poetry. Kuntaka calls it *kavivṛyāpār-vakratā* that he mentions essential in poetry. Then he classified *Vakratā* ‘obliquity’ into six categories: the arrangement of letters ‘*varṇavinyāsa*’, in parts of a word ‘*pada*’, in a sentence ‘*vākya*’, in a particular topic ‘*prakaraṇa*’, or in the whole composition ‘*prabandha*’. Thus, he has considered all the levels of linguistic analysis right from phonetic level, through lexical and grammatical levels, sentential level to the discourse level considering arrangement of letters, words, sentences, topics, and the entire composition.

Of these categories of *Vakratā* or obliquity, the second chapter details the first two categories i.e. the obliquity of the arrangement of letters and words. He further classifies the second category into two sub-categories as: the lexical obliquity ‘*padapurvārdh*’ and the grammatical obliquity ‘*padaparārdh-vakratā*’ or ‘*pratyaya-vakratā*’. The third chapter discusses the sentential obliquity ‘*vākya-vakratā*’ while the fourth chapter is devoted to the topical obliquity ‘*prakaraṇa-vakratā*’ and the entire compositional obliquity ‘*prabandha-vakratā*’.

Vakrokti-Jivita consists of *Kārikā-śhokasinanuṣṭabh* meter with a little variation at the end of each chapter. Kuntaka gives running commentary to explain his arguments.

In Sanskrit Poetics the different theoreticians discuss a singular form of ‘literariness’. Bhamaha and Dandin mentions it as “figuration”, Vamana considers it as “style”, Anandavardhan explains it as “suggestion” or “implicature”, and for Khemachandra it is “propriety”. Kuntaka develops the theory of poetry and discusses literariness in terms of *Vakroktior* “the crooked utterance (literary)” or “the striking usage”. Kuntaka mentions *Vakroktias* indirect expression as exhibited in figurative language.

For Kuntaka, *rasa* is in the first instance the “enhancement” of the stable emotion of the leading character through the combined force of the aesthetic elements. Kuntaka is the first to deny that *rasa* can ever be figural “ornament” to a literary text, directly and forcefully critiquing both Udbhata and Anandavardhana. He detailed it with tenacity that is not possible to convey briefly. Though Kuntaka was more focused to delineate literary form, he also considered the aesthetic response of the viewers or readers.

We are aware that there are nine *Rasa* in *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Bharata. These are *Sringaram* ‘Erotic’, *Hasyam* ‘Comic’, *Raudram* ‘Rage’, *Adbhutam* ‘Marvellous’, *Veeram* ‘Heroic’, *Bibhatsam* ‘Odious’, *Bhayanakam* ‘Terror’, *Karunayam* ‘Pathos’, and *Santam* ‘Peace’. The corresponding dominant emotions or mental states are ‘Love’, ‘Mirth’, ‘Anger’, ‘Astonishment’, ‘Energy’, ‘Disgust’, ‘Fear’, ‘Sorrow’, and ‘Peace’. The *Sringaram* is further divided into two sub-categories: ‘Love-in-union’ and ‘Love-in-seperation’.

Besides these *Sahityabhāva* ‘mental states’ that readers or audience can experience while reading or listening to the work of literature. We are also aware that Aristotle discussed the noble characters while discussing his idea of ‘tragedy’ in particular, and the idea of ‘literary creation’ in general. Similarly, Sanskrit literature also discusses different types of characters in the noble category such as Gods, Anti-gods, Kings, etc.

With the above background of *Rasas* and the category of noble characters, we will discuss the prescribed text *The Vital Force of Literary Language by Kuntaka*’ from Sheldon Pollock’s translations of Indian Aesthetics that conceived in terms of *Rasa* Theory. Briefly, we discuss Kuntaka’s ideas about literature, especially poetry

and the literariness or the elements responsible for the literariness. We will concentrate on the Pollock's section of Kuntaka here.

Kuntaka mentions that the original unaffected desires or mental states are naturally 'beautiful'. The "unaffected desire" can further be enhanced when they come with erotic and other rasas. He illustrates giving the case of the erotic thwarted i.e. 'love-in-seperation' type of *Sringaram*. Study the following poetic lines from the *Urvashi*.

She might be angry and hiding herself by magic – but she would not stay angry so long.

She might have flown up to heaven – but her heart would still be soft on me.

Even the foes of the gods could not abduct her from my presence – and yet

She is completely lost to view. How can fate ever have arranged this?

Before discussing the given text, let me give a little background to help you to understand the context. According to Britannica: *Vikromōrvaṣīyam* or "Urvashi Won by Valor (Force)" is a Sanskrit play written by *Kālidās* in 5th Century C.E. The subject of the play is the love of a mortal for a divine maiden. The play contains a well-known mad scene in which the king, grief stricken, wanders through a lovely forest apostrophizing various flowers and trees as though they were his love. Pollock explains that the King is miserably upset after losing his beloved, and that could not recover her. He could not catch her sight. He then remains in the state of hopelessness. This brings the rasa to the point of full enhancement. As he mentions, that is further stimulated by later statements like following:

Had that shapely woman touched the earth with her feet

Where the sandy ground of the forest is wet from rain

I would surely see a trail of footprints, with traces of lac,

With a deeper depression at the heel from the weight of her limbs.

Though the King had some hope of recovering her as she had touched the earth with her foot. However, it becomes hopeless once rain has wet the forest and washed her footsteps.

Kuntaka gives another example from the second act of **Bhāsa's** play *Svapnavasavadatta* or the King of Vatsa. He explains how the entire foundational and stimulant factors that cause rasa's enhancement. The play is about **King**

Udayana and his true love **Vasavadattā**. This is a dialogue between the King and the adopted child of Vasavadattā. The queen's adopted child, the riverside house, the baby deer, and the rest are stimulant factors which are used by the poet Bhāsa with the tragic rasa more effectively.

You only glanced at the riverside house and wandered with forlorn look from the pleasure house heaving with sigh and casting quick glances at the walkway of kesara vines. Why now come to my side, little son, and ply me with your fawning? It was your cruel mother who left you – and left me – and departed for the most distant land.

A brief sketch of Bhāsa's play *Svapnavasavadattā* will help you understand the context. The principal characters of the play are: **Udayana (Vatsarāja)** – the King of Vatsa (the capital of the Vatsa state is Kaushambi), **Vasavadattā** – the queen of Udayana and the daughter of Pradyota, the King of Avanti state, **Yaugandharayana** – Udayana's faithful minister, **Padmavati** – Udayana's second wife and princess of Magadha and sister of King Darsaka, **Rumanvat** – another minister of Udayana, and Vasantaka, a jester and the companion of Udayana. The play is about the sorrow of Udayana for his queen Vasavadattā believed by him to be perished in fire, which was actually rumour spread by Yaugandharayana to compel the king to marry Padmavati.

Kuntaka cites another example of the same play. Rumanvat; the minister of the King Udayana says, "This is rubbing salt in a wound" after hearing the parrot's crying for the queen. The King Udayana addresses his supposedly dead queen:

Your boon companion, who once touched that cheek of yours with his claw as he tried to peck the ruby earring from your ear, thinking it a pomegranate seed...

this poor parrot is now crying out in utter agony.

And how, my queen, can you refuse to respond to him at all?

The poet presents the parrot as the spoiled favourite of the queen with the intention of communicating her affection for him. The use of the word "that" referring to the cheek is meant to point towards its extreme delicacy, which the king himself had had the experience of enjoying. In this way, as Pollock mentions, the tragic rasa brought the highest pitch of beauty.

Kuntaka's views are observed in his description of obliquity, especially sentential obliquity, topical obliquity, and compositional obliquity. As seen from the

above examples, Kuntaka gives highest importance to the tragic rasa in the poetry. Next, he describes gods, antigods, and other entities as the “primary” category for the subject matter of the narrative, while the animals such as lions are included by him in the “secondary” category.

Kuntaka compares the narrative and the rasas. He maintains that **the rasa is predominant in the primary category** as cited in a few examples above. **In the case of the secondary category, the narrative is predominant** and hence rasa is subordinate. When the rasa is subordinate, according to Kuntaka, it is an ornament. Kuntaka underlines the point that what is in the highest form can never be ornamented. For example, in the first category rasa is in the highest form and nothing else. The subject matter or the narrative ultimately gets subordinate position, and it can be decorated further i.e. “enhanced”. In the secondary category, the rasa gets subordinate position, and it functions as an ornament. He calls his first category “rasa-laden” which cannot be ornamented. He asserts that the **rasa-laden** figure may be understood as something providing a special beauty and brilliance to the poem. He quotes some unknown author to clarify the issue of “primacy” or “predominance” either of rasa or of the subject matter or the narrative, and their relative functions in the given work of art. He cites:

But in a literary text where some other subject matter is predominant and rasa subordinate, rasa functions as a figure of speech. Such is my view.

Next, he points out that the “proper term” or “definition” of rasa is not applicable as there can be combination of rasas present in the same poem. Again, he clarifies that one of the rasas remains prominent in the poem, while other rasa supplements it in the proper context. For example, the tragic rasa remains dominant throughout the given work where erotic-thwarted or ‘love-in-separation’ can supplement it in the particular part.

Further, Kuntaka discusses the importance of “propriety” and “impropriety”. He mentions his ancestors saying how “impropriety” impairs rasa. Conversely, without focusing “impropriety”, he focuses the perfect harmony with the subject matter in reference to rasa – which itself is being manifested by aesthetic elements. Kuntaka here expects poet’s artistry or the craftsmanship to combine natural beauty and the artistic beauty together. He expects the highest brilliance of selection of subject matter, plot, appropriate rasa, proper diction, and flawless combination of all. That

conveys, according to him, the deepest beauty to the reader. He clarifies it with the following example:

*Shiva himself passed those days only with difficulty,
longing for reunion with the Mountain's daughter.
How could such emotions not disturb a human, who is far less self-controlled,
when they touch the lord of all?*

These poetic lines describe the separation of Lord Shiva and Parvati. The rhetorical question assumes that such pains and emotions are inevitable for human beings.

Thus, in the essay 'The Vital Force of Literary Language' by Kuntaka. Kuntaka gives his views on poetry, poet's imagination and craftsmanship, the *rasa*, and its proper employment, etc. He theorizes it in terms of *Vakrokti* 'obliquity'.

2.6 Summary of Kuntaka's 'The Vital Force of Literary Language'

We find controversy attached to the name of Kuntaka, his work, and his time. We find two variations to the name as the author of the work *Vakrokri-Jivitam*. These are *Kuntala* and *Kuntalaka*. However, scholars attributed the work to *Kuntaka* by saying he is *Vikrokti-Jivita-Kar* i.e. the creator of the work – *Vakrokri-Jivitam*. This theory expounds that a certain strikingness of expression (*Vakrokti*) is the essence (*jivita*) of poetry. Lastly, it seems that Kuntaka lived in the mid-10th and mid-11th century.

Krishnamoorthy states the importance of Kuntaka in the history of Sanskrit poetics very aptly in the following words: "Kuntaka may not be as a great philosopher as Ānandavardhana; he may not be as a great logician as Bhāmaha or as a fervent a dialectician as Mahimbhatta; but as a literary critic in the true sense of the term, Kuntaka stands unrivalled".

"We might conclude by saying that Kuntaka's *Vakrokti* is the Indian counterpart of the Longinian Sublime" (Krishnamoorthy xxxvi). He cites Saintsbury regarding it, "all that quality or combination of qualities which creates *enthusiasm* in literature, all that gives consummation to it, all that deserves the highest encomium either in prose or poetry". Further, Philip Rawson observes that "ornament is a functional aspect of art, embedded in it, not a gratuitous extra". No one enunciated more clearly than Kuntaka in Indian Poetics.

It is to the credit of Kuntaka that he was the first to formulate it into a systematic aesthetic theory. His *Vakrokti* is an inevitable and deliberate departure from the empirical linguistic mode to achieve aesthetic effect. He gives precedence to the imaginative activity than intellectual activity in the creation of art.

2.6.1 Check your progress: Part II

1. The theory of obliquity is attributed to _____.
a. Bharata b. Vaman c. Anandavardhana d. Kuntaka
2. The significant work **Natyashastra** is written by _____.
a. Bharata b. Vaman c. Anandavardhana d. Kuntaka
3. Kuntaka is considered to be lived in the _____ century.
a. mid-eighth and mid-nineth b. mid-nineth and mid-tenth
c. mid-tenth and mid-eleventh d. mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth
4. Kuntaka belonged to _____ region of India.
a. Kashmir b. Kerala c. Karnataka d. Kochi
5. Kuntaka's *Vakrokti-Jivita* has _____ parts.
a. three b. four c. five d. six
6. Kuntaka can most appropriately be described as a _____.
a. poet b. novelist c. dramatist d. critic
7. The term *Vakrokti* is _____.
a. obliquity b. deviation c. strikingness d. all the above
8. Kuntaka described obliquity in _____ categories.
a. four b. five c. six d. seven
9. The play *Vikramorvashi* was written by _____.
a. Kalidas b. Vyas c. Bharata d. Valmik
10. The play *Svapnavasavadatta* was written by _____.
a. Kalidas b. Bhasa c. Bharata d. Kuntaka

2.7 Conclusion

Let us conclude the chapter on two great critical theorists of ancient times – Longinus and Kuntaka.

There is controversy about the name and date of Longinus and the authorship of ‘On the Sublime’. However, it is accepted that the author of the treatise ‘On the Sublime’ is Longinus and the work is one of the most important in literary criticism.

We find similar controversy about Kuntaka. We find two variations to his name as Kuntala and Kuntalaka, however the scholars agree that Kuntaka is his name, and he is the writer of the significant work ‘Vakrokti Jivita’.

Both Longinus and Kuntaka are regarded as literary critic and their contribution to literary criticism is immense.

Though Longinus and Kuntaka belong to different traditions and to different centuries, their work is original, vast, and excellent.

Longinus considered the number of previous authors and their work for his analysis. Kuntaka also analyzed many of his predecessors and their work. Their comparative approach is noteworthy.

Longinus and Kuntaka discuss beauty of poetry. Both give precedence to imagination.

Besides these parallels between these critics, we certainly find differences in their work that we discussed in the chapter in detail. The aim of literary criticism is not only to analyze the text, but it also helps to excel literature. Their evaluation provides an opportunity to the future writers and guide to know ‘what is great literature’, ‘how to produce such literature’, and most importantly, ‘to take inspiration from the previous great literary artist and avoid mistakes committed by previous writers’. Both Longinus and Kuntaka’s work in this regard played an important role.

2.8 Terms to remember

Alexander Pope: He was an English poet, translator, and satirist from United Kingdom lived from 1688 to 1744.

Alexandria: The second largest city in Egypt.

Anandavardhana: He (820 – 890 CE) was the author of the *Dhvanyāloka*, or *A Light on Suggestion*, a work articulating the philosophy of "aesthetic suggestion".

Asyndeton: not bound together, unconnected. The omission or absence of one or several conjunctions between the parts of a sentence.

Bharata: He (200 BCE and 200 CE.) was a sage of ancient India. He is traditionally attributed authorship of the influential performing arts treatise **Natyashastra**, which covers ancient Indian dance, dramaturgy, poetics, and music.

Bhasa: He (200 a.d. to 300 a.d.) is one of the earliest and most celebrated Indian playwrights in Sanskrit, predating Kālidasa.

Caecilius: He was born in 219 BCE and died in 168 BCE. Roman comic poet.

Demosthenes: He (384 B.C. – 322 B.C.) was a Greek statesman and orator in ancient Athens.

Eliot: Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 – 1965) was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, literary critic, and editor.

Homer: He (8th Century B.C.) was a Greek poet who is credited as the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two epic poems that are foundational works of ancient Greek literature.

Hyperbaton: *It* is a figure of speech that uses disruption or inversion of customary word order to produce a distinctive effect.

Hyperbole: A *hyperbole* is a rhetorical device that is mainly used to make something look and sound a lot better or worse than it actually is.

Kalidas: He was a Classical Sanskrit author and playwright of Gupta era. He is an author of the famous plays like *Shakuntala*, *Vikramorvashi*, etc.

Kant: Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) was a German philosopher and one of the central Enlightenment thinkers.

Leavis: Frank Raymond Leavis (1895 – 1978) was an English literary critic.

Mathew Arnold: He (1822 – 1888) was an English poet and cultural critic.

Platonism: Platonism is the philosophy of Plato and philosophical systems closely derived from it, though contemporary Platonists do not necessarily accept all doctrines of Plato.

Plutarch: Plutarch was a Greek Middle Platonist philosopher, historian, biographer, essayist, and priest at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi.

Porphry: The most distinguished pupil of Longinus.

Puerility: trivial or childish.

Rasa: In Indian aesthetics, a rasa literally means "nectar, essence or taste". It is a concept in Indian arts denoting the aesthetic flavour of any visual, literary or musical work that evokes an emotion or feeling in the reader or audience, but it cannot be described.

Riti: Literary style.

Sappho: Sappho was an Archaic Greek poet from Eresos or Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. Sappho is known for her lyric poetry, written to be sung while accompanied by music. In ancient times, Sappho was widely regarded as one of the greatest lyric poets and was given names such as the "Tenth Muse" and "The Poetess".

Sublime: It is of very great excellence or beauty.

Terentianus: Postumius Terentianus was a friend of Longinus.

Vakrata: obliquity

Vakrokti: It is comprised of two words *Vakra* 'oblique' and *Ukti* 'utterance'. The theory of *Vakrokti* is fully developed by Kuntaka.

2.9 Answer to the Check your progress: Part I and II

Part I

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 2. a | 3. d | 4. d | 5. b |
| 6. b | 7. d | 8. a | 9. c | 10. a |

Part II

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. d | 2. a | 3. c | 4. a | 5. b |
| 6. d | 7. d | 8. c | 9. a | 10. b |

2.10 Exercise

Question. Answer the following questions.

1. Write a note on Longinus.
2. Explain the treatise *On Sublimity*.
3. Describe the sources of *Sublimity*.
4. Write a note on Longinus' views on great literature.
5. What is 'obliquity'? Describe the different types of obliquity.
6. Write a note on Kuntaka's *Vakrokti-Jivita*.
7. Write a note on Kuntaka's views on poetry and style.
8. How does Kuntaka explain characterization, setting, rasa, and ornamentation.
9. Kuntaka was a great literary critic. Explain.
10. Compare Longinus and Kuntaka and their views on literary art.

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Unit-3

A. MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S *A VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN: WITH STRICTURES ON POLITICAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS*

The present unit is divided into the following sections :

- A) Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*
- B) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions (1817)

- 3.0 Content
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Life and Works of Mary Wollstonecraft
- 3.4 Her Literary Career
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Critical Analysis I
- 3.7 Critical Assessment
- 3.8 Critical Analysis II
- 3.9 Marriage and Beauty
- 3.10 Reason and Rationality
- 3.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.13 Suggested Readings

3.1 Objectives

After studying this unit 3. a), you should be able to:

- get acquainted with the life and works, and literary career of Mary Wollstonecraft
- develop a critical understanding and thematic considerations of Mary Wollstonecraft's essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

3.2 Introduction

Published in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is an essay which deals with the rights of humankind, particularly of women. Of all her writings *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is known as her best work given the fact that in this essay, she sets out to establish her distinct voice in the form of a postulation that all things were not equal, particularly a woman's place in society when compared to that of a man. She emphatically argues that women are not naturally inferior to men but appear to be as such only due to lack of education. Imagining a social order fundamentally based on reason, she suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Sulkin (Sulkin, 1990), argues that the essay was her stand against the injustices not only of women, although that is the major thrust, but also of men.

She wished to become through her writing the “voice” that would generate participation of the natural rights of mankind. Her essay thus creates an alternative discursive opening for women voices by questioning and displacing the locations of power within discursive spaces. This essay emerges discursively as a powerful visible form of protest literature, becoming an entry point to explore the emancipatory potential of dialogue.

3.3 Life and Works of Marry Wollstonecraft

William Godwin, her husband, who wrote a Memoir of her life in 1798, described her in the following words: “Lovely in her person, and in the best and most engaging sense feminine in her manners”. Her contemporary noted Wollstonecraft's provocative presence—thin, medium height, brown hair, haunting brown eyes, and a soft voice. Jim Powell writes that she was ‘without being a dazzling beauty, ... of a charming grace’. Jim Powell further adds that her face, so full of expression, presented a style of beauty beyond that of merely regular features. There was enchantment in her glance, her voice, and her movements. (Jim Powell, 1996) Writer, teacher and champion of Women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft was born in a struggling family in April 1759 in London. She was the second child and eldest daughter of Elizabeth Dixon, who hailed from Bally Shannon, Ireland. Mary's father, Edward John Wollstonecraft, was a handkerchief weaver. The family moved seven times in ten years as their finances deteriorated. Her father Edward drank heavily, and Mary often had to protect her mother from his violent outbursts. She had rocky relations with her siblings. She did not have access to formal schooling, which was

limited, but she got tremendous help from one of her friends in Hoxton, outside London, who had a respectable library, and Mary used to spend a considerable time exploring it. Through these friends, she met Fanny Blood, two years older and skilled at sewing, drawing, watercolors, and the piano. She inspired Mary to take an initiative in cultivating her mind. (Jim Powell,1996)

Owing to her family financial problems, Mary resolved to somehow make her own way. At 19, she got a job as live in helper for a wealthy widow who proved to be a difficult taskmaster. In 1781, Mary tried and failed to establish a school at Islington, North London. Mary, with the help of Fanny, and Mary's sisters, Eliza and Everina, started a school nearby at Newington Green. However, that school too after initial success, failed. She then worked as a governess for an Irish family and saw firsthand the idleness of landed aristocrats. These discouraging experiences were compounded by the death of Fanny Blood from tuberculosis. After the death of Mary's mother in 1782, she—not her oldest brother—assumed primary responsibility for taking care of her volatile father. (Jim Powell,1996)

As far as her personal life is concerned, she became infatuated with the eccentric genius Henry Fuseli, but he was married and brushed her off after extended flirtation. While still in France, she fell in love with an American adventurer named Gilbert Imlay, who was always looking for a scheme to strike it rich.

They had a daughter, Fanny, but he lost interest in both of them and walked out. Wollstonecraft attempted suicide twice. While recovering from despair, she took a three month break with Fanny in Scandinavia and produced one of her most poignant works, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*. The letters were addressed to the unnamed American father of her child. They provide a travelogue laced with commentary on politics, philosophy, and her personal life. After witnessing the French Terror, she tempered her hopes for social change. Throughout the book, Wollstonecraft struggled to cope with her grief about Imlay, and she conveyed an immediacy and tenderness that touches the heart. William Godwin said that if ever there was a book calculated to make a man in love with its author, this appears to me to be the book.

Wollstonecraft decided to pursue her acquaintance with Godwin. He had a large head, deep set eyes, and a thin voice. "He seems to have had some charm which his enemies could not detect, or his friends define, but which had a real influence on those who attained his close friendship," reported Godwin biographer George

Woodcock. Like Wollstonecraft, he had started a school, but his ideas were too radical, and the effort failed. His literary career had begun with a dull political biography, a book of sermons and some potboiler novels. Then London publisher George Robinson offered to pay Godwin enough of an advance that he could work out his philosophy.

Critics are of the view that at the time Wollstonecraft called, Godwin was a 42 year old bachelor courting Amelia Alderson, a doctor's daughter. But he was intrigued with Wollstonecraft, despite his initial impression that she talked too much. He invited her to a dinner party the following week. Included were James Mackintosh and Dr. Samuel Parr, both of whom had written rebuttals to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. After Alderson rejected Godwin, he became more responsive to Wollstonecraft, and her passion overwhelmed him. "It was friendship melting into love," he recalled. But Wollstonecraft was haunted by fear of another betrayal. Godwin reassured her that he longed for a relationship between equals. Her passion surged again. "It is a sublime tranquility," she wrote him, "I have felt it in your arms." By December, she was pregnant. Both Wollstonecraft and Godwin had criticized marriage as a vehicle for exploitation, but they tied the knot on March 29, 1797. She rejoiced that she had found true love at last.

It is said that she went into labor during the early morning of Wednesday, August 30, 1797. She was attended by one Mrs. Blenkinsop, an experienced midwife. After 11 o'clock that night, a daughter was born—Mary, who grew up to be Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*. For a while, it appeared things were fine, but three hours later, Mrs. Blenkinsop notified Godwin that the placenta still hadn't come out of the womb. The longer the placenta remained, the greater the risk of infection. Godwin called Dr. Poignand who succeeded in removing much of the placenta. Wollstonecraft reported that the procedure was the most excruciatingly painful experience of her life. That Sunday, she began suffering chills, an ominous sign of infection. Doctors offered wine to help ease the pain and tried other measures to stimulate her body to eject the remains of the placenta. Wollstonecraft continued to decline. She died Sunday morning, September 10, 1797. Godwin was so overcome that he didn't attend the funeral, held at St. Pancras church where they had been married just five months before. She was buried in the churchyard.

3.4 Her Literary Career

Wollstonecraft's literary career began with the publication of a pamphlet. Hewlett encouraged Wollstonecraft to write a pamphlet on education and submit it to Joseph Johnson, the radical publisher and bookseller with a shop at St. Paul's Churchyard. He was known as a visionary entrepreneur who backed a number of unknowns including the poet printmaker William Blake. Johnson published works by Joseph Priestley and poets William Cowper and William Wordsworth, too. He distributed materials for Unitarians.

Literary critics are of the view that most of Wollstonecraft's early productions are about education. She published an anthology of literary extracts "for the improvement of young women", which was entitled *The Female Reader* and she translated two children's works, Maria Geertruida van de Werken de Cambon's *Young Grandison* and Christian Gotthilf Salzmann's *Elements of Morality*. She deals with the same topic in her own writings. In her books entitled *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) and her children's book *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788), she promotes the idea of educating children into the emerging middle-class ethos: self-discipline, honesty, frugality, and social contentment. Moreover, both these books also lay emphasis on the importance of teaching children to reason, revealing Wollstonecraft's intellectual debt to the educational views of seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke. However, the prominence she affords religious faith and innate feelings, which very distinctly distinguishes her work from his, links it to the discourse of sensibility popular at the end of the eighteenth century. It is a fact that both texts also advocate the education of women, a controversial topic at the time and one which she would return to throughout her career, most notably in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft maintains that well-educated women will be good wives and mothers and ultimately contribute positively to the nation.

Some of her prominent works include *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*. London: Joseph Johnson, 1787; *Mary: A Fiction*. London: Joseph Johnson, 1788; *Original Stories from Real Life: With Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness*. London: Joseph Johnson, 1788; *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. London: Joseph Johnson, 1790; *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures*

on Moral and Political Subjects. London: Joseph Johnson, 1792; *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*. London: Joseph Johnson, 1796.

Mary Wollstonecraft's biographer Claire Tomalin maintains that Mary was homeless again, without a job or a reference; she had nothing to live on, and she was in debt to several people. She had no marriage prospects. She was 28, with a face that looked as though it had settled permanently into lines of severity and depression around the fierce eyes ... her most remarkable trait was still that she had refused to learn the techniques whereby women in her situation usually attempted to make life tolerable for themselves: flattery, docility, resignation to the will of man, or God, or their social superiors, or all three. Johnson explained it to Wollstonecraft that she had talent and could succeed if she worked hard. He published her pamphlet in 1786 as *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, with Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*. Sales were negligible, but the work launched Wollstonecraft's literary career. She sent her author's fee to the impoverished Blood family and redoubled her efforts. It is believed that by 1788, Johnson offered her steady work. She translated books from French and German into English. She served as an assistant editor and writer for his new journal, *The Analytical Review*. She contributed to it until her death, perhaps as many as 200 articles on fiction, education, sermons, travelogues, and children's books. Johnson was a good man. It was he who helped Wollstonecraft find lodgings. It was he who advanced her money when needed. And it was he who dealt with her creditors, helping her cope with her father's chaotic situation.

3.5 Summary

In this essay Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) argues against both Burke and Rousseau, defending the notion of natural rights, particularly rights for women, such as equal education. She insisted that women could not become virtuous, even as mothers, unless they won the right to participate in economic and political life on an equal basis with men. Although she did not specifically demand the right to vote for women, her emphasis on women's rights made her an object of ridicule for some, heroism for others. Contending for the rights of woman, her main argument is built on the simple principle that if she is not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general

practice. She raises a few questions such as: how can woman be expected to co-operate unless she knows why she ought to be virtuous, unless freedom strengthens her reason till she comprehends her duty, and sees in what manner it is connected with her real good? If children are to be educated to understand the true principle of patriotism, their mother must be a patriot; and the love of mankind, from which an orderly strain of virtues spring, can only be produced by considering the moral and civil interest of mankind; but the education and situation of woman, at present, shuts her out from such investigations. (Wollstonecraft, 1792)

In this work she has produced many arguments, which to her were conclusive, to prove that the prevailing notion respecting a sexual character was subversive of morality, and she has contended that to render the human body and mind more perfect, chastity must more universally prevail, and that chastity will never be respected in the male world till the person of a woman is not, as it were, idolized, when little virtue or sense embellish it with the grand traces of mental beauty, or the interesting simplicity of affection

3.6 Critical Analysis I

Now let us go on to a critical analysis of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Why was *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* Written?

On September 10, 1791, Talleyrand, former Bishop of Autun, advocated government schools which would end at eighth grade for girls but continue for boys. This made clear to Wollstonecraft that despite all the talk about equal rights, the French Revolution wasn't intended to help women much. As a reply to Talleyrand's document on education, she began planning her most famous work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She wrote for more than three months and was finished on January 3, 1792. Johnson published it in three volumes.

3.7 Critical Assessment

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman is, more often than not, regarded as a purely political treatise. However, like Plato's *Republic* and Rousseau's *Emile*, it can be seen as both a political and an educational treatise. It is, above all, a celebration of the rationality of women. It constitutes an attack on the view of female education put forward by Talleyrand, former Bishop of Autun, Rousseau and countless others who regarded women as weak and artificial and not capable of reasoning effectively. Mary Wollstonecraft rejected the education in dependency that Rousseau advocated

for them in *Emile*. For Mary Wollstonecraft, rationality or reason formed the basis of our human rights as she argues that it was our ability to grasp the truth and, therefore, acquire knowledge of right and wrong that separated us, as human beings, from the animal world. She maintains that through the exercise of reason we became moral and political agents. This worldview was acknowledged by all progressive thinkers of the time. However, it was essentially a man's world, and the work of Rousseau was typical of this. What Mary Wollstonecraft did was to extend the basic ideas of Enlightenment philosophy to women and Rousseau's educational ideas of how to educate boys to girls.

She develops an exclusive discourse arguing against the assumption that women were not rational creatures and were simply slaves to their passions. Mary Wollstonecraft argued that it was up to those who thought like this to prove it. She described the process by which parents brought their daughters up to be docile and domesticated. She maintained that if girls were encouraged from an early age to develop their minds, it would be seen that they were rational creatures and there was no reason whatsoever for them not to be given the same opportunities as boys with regard to education and training. Women could enter the professions and have careers just the same as men. In proposing the same type of education for girls as that proposed for boys, Mary Wollstonecraft also went a step further and proposed that they be educated together which was even more radical than anything proposed before. The idea of co- educational schooling was simply regarded as nonsense by many educational thinkers of the time. It was fashionable to contend that if women were educated and not docile creatures, they would lose any power they had over their husbands. Mary Wollstonecraft was furious about this and maintained that 'This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men but over themselves'. (Burke, 2004).

Wollstonecraft believed education could be the salvation of women. She asserts that the exercise of their understanding is necessary, there is no other foundation for independence of character. She strongly is of the view that they must bow only to the authority of reason, instead of being the modest slaves of opinion. She insisted women should be taught serious subjects like reading, writing, arithmetic, botany, natural history, and moral philosophy. She recommended vigorous physical exercise to help stimulate the mind. Mary had a naive faith that the same governments which restricted women could inexplicably be trusted to run schools uplifting women.

Twentieth century government schools have been catastrophes for women as well as men, graduating large numbers at high cost without the most fundamental skills.

That men prefer emotion and common sense for women over reason and common sense is well contested by Mary Wollstonecraft very emphatically in a critical manner, demonstrating the dominance of patriarchal mindset. She demonstrates how men have created a separate realm for women, particularly girls, who are inculcated such a culture where they are taught to be concerned with persons only not virtue. This practice creates such a trend which becomes very problematic for mothers who either don't care for their children or are not able to mould their children's future in a positive direction. She argues that both husband and wife must treat each other like friends or companions then only their marriage would be a successful one.

Commenting about modesty, she claims that there is a huge difference between modesty and humility and both are not the same. Linking modesty with reason, she explains that those women who make use of their reason the most, are the most modest ones, and this can happen only when such women are strengthened in both their body and mind, making them reasonably strong. Further, Mary Wollstonecraft advocates for women's economic independence, expressing the demands for women's more active participation in the public sphere, asking them to go for various other responsibilities on their shoulders so that they become good citizens and good mothers.

There is no denying the fact that with *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft emerged in a class by herself, going beyond her contemporaries who had written passionately about educating women, by postulating her own ideas for education reform, suggesting opening up of more public and private co-educational schools which would promote more democratic and more participatory educational structures. Finally, she concludes by claiming that women's weaknesses are not resulting from any natural deficiency but from their lower status in the society and inefficient education system being regulated by the patriarchal framework of thought and structure.

3.8 Critical Analysis II : Themes in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

Inadequate Education System

This essay's major concern is to present a strong critique of Talleyrand's document on education and female education model advanced by Rousseau and other contemporaries who considered women to be weak and artificial and not capable enough of reasoning effectively. It can be observed that Mary Wollstonecraft outrightly rejected the education in dependency model that Rousseau advocated for women in *Emile*. She was of an understanding that a woman is and should be intelligent in every manner.

Mary Wollstonecraft strongly argues that women of the eighteenth century were not considered the same as their male counterparts. This situation did not happen due to the weakness of the women but due to the inadequate system of education as women of the eighteenth century did not have full access to education. They were assumed to be essentially housewives meant to please their husbands. As we have already seen earlier how the roles of the women were circumscribed by the powerfully regulatory mechanism of patriarchal thoughts and women were in effect confined to domestic works only. Women were expected to be characteristically virtuous and submissive. Girls were taught to keep their beauty intact by grooming themselves, maintaining their beauty and tenderness in order to woo their husbands. Their upbringing was done in such a way that they maintain their external beauty. These treatments of women demonstrated that women were not free in their minds, not having a very healthy mindset at all. Mary Wollstonecraft calls such nurturing as 'barren blooming' which was a product of a false system of education. She expresses her concern for women by stating that it was sad to learn that women of that period were only anxious to inspire their love whereas they should have had nobler ambitions and high spirits of a broad mindset.

She is of the view that women tend to stagnate due to lack of an adequate education system without which women would always remain to be immature, behaving like a child who even after marriage would not be able to take care of their household in a proper responsible manner. This would lead to women's infantilizing situation. She suggests that the only solution to this problem is giving women full and complete access to education, developing higher goals for women's education which would enlighten their minds, empowering them with rights.

3.9 Marriage and Beauty:

Mary Wollstonecraft puts a lot of emphasis on the practice of marriage in her essay, rather criticizing it for the way it was being customized in the eighteenth-century society. She relates marriage and beauty together arguing that girls were brought up and taught to maintain their beauty intact so that they could be able to win suitors or husbands. Girls were nurtured with such principles in their lives which would eventually lead them to marrying immoral husbands because of their youthful passion.

Mary argues very strongly that women were taught to develop their weakness as virtue, using it as a power play to woo men, clearly giving an indication that it was going to make their lives a living hell. She asserts that women were moulded like this since childhood in order to make themselves more appealing to suitors. This kind of practice, she argues, was going to create a lifelong negative effect on the society as a whole and was going to lead to elevating gratification and romantic conquest over a relationship which should have been based on mutual respect. This clearly demonstrates the fact that the marriage of that time did not give any value to compatibility which happens to be the crucial factor for any marriage. Rather the marriage of that period was based on the concept of the transaction of a business. She is of the view that the inadequate education system is to be blamed for these which sets women up for the unhappiness of their marriages, making their lives vulnerable.

She suggests that women should learn to be the lifelong strong companions of their husbands to protect themselves from potentially weak, unhappy and even disastrous and unsuccessful marriages. Women should learn to strengthen their body and be mentally strong so that they become not only good wives but also very good contributors to the welfare of the society.

3.10 Reason and Rationality:

For Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Reason' happens to be one of the key concerns. She believed that it was the reasoning power which formed the very basis of human thoughts giving us an understanding to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, making a human being a rational being, distinguishing him/her from an animal. Animals don't have reasoning power. Reason makes human beings to be progressive. That is the reason why Mary Wollstonecraft, again and again, advises women to use their reason. Moreover, Mary Wollstonecraft wanted to extend the basic ideas of Enlightenment philosophy to women. She argues that women need to

develop their reasoning power very strongly if they want to have control over their emotions and also in order to become virtuous.

Mary Wollstonecraft points out that education and reasoning cannot be separated from each other. Education helps people to elevate themselves as human beings. Reason, on the other hand, helps human beings to elevate themselves over animals. Therefore, both entities are intricately related with each other, and both, consequently, are essential for the human being to be an independent or free or progressive entity. She brings in here the third entity which is virtue. She argues that it is virtue by which one individual elevates him/herself over other human beings. She further maintains that it is with the help of God-given reasoning power that human beings can attain virtue.

She feels very sorry to note that women are taught to rely on their feelings and sentiments rather than developing their reason. Wollstonecraft is laying emphasis on the mind rather than on the heart and she keeps motivating women that they should be using their minds in order to keep a balance between head and heart rather than wasting time and energy on pleasing their lovers or husbands. If they don't behave in this manner, then they won't be in a position to develop their mental faculty necessary for attaining higher virtues which would prove to be very detrimental for their moral development and will lead to an unhappy life.

She comes up with a proposal that to ensure equality, girls should be given the same intellectual education and the same mental training in reason and virtue that boys are given, and the understanding of the girls should be trained in order for the girls to regulate emotions through reason

3.11 Let us Sum up :

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman argues that women are not naturally inferior to men but appear to be as such only due to lack of education. Imagining a social order fundamentally based on reason, she suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings. The essay was her stand against the injustices not only of women, although that is the major thrust, but also of men. She wished to become, through her writing, the “voice” that would generate participation of the natural rights of mankind. Her essay thus creates an alternative discursive opening for women voices by questioning and displacing the locations of power within discursive spaces. This essay emerges discursively as a powerful visible form of

protest literature, becoming an entry point to explore the emancipatory potential of dialogue.

3.12 Check Your Progress:

1. What year was the work published?
A. 1790 B. 1800 C. 1792 D. 1789
2. Whose writings (among others) was this work a response to?
A. Edmund Burke B. William Godwin
C. John Locke D. Thomas Paine
3. To whom is this work dedicated?
A. Edmund Burke B. M. Talleyrand-Perigord
C. Thomas Paine D. William Godwin
4. Wollstonecraft had already published which work before *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*?
A. *A Vindication Of The Rights Of Man*
B. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
C. *Second Treatise Of Government*
D. *The Rights Of Man*
5. Which country's constitution is Wollstonecraft unhappy with?
A. France B. America C. Germany D. Britain
6. If man acts like a _____, then morality is undermined.
A. Woman B. Hero C. Politician D. Tyrant
7. What does Wollstonecraft say in her advertisement?
A. She will not address the subject again
B. She is completely satisfied with her work
C. She plans on seven more volumes
D. She plans on a second volume
8. What the "grand source of misery" that she deplores?
A. Physical superiority of men B. Neglected education
C. Political subordination D. Natural differences between the sexes
9. What does Wollstonecraft assert about physical superiority?

- A. Men are physically superior B. Both sexes are equal
C. Women are physically superior D. She does not address it
10. What social class of women is she primarily addressing?
A. Middle class B. The aristocracy
C. Working class D. All women
11. Elegance is said to be inferior to what?
A. Intelligence B. Virtue C. Modesty D. Power
12. Which of the following statements is TRUE?
A. Women will still be dependent upon men in some areas of life
B. Men and women will be exact equals in all areas
C. Women will never need men again
D. Men will become the subordinate sex
13. Men seem to employ reason to justify what?
A. Prejudices B. Power C. Equality D. Kindness
14. What is Wollstonecraft's opinion of the rich?
A. Very positive B. Neutral C. Very negative D. Unknown
15. Which author does she engage with the most?
A. Rousseau B. Shakespeare C. Dr. Gregory D. Milton
16. What entity does Wollstonecraft criticize?
A. Parliament B. The church
C. The standing army D. The court
17. What should form character the most?
A. Reason, education, and experience B. Profession, gender, and class
C. Books, music, and theatre D. Age, luck, and wealth
18. What renders the progress of civilization a curse?
A. Royalty B. Ignorance C. Religion D. Sexual immorality
19. Women are generally taught all of the following EXCEPT
A. Cunning B. Meekness C. Reason D. Weakness
20. Who describes "our first frail mother" in terms Wollstonecraft disputes?
A. Milton B. St. Matthew C. Shakespeare D. Rousseau

21. Men try to secure the good conduct of women by doing what?
 - A. Keeping them in a state of childhood
 - B. Emotionally abusing them
 - C. Letting them exercise reason
 - D. Tyrannizing over them
22. Virtue must result from what?
 - A. Modesty
 - B. The exercise of reason
 - C. Nature
 - D. Intellect
23. What does "silently more misfortune than all the rest" for women?
 - A. Their attraction to rakes
 - B. Their disregard of order
 - C. Their cultivation of weakness
 - D. Their lack of bodily strength
24. Who does Wollstonecraft compare women to in regard to weakness?
 - A. Kings
 - B. Animals
 - C. Children
 - D. Military men
25. All of the following are true of women EXCEPT
 - A. They understand the grand outline of history
 - B. They blindly submit to authority
 - C. They acquire manners before morals
 - D. They are prey to prejudices

3.12 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1.C 2. A 3. B 4. A 5. A 6.D 7.D 8.B 9. A
 10.A 11.B 12.A 13. A 14. C 15. A 16. C 17. A 18.A
 19.C 20.A 21. A 22. B 23. C 24. D 25. A

3.13 Suggested Readings

Mary Wollstonecraft. 1792. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. London: Joseph Johnson.

Mary Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," in Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Rights of Woman* (London: Scott, 1891), xxvi–xxix, 17–18, 155–56, 159.

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Janet Todd. *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000).

Claire Tomalin. *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).

Gary Kelly. *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Macmillan-now Palgrave Macmillan 1991).

Janet Todd. *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Penguin, 2003).

B) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions (1817)

3.0 Content

3.1 Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Fancy and Imagination

3.4 Coleridge's View of Poetry and of The Poet

3.5 The German Angle

3.6 A Comparison of Wordsworth and Coleridge as Critics

3.7 Conclusion

3.8 Check in Progress

3.9 Answer to Check in Progress

3.1 Objectives

In this unit, we shall discuss and understand Coleridge's principal critical exertion *Biographia Literaria* with special consideration to his theory of Imagination and his elucidation of poetry. In doing so, we shall also reflect upon the effect of German thinkers on his thought.

3.2 Introduction

Biographia Literaria, a treatise of twenty-three chapters on romantic criticism, was intended by Coleridge as a literary autobiography, but swung away into deliberations about Kant, Schelling, and the author's insightful critique on his friend and co-author, Wordsworth's poetry. It also sheds light on a comprehensive theorization of creative imagination which constitutes his most momentous contribution to literary criticism and theory.

Coleridge has let his powerful reins of mind loose on his theory of imagination, his understanding of poetry and its aesthetics, its philosophical foundations, and its practical application in an almost indiscriminate manner. The result is a source of inexhaustible contemplation called *Biographia Literaria* (1817) to which he draws

attention of critics to. Arthur Symonds justly described the work as ‘the greatest book of English criticism’. Although Coleridge has occasionally been alleged of borrowing from the Germans, particularly from Kant, Schelling and the Schlegels, most of his ideas were originally arrived at, and the system into which these ideas were fitted was the creation of his own great mind.

Coleridge's whole aesthetic - his definition of poetry, his idea of the poet, and his poetical criticism - revolve around his theory of creative imagination. *Biographia Literaria*, was the result of six months’ hard labour on the part of Coleridge. Its manuscript was completed by September 1815, and it was published in July 1817. A two-volume prose work of extensive intellectual range and ambition, it syndicates Coleridge’s ideas on theology, philosophy, literary theory, the nature of the imagination, and poetic genius with practical criticism and personal reminiscence. His addiction to opium and bouts of suicidal depression during the time wherein he penned this treaty partially explains the digressive and patchwork topography of *Biographia*, the composition of which began as a form of literary restoration (Coleridge dictated much of it to his friend John Morgan).

Originally, Coleridge conceived the work as a preface to his collection of poems, *Sybylline Leaves* (1817), and as a reply to William Wordsworth’s Preface to his own 1815 Poems. However, the task of prefacing his poetry stretched to integrate a history of the poetic imagination, which in turn was succeeded by the project of writing a critical history of modern philosophy. Shifting objectives made for an ungainly structure, as Coleridge returned to interpolate philosophical material written in August and September (Chapters 5-13) into the autobiographical / literary sections completed in July (Chapters 1-4 and 14-22). The resulting complexity in *Biographia*’s narrative and discursive threads is augmented by the remarkable variety of mood and register in Coleridge’s prose, ranging from the light-hearted anecdote and ambitious system-building of the early sections to the more energetic poetry criticism and aesthetics of the later chapters. Compounding this, miscalculations by the printer forced Coleridge hurriedly to graft extra material onto the end of the work before it was finally published in two volumes in July 1817 (volume I containing Chapters 1 to 13, with volume II housing Chapters 14 to 22, as well as the hastily added “Satyrane’s Letters” and the “Critique on Bertram”).

The statement of the theory of imagination in *Biographia Literaria* is preceded by a prolix and, at time philosophical discourse in the form of certain hypotheses or propositions wherein Coleridge attempts to define Nature and Self. Nature - the sum

of all that is objective - is passive and unconscious while Self or Intelligence - the sum of all that is subjective - is vital and conscious. All knowledge is the product of the unification of the subject and the object. This amalgamation leads to the act of creation. It is in this state of self-consciousness that ['object and subject, being and knowledge, are identical'] and the reality of ['the one life in us and abroad'] is experienced and affirmed and chaos is converted into cosmos. What happens is that the Self or Spirit views itself in all objects which as objects are dead and finite.

Coleridge's theory of creative imagination is essentially grounded in his perception. Hence Coleridge's view of the imagination approximates to the views of Schelling and Kant. Like Coleridge, they recognise the interdependence of subject and object as complementary aspects of a single reality. Also they all agree about the self-conceived as a totality: thought and feeling in their original identity and not as an abstraction.

3.3 Fancy and Imagination

Biographia is typically romantic in playing fast and loose with conventional literary genres, and also is demonstrative in helping to fashion a new one: autobiography. Like other texts from the period, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782-89), Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) and Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850), the narrative of *Biographia* is based primarily in self-exploration. Coleridge insisted that memory and introspection could only ever be a means to an end. As he writes in the first chapter, "[i]t will be found, that the least of what I have written concerns myself personally. I have used the narration [...] as introductory to the statement of my principles on Politics, Religion, and Philosophy, and the application of the rules, deduced from philosophical principles, to poetry and criticism" (Coleridge 1817). As this opening declaration reveals, *Biographia* combines an extraordinary intellectual ambitiousness with hesitancy over using the personal as a basis for the philosophical.

Coleridge builds his theory on the basic distinction between Fancy and Imagination - terms which were used before him more-or-less indistinguishably to express the same import. He first refers to this significant distinction in Chapter IV of *Biographia Literaria*. The occasion is his consideration of the excellence of Wordsworth's mind as reflected in his poetry:

Repeated meditations led me first to suspect (and a more intimate analysis of human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions and effects matured my

conjecture into full conviction) that fancy and imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power.

Coleridge ultimately uses the term 'Fancy' for the eighteenth century view of imagination which was essentially mechanical and determined by the law of association. Imagination, on this view, does not modify, much less does it transform the materials that it deals with but merely reproduces them. In Kantian terms, we should call it the reproductive imagination.

'Fancy', says Coleridge, 'has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definitives. ... Fancy must receive all its materials ready-made from the law of association.' Our brief discussion of the theory of association in the context of the eighteenth century view of imagination above would make it clear that although Coleridge does assign a minor role to Fancy in the production of poetry, it is with him essentially a pejorative term, because as Shawcross explains, the distinction between imagination as universally active in consciousness and the same faculty in a heightened power as creative in a poetic sense.

In contrast to Fancy, Imagination is essentially creative. Coleridge subdivides it into the Primary and the Secondary Imagination:

PRIMARY IMAGINATION

Coleridge asserts,

The Primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime Agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.

The Primary Imagination is the elemental power of basic human perception which enables us to identify, to discriminate, to synthesize and thus to produce order out of disorder. In this it is analogous to the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. Primary imagination is merely the power of receiving impressions of the external world through the senses. It is the power of perceiving the objects of sense, both in their parts and as whole. It is an evolutionary act of the mind; the human mind receives impressions and sensations from the outside world, unconsciously and involuntarily, it imposes some sort of order on those impressions, reduces them to

shape and size, so that the mind is able to form a clear image of the outside world. It is in this way that clear and coherent perception becomes possible.

SECONDARY IMAGINATION

The Secondary or artistic Imagination co-exists with the conscious will and is different in degree and mode of operation from the Primary Imagination.

First it is essentially vital as all objects as objects are fixed and dead. That is to say, it is active and projective in nature and has a life-bestowing capacity which informs the world of objective phenomena with attributes which make it responsive and hospitable to man. Secondly, it dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events, it struggles to idealise and to unify. In other words, the creative imagination, through a process of dissolution, diffusion and dissipation creates a chaos and then sets out to create a universe from it. It is a coadunating and esemplastic power which reconciles opposites, unifies disparate elements and synthesises dialectically opposed forces. It idealises and reshapes the data of experience to create a new reality out of them and this reality has the prime attribute of organic unity in it.

The primary imagination is universal, it is possessed by all. The secondary imagination, on the other hand, may be possessed by others also, but it is the peculiar and distinctive attribute of the artist. It is the secondary imagination which makes artistic creation possible. Secondary imagination is more active and conscious in its working. It requires an effort of the will, volition and conscious effort. It works upon what is perceived by the primary imagination, its raw material is the sensations and impressions supplied to it by the primary imagination. By an effort of the will and the intellect, the secondary imagination selects and orders the raw material, and re-shapes and re-models it into objects of beauty.

The secondary imagination is at the root of all poetic activity. It is the power which harmonizes and reconciles opposites, and hence Coleridge calls it a *magical, synthetic power*. This unifying power of the imagination is best seen in the fact that it synthesises or fuses the various faculties of the soul – perception, intellect, will, emotion – and fuses the internal with the external, the subjective with the objective, the human mind with external nature, the spiritual with the physical or material. It is through the play of this unifying power that nature is coloured by the soul of the poet, and soul of the poet is steeped in nature.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY

The primary and secondary imagination do not differ from each other in kind. The difference between them is one of degree. The secondary imagination is more active, more a result of volition, more conscious, and more voluntary, than the primary one. The primary imagination, on the other hand, is universal, while the secondary is peculiar privilege enjoyed by the artist.

This tension between private and public voices further echoes Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, a text which shares *Biographia*'s marriage of introspection and philosophy. Indeed, both works emerged from a literary dialogue between the two writers that dates back to their joint endeavours on *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): Wordsworth's great poem initially took shape as the "Poem to Coleridge," which Coleridge hoped would become part of "the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC POEM" (Coleridge 1817, II 156). The presence of Wordsworth reverberates throughout *Biographia*, the result of Coleridge's belief that his friend embodied the principle that "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher" (Coleridge 1817, II 25-26). Correspondingly, he insisted, no theory of poetry or criticism could be sound without the kind of firm philosophical underpinning that *Biographia* would establish. This raises the complicated issue of *Biographia*'s relation to his projected but never completed philosophical magnum opus, the *Logosophia*, in which Coleridge planned to set out a "total and undivided philosophy" in which "philosophy would pass into religion, and religion become inclusive of philosophy" (Coleridge 1817, I 282-83). Like *The Prelude*, which Wordsworth saw merely as the ante-chapel to the cathedral of the never-written epic poem *The Recluse*, *Biographia* was conceived as a preamble to (and as an attempt to apply to criticism and aesthetics the principles of) an even grander work. That *Logosophia* was never completed (although its fragments have recently been published as part of the *Opus Maximum*) was largely due to the overreaching ambition behind its "total and undivided philosophy," which promised no less than the synthesis of centuries of critical, philosophical and theological inquiry into a new and dynamic system of thought that would reconcile art, philosophy, and religion. *Biographia* betrays Coleridge's difficulty in fulfilling this undertaking in two ways.

The first is the work's philosophical allusiveness. For Coleridge, overthrowing the dominant aesthetic and critical theories of the past century in Britain meant dismantling the philosophical foundations upon which they rested. In place of the empirical tradition of John Locke, David Hume and David Hartley,

Coleridge offered a philosophy of art based on a mixture of scripture, Neoplatonism, and (more controversially) the transcendental idealism of German thinkers, principally Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller and F. W. J. von Schelling. The bulk of this edifice is constructed in Chapters 5-13 of the first volume of *Biographia*. Chapters 5-8 find Coleridge on the 3 offensive, attacking empiricism (the theory that all human knowledge is based on experience derived from our senses), materialism (the theory that all existence is reducible to matter), and the theory of association, which, in the work of Coleridge's erstwhile mentor, Hartley, proposed that ideas have their roots in neurological connections, or associations, formed in the brain. Deploying arguments he found in Kant, Coleridge accuses Hartley and others of confusing the mechanical "conditions" of knowledge with its "essence," or principles of possibility (Coleridge 1817, I 123). In Chapters 9-13, he acknowledges his debts to Kant and Schelling and, amid digression, anecdote and apology, lays the foundations for his new "constructive philosophy" (Coleridge 1817, I 302), which combines the Neoplatonic mysticism of Plotinus with some of the methods of German transcendentalism. More specifically, it combines the Plotinian idea that absolute reality can be grasped only intuitively with the transcendentalist claim that this grasping must be understood as the unification of knowing and being and thus as the basic precondition of all thought. The first volume culminates with the ten philosophical-theological "Theses" of Chapter 12, which prepare the ground for the account of creative-intuitive Imagination, the cornerstone of *Biographia's* aesthetic theory, in Chapter 13. Coleridge leaves it to his readers to connect this truncated account of Imagination to both the philosophical Theses that precede it and the literary criticism that follows in Volume II. Nonetheless (and despite the tendency of many readers since to treat the literary-critical chapters of the second volume as freestanding), the philosophy of Imagination is crucial to what follows. Chapters 14-16 prepare the ground for the critique of Wordsworth by outlining what Coleridge, with hindsight, sees as the principal idea behind *Lyrical Ballads*, namely "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination" (Coleridge 1817, II 5). For Coleridge, the poetry in *Lyrical Ballads* was to embody the imaginative synthesis of world and mind, object and subject. This would be achieved by reconciling, through style and content, the natural and the supernatural, with Coleridge endowing supernatural subjects with "a semblance of truth sufficient to procure [...] that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (Coleridge 1817, II 6),

while, conversely, Wordsworth endeavoured “to give the charm of novelty to things of every day” (Coleridge 1817, II 7). However, Wordsworth’s decision to present the volume in his “Preface” as containing, in Coleridge’s words, “the language of real life” (Coleridge 1817, II 8) did not fit this picture.

Writing *Biographia* provided Coleridge with an opportunity to set the record straight. Coleridge embarks on this task towards the end of Chapter 14 by introducing further “philosophical” definitions: of a poem, and of poetry. He tackles the poem first:

A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species [...] it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part. (Coleridge 1817, II 13)

A poem ought to have truth as its “ultimate end” (Coleridge 1817, II 12), but since it is a creature of Imagination, not reason, its approach must be intuitive rather than logical or inductive. In accounting for the function of metre, Coleridge is influenced by the new German theory of organic form, according to which the relationship between the parts and the whole of any artwork should, as in a plant, be mutually sustaining. On this picture, metrical form should not only grow naturally from the seed of a poem’s content; it will also, in turn, affect the essential meaning of that poem.

In truth, however, Coleridge is more interested in the literary process (poetry, or the creative act of Imagination) than the literary product (the poem, or composition). Poetry for Coleridge is not an arrangement of words, but an expression of genius that “brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other” and “diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power [...] of] imagination” (Coleridge 1817, II 15-16). The key distinction here is not the functional one between a poem and prose, but the epistemological and aesthetic one between poetry and science. Poetry’s aim is not truth as verisimilitude, but truth as feeling, as unification, and as power.

This brings us back to Wordsworth’s characterisation of poetic diction as the “language of real life.” Coleridge’s objection to this formulation is that, by implying that poetry merely replicates ordinary life, Wordsworth is in danger of

misrepresenting not just poetry, but also language itself. At the core of his argument is yet another distinction: this time, between “imitation” and “copy”. When Coleridge claims in Chapter 18 that “the composition of a poem is among the imitative arts,” he means that poems transform rather than duplicate what they represent. Consequently, “imitation, as opposed to copying, consists either in the interfusion of the SAME throughout the radically DIFFERENT, or of the different throughout a base radically the same” (Coleridge 1817, II 72). Since, Coleridge maintains, words themselves are not copies of thoughts, but imitations, poetry is not a copy of speech, but speech raised and transformed by the creative imagination into something at once the “same” and “different”: poetic truth. One important consequence of this is what Coleridge deems to be “the infallible test of a blameless style; namely, its untranslatableness in words of the same language without injury to the meaning” (Coleridge 1817, II 142). It is this idea of poetic language that Coleridge claims is at the heart of *Lyrical Ballads*: synthesising difference with sameness by interweaving nature and imagination, the ordinary with the supernatural, it cannot be paraphrased or translated into the merely literal and mechanical vocabulary of the understanding.

Throughout Chapters 15-22, Coleridge engages in a “practical criticism” (his own phrase) of Wordsworth’s poetry (Coleridge 1817, II 19). This involves, among other things, quantifying Wordsworth’s merits by comparing him to other great poets. In Chapter 15, Coleridge uses Shakespeare as a model for the major characteristics of “original poetic genius” (Coleridge 1817, II 18): a sense of musical delight; a sympathetic imagination; a unifying, predominant passion; and a depth and powerful energy of thought. While Shakespeare possesses all these qualities in 6 abundance, Wordsworth excels only in the latter two. Indeed, among the five major “defects” of Wordsworth’s poetry enumerated in Chapter 22, Coleridge includes “an undue predilection for the dramatic form in certain poems” (Coleridge 1817, II 135). Coleridge sees Wordsworth’s genius, like that of Milton (but in contrast to the “Proteus” Shakespeare), as fundamentally non-dramatic. Wordsworth is at his best as a poet, Coleridge argues, when he draws all things into himself through “the blending, fusing power of Imagination and Passion” (Coleridge 1817, II 150). In this regard, “he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own” (Coleridge 1817, II 151).

Biographia was not greeted with much enthusiasm by reviewers, who objected to the work’s lack of organisation and to Coleridge’s metaphysics, which even

philosophically sophisticated readers such as William Hazlitt found impenetrable. A second edition appeared posthumously in 1847, by which time accusations had already emerged that Coleridge had plagiarised his German sources, particularly Schelling—claims that continue to dog the work’s reputation today. Nonetheless, *Biographia*’s increasing importance and influence is attested by the appearance of two new editions around the beginning of the twentieth century: an Everyman edition, with an Introduction by Arthur Symonds (1906), and a new annotated edition by John Shawcross for the Clarendon Press (1907). By this time *Biographia* had already acquired the reputation as one of the most important works in the history of English literary criticism, not just because of its revealing criticism of Wordsworth and Shakespeare, but also through introducing to an Anglophone audience the ideas of organic unity, practical criticism, the untranslatableness of poetic diction, and the “willing suspension of disbelief,” as well as radically new definitions of imitation, poetic genius, and—most influentially of all— Imagination. Even as this pre-eminence has withstood the challenge of High Modernism and postmodernism, *Biographia* has remained a focus of attention for a variety of theoretical and critical schools, from the history of ideas to New Criticism, and from stylistic approaches to attempts either to deconstruct the work’s metaphysics or to find in its self-conscious lacunae a foreshadowing of postmodern irony. Today, the work remains widely available in print in the form of the revised Everyman’s edition by George Watson (1975) and the standard, Princeton University Press edition by James Engell and Walter Jackson Bate (1983).

3.4 Coleridge’s View of Poetry and the Poet

This brings us to the other feature that suggests that *Biographia* was beginning to bend under the weight of Coleridge’s varied and ambitious objectives: the hiatus in the argument between Chapters 12 and 13. Rather than extending the Theses of the earlier chapter into the definition of Imagination, Coleridge abruptly introduces a “letter from a friend” (Coleridge 1817, I 300), in which the author is advised to reserve such a daunting task for the Logosophia. This intervention echoes that of the “person on business from Porlock,” whose call prevents the completion of “Kubla Khan.” Like the person from Porlock, the “friend” is almost certainly Coleridge himself, whose intrusion at this point hastens the definition of imagination, severing it from the philosophical exposition of the previous eight chapters. In the three short but hugely influential paragraphs that follow, Coleridge makes two critical distinctions: first, between the Imagination taken as “primary” and taken as

“secondary” (Coleridge 1817, I 304), and second, between Imagination generally and “Fancy” (Coleridge 1817, I 305). Of these, the second is more fundamental to Coleridge’s aesthetics. Coleridge designates as mere “Fancy” what eighteenth-century theorists had generally seen as imagination, i.e. the capacity of the mind to receive, represent and reassemble images gained from experience. For Coleridge, however, Imagination is not passive before the world, but helps to shape it, both on an ontological and a psychological level. This brings us to the distinction between Imagination as “Primary” and as “Secondary”. Coleridge sees Imagination in a twofold way: first, in ontological terms (the Primary Imagination) as the principle of divine creativity in human beings, the “repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM” (Coleridge 1817, I 304) that connects humanity to God, and unifies knowing and being, subject and object; second, in 4 psychological terms (the Secondary Imagination) as the expression of the same unifying, creative power in the human mind as it “struggles to idealize and to unify” (Coleridge 1817, I 304) its welter of experience. As a productive, unifying and “vital” power (Coleridge 1817, I 304), Imagination is more philosophically fundamental for Coleridge than the reproductive, passive and mechanical faculty of Fancy, which “must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association” (Coleridge 1817, I 305).

Coleridge's definition of poetry and the poet naturally arises from his views on imagination. He begins with a distinction between 'poetry' and 'poem'. Poetry is a term of wider connotation which he uses to cover most of the forms of imaginative literature and other fine arts whose immediate purpose is to impart pleasure through the medium of beauty. In his essay entitled 'On the Principles of Genial Criticism', which forms of part of *Biographia Literaria*, he writes:

All the fine arts are different species of poetry. . . They admit, therefore, of a natural division into poetry of language (poetry in the emphatic sense, because less subject to the accidents and limitation of time and space); poetry of the ear, or music; and poetry of the eye, which is again divided into plastic poetry of the eye, which is again divided into plastic poetry or statuary and a graphic poetry. or painting. The common essence of all consists in the excitement of emotion for the immediate purpose of pleasure through the medium of beauty; herein contradistinguishing poetry from science, the immediate object and primary purpose of which is truth and possible utility.

In the poetry of language, he would include, to begin with, even unrhymed imaginative writing. 'The writing of Plato and Bishop Taylor, furnish undeniable

proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre.. . The first chapter of Isaiah (indeed a very large portion of the whole book) is poetry in the most emphatic sense.' How can we distinguish a poem proper from this poetry which too has language as its medium like the writings of Plato and the Book of Isaiah. Coleridge says that the poem proper combines the same elements, as are found in imaginative prose compositions, in a different manner because it aims at a different object. Sometimes the object may be merely to facilitate recollection as in 'Thirty days hath September'. Sometimes the purpose may be even communication of truth and such communication may give us pleasure but this pleasure is not the immediate end, but is indirectly obtained while pleasure is the immediate end of poetry.

But pleasure may be the immediate end of a work not metrically composed. Would then the super addition of rhyme entitle these works to the name of poems? The answer is that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise. If metre is superadded all other parts should be made consonant with it. A poem is thus 'that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth: and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component'. Such a poem Coleridge calls a legitimate poem, 'the parts of which mutually support and explain each other.' This organicism originates from a corresponding organic process whose source is the poet:

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their worth or dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.

Here it must be stressed that pleasure and truth which Coleridge seems to separate are given both by poetry and science. Coleridge's separation of the two seems arbitrary and can be explained both by the fact that Coleridge, like nineteenth century thinkers in general was not able to shed the dichotomies of the, current philosophy.

3.5 The German Angle

A number of Coleridge's key terms and distinctions are derived from German thought and he does this in quite an eclectic way. This means that he draws from a variety of sources and mixes up the borrowings. He borrows from German thought the conception of the ideas that views all experience as not merely general notions, but as a form of mental image or impression. Another idea which is largely German in origin is that the symbol and the mind both participate in a common spiritual life and that the experience of the beautiful is a consequence of this participation. There are also borrowings from Shelling.

Kant is the biggest influence as the fundamental philosophical distinctions put forward by Coleridge are essentially Kantian. He accepts the Kantian distinction between Reason and Understanding and this distinction is the groundwork of his speculation on the nature of fancy and imagination. Seen from the Kantian angle, reason is concerned with ultimate values or with the perception of unity in multiplicity. Understanding operates on a limited sphere.

Kant's reproductive imagination is close to Coleridge's fancy. His productive imagination is close to Coleridge's primary imagination and Reason is close to Coleridge's secondary imagination because it mediates between rationality and understanding by means of symbols. And yet Coleridge's recourse to the 'Idea' still assumes something of a Platonic rather than a Kantian meaning.

Kant explained the imagination in terms of a comprehensive epistemology and Coleridge followed in Kant's footsteps by describing the imagination as operating under Reason. Where Coleridge went beyond Kant was in his belief that Reason could give us more than a knowledge of the world of perception. And yet the symbols of the imagination have to accommodate themselves to the concepts of the understanding.

3.6 A Comparison of Wordsworth and Coleridge as Critics

Here we shall briefly compare the achievement of Wordsworth and Coleridge as v critics. Wordsworth's criticism was limited in scope whereas the range of Coleridge as a critic was vast. In his own way he was a system builder and always thought within a larger philosophical context. He considered criticism to be an important part of literary Study. I.A. Richards in his book *Coleridge on Imagination* tells us that Coleridge's criticism is of a kind that required us to consider our most fundamental

conceptions. He paved the way for appreciation of great poetry as is evident in his praise for Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth is mostly subjective but Coleridge gives ample evidence of both subjectivity and objectivity.

In Wordsworth's whole approach to poetry and expression there is an element of primitivism whereas Coleridge's theory accommodates formal concerns to a considerable degree. His concern with shape, with form, with embodiment and his taking metre to be an integral part of the poetic process all point to this. In this respect he is a precursor of the New Critics. Romantic Criticism

3.7 Conclusion

Coleridge is the first critic in English to talk at length about the relationship between knowledge and poetic creation. His distinction between Fancy and Imagination is a very useful one. Fancy is arbitrary and aggregating. It is an associative process. Imagination is a creative one. In perception the imagination imposes form and order upon the material of sensation and half creates what it perceives, so in art it works upon the raw material of experience. It gives this raw material a new form and shape. The secondary imagination is essentially vital. To Coleridge the best example of the operation of the imagination in his times was the poetry of Wordsworth.

Coleridge was influenced by German thought but had enough originality to emerge as a major thinker in his own right. His influence as a critic has been remarkable, much greater than that exercised by Wordsworth's criticism.

3.8 Check in Progress

1. S.T Coleridge belonged to the group of
 - A. Early Victorian Poets
 - B. Younger Romantic Poets
 - C. Older Romantic Poets
 - D. Later Victorian Poets
2. The phrase "Willing suspension of disbelief" is applied to Coleridge's
 - A. Poems on Supernatural themes
 - B. Poems on a social theme
 - C. Poetic plays
 - D. Nature Poems
3. Which is the autobiographical work of Coleridge?
 - A. Biographia Literaria
 - B. The Ancient Mariner
 - C. A Christmas Carol
 - D. None

4. In which year Biographia Literaria published?
A. 1898 B. 1849 C. 1866 D. 1817
5. In how many chapter Biographia Literaria is divided
A. 23 B. 24 C. 27 D. 29
6. How many poems of Coleridge included in the Lyrical Ballad?
A. 16 B. 14 C. 04 D. 50
7. 'Biographical Sketches of my literary life is the subtitle of
A. Kubla Khan B. Biographia Literaria
C. A Christmas Carol D. None
8. Who is considered the pre-generator of American Transcendentalism?
A. Coleridge B. Wordsworth
C. Southey D. None

3.8 Answer to Check Your Progress

1- C 2- A 3- A 4-D 5- B 6- C 7-B 8- A

3.9 Questions

1. What, according to Coleridge, is the difference between Fancy and Primary Imagination?
2. How is Primary Imagination different from Secondary Imagination'?
3. What is Coleridge's ideal of a good poet? Who, among his contemporaries fits the bill best?
4. Of the two - Coleridge and Wordsworth - who has had greater influence on modern criticism and in what respects?

3.10 Suggested Readings

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Unit-4

(1) The Intentional Fallacy by Wimsatt and Beardsley (2) Structural Analysis of Narrative by Tzvetan Todorov

The present unit is divided into the following sections:

(1) The Intentional Fallacy by Wimsatt and Beardsley

(2) Structural Analysis of Narrative by Tzvetan Todorov

Section I: The Intentional Fallacy

The present Unit is divided into the following Sections:

4.1.0 Objectives

4.1.1 Introduction

4.1.2 Subject Matter

4.1.3 Check your progress

4.1.4 Answers to check your progress

4.1.5 Exercise

4.1.6 Books for further reading

4.1.0 Objectives:

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meanings of the term ‘Intentional Fallacy’
- Explain different debates associated with Intentional Fallacy.
- Find relationship between the various views expressed by scholars regarding the role of author’s intention in critical judgment.

The Intentional Fallacy

William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley

4.1.1 Introduction

‘The Intentional Fallacy’ is one of the most important position papers that heralds the core critical concerns of the New Critics, an important school of criticism during the first half of the 20th Century. The essay is co-authored by two noteworthy

critics – William Kurtz Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley. They have also written another position paper which is equally important – The Affective Fallacy. In ‘The Intentional Fallacy’, Wimsatt and Beardsley challenge the relevance of author’s intention in judging a literary text. The literary work is a public utterance and not the private. Therefore, its meaning is not dependent upon the intent or design of the author. Even though the critic knows the intention of the author, it may not be useful for the interpretation of the text.

Both Wimsatt and Beardsley have studied at Yale University and have many books to their credit. Wimsatt was earlier interested in 18th Century Studies and in this area, he has published some books like – *The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson* (1941) and *Philosophic Words: A Study of Style and Meaning in the “Rambler” and “Dictionary” of Samuel Johnson* (1943). However, he is known for his crucial contribution to literary theory and criticism – *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954), *Hateful Contraries: Studies in Literature and Criticism* (1965) and *Days of Leopards: Essays in Defense of Poem* (1976). Beardsley, completing his education at Yale University, was teaching literary criticism and aesthetics at Temple University. His books include – *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958) and *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (1966).

New Criticism: The term ‘New Criticism’ became popular with the publication of the book *The New Criticism* by John Crowe Ransom. The term is applied to the theory and practice of criticism that was prominent in America until 1960s. Many of the important tenets of the New Criticism are based on I. A. Richards’s books *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Practical Criticism* and also on the critical essays of T. S. Eliot. It specifically criticized the prevailing interest of the critics in the biography of the author, the social context of the text and literary history. The New Critics argued that the proper study of literary criticism is not the external circumstances of the text, but a detailed consideration of the work itself as an independent entity. Important critics of this school include – Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur and William K. Wimsatt.

4.1.2 Subject Matter:

In the present essay ‘The Intentional Fallacy’, which is divided into five parts, Wimsatt and Beardsley provide their critique of the concept of author’s intention. They criticize the romantic idea of poetry as ‘the expression of writer’s soul or

personality'. Wimsatt and Beardsley were influenced by the views of such critics as T. S. Eliot, John Crowe Ransom, Brooks and other New Critics and think poetry as an impersonal art, where only the text matters. They also criticize the literary historian for whom the biographical and historical information of the author is important for evaluating a poem. On the other hand, Wimsatt and Beardsley think that one must focus on the organization of the words on the page and the coherence that the words do or do not possess. They further think that whatever the intention of the author, he will try to successfully communicating it in the poem itself. Therefore, if the poem is able to communicate the intention of the author, it is successful; otherwise, it is not.

Section I

The basic claim of the essay is encapsulated in the debate regarding the importance of author's intention (in composing a poem) in the process of the critic's judgment of the poem. Wimsatt and Beardsley refer to this contemporary debate which has been popularized by the book of Prof Lewis and Tillyard - *The Personal Heresy: A Controversy*, and implicitly in the periodical essays published in the *Southern* and *Kenyon Reviews*. Wimsatt and Beardsley have already written a short article entitled 'Intention' for a Dictionary of Literary Criticism, in which they wrote "the design or the intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art."

Wimsatt and Beardsley use the word 'intention' in the following sense:

'Intention' . . . corresponds to *what he intended* in a formula which more or less explicitly has had wide acceptance. "In order to judge the poet's performance, we must know *what he intended*." Intention or design or plan in the author's mind. Intention has obvious affinities for the author's attitude toward his work, the way he felt, what made him write.

As is clear from the passage, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, the word 'intention' corresponds to (1) what the author intended, (2) design or plan in the author's mind, (3) the author's attitude toward his work and (4) the way the author felt that made him write. The first two meanings are quite close, related to text, but the next two meaning seem somewhat broader in scope. However, it is always better to keep in mind all the four meanings of the word in order to understand the total essay.

Wimsatt and Beardsley begin their discussion with the following five propositions which are self evident:

(1) A poem does not come into existence by accident. The Words of a poem, as Professor Stoll has remarked, come out of a head, not out of a hat. Yet to insist on the designing intellect as a *cause* of a poem is not to grant the design or intention as a *standard*.

(2) One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention. How is he to find out what the poet tried to do? If the poet succeeded in doing it, then the poem itself shows what he was trying to do. And if the poet did not succeed, then the poem is not adequate evidence, and the critic must go outside the poem – for evidence of an intention that did not become effective in the poem. “Only one *caveat* must be borne in mind”, says an eminent intentionalist (J. E. Spingarn) in a moment when his theory repudiates itself; “the poet’s aim must be judged at the moment of the creative act, that is to say, by the art of the poem itself.”

(3) Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work. It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of an artificer. “A poem should not mean but be.”(American poet, Archibald MacLeish) A poem can ‘be’ only through its meaning – since its medium is words – yet *it is*, simply *is*, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant. Poetry is a feat of style by which a complex of meaning is handled all at once. Poetry succeeds because all or most of what is said or implied is relevant; what is irrelevant has been excluded, like lumps from pudding and “bugs” from machinery. In this respect poetry differs from practical messages, which are successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention. They are more abstract than poetry.

(4) The meaning of a poem may certainly be a personal one, in the sense that a poem expresses a personality or state of soul rather than a physical object like an apple. But even a short lyric poem is dramatic, the response of a speaker (no matter how abstractly conceived) to a situation (no matter how universalized). We ought to impute the thoughts and attitudes of the poem immediately to the dramatic *speaker*, and if to the author at all, only by a biographical act of inference.

(5) If there is any sense in which an author, by revision, has better achieved his original intention, it is only the very abstract, tautological, sense that he intended to write a better work and now has done it. (In this sense every author’s intention is the same.) His former specific intention was not his intention. “He’s the man we were in search of, that’s true”; says Hardy’s rustic constable, “and yet he’s not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search was not the man we wanted.”

In all these propositions, Wimsatt and Beardsley had repeatedly asserted that though the poet is the creator of the poem, it comes out of his head. He had some plans and designs while composing it, still these things do not matter in the critical inquiry. A critic, however he tries hard, will not be able to reach to the intention of the poet. Moreover, even though he is able to get the intentions of the author, what is its relevance to the text, for it will not change the basic meaning of the poem. Therefore, the critic should focus his attention on the text, the poem itself, because if the poet has succeeded in reflecting his plan / design in the poem, the poem is self reflective and it will reveal its meaning.

In this context, Professor Stall says that the poem is not critic's own; but, he / she has diagnosed it accurately.

Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that the poem is neither of the critic nor of the author; the poem belongs to the public, 'it is embodied in language (the possession of the public) and it is about the human beings. Therefore, the poem is subjected to the same scrutiny as any statement in linguistics. In his book *Principles of Literary Criticism*, I A Richards calls the poem a *class*, "a class of experiences which do not differ in any character more than a certain amount . . . from a standard experience." He further writes: "We may talk as this standard experience the relevant experience of the poet when contemplating the completed composition." It means, for Richards, the standard experience is what the poet thinks of his own poem after it is completed. Thus he has made the poet a reader of his own poem and his reading as the standard experience. However, For Professor Wellek, the poem is 'a system of norms', 'extracted from every individual experience'. Here Wellek objects to Richards' view 'poet as reader'. Wimsatt and Beardsley also agree with Wellek's views.

After reading Wimsatt and Beardsley article published in the Dictionary, Mr Anand K. Coomaraswamy distinguishes between two kinds of enquiry about a work of art: (1) whether the artist achieved his intentions; (2) whether the work of art "ought ever to have been undertaken at all" and so "whether it is worth preserving." For Coomaraswamy, number (1) is artistic criticism, while number (2) is moral criticism. However, Wimsatt and Beardsley object to Coomaraswamy's views and argue that the inquiry in number (2) is more important than in number (1) and therefore, number (2) should be treated as artistic criticism.

Section II

For Wimsatt and Beardsley, intentional fallacy is romantic, i.e. this is not empirical but analytic judgment; not historical but a definitional. Considered from this point, the views of the first century AD critic, Longinus (in his book *On the Sublime*) ‘sublimity is the echo of a great soul’, is to be considered as romantic in a special sense. To prove this point further, Wimsatt and Beardsley take into account the views of Goethe and Benedetto Croce. Goethe asks three questions about ‘constructive criticism’:

1. What did the author set out to do?
2. Was his plan reasonable and sensible?
3. How far did he succeed in carrying it out?

According to Wimsatt and Beardsley, the first and the last questions of Goethe point to the culmination and crowning philosophical expression of romanticism of Croce.

The beautiful is the successful intuition-experience, and the ugly is the unsuccessful; the intuition or private part of the art is the aesthetic fact, and the medium or public part is not the subject of aesthetic at all.

Croce’s approach is that of historical interpretations which he argues helps to reintegrate ‘the psychological conditions which have changed in the course of history’ and also enables to see a work of art *as its author saw it*.

However, Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that Croce’s ‘ambiguous emphasis on history’ can lead to two things: (1) a critic may write a close analysis of the meaning of ‘spirit’ of a play (a close historical study but it remains aesthetic criticism) or (2) may write sociology, biography or other kinds of non-aesthetic history. Croce’s approach has given boost to the second type.

After referring to two critics (Spingarn and Bosanquet), Wimsatt and Beardsley close this section with the views of another two critics – I. A. Richards and Allen Tate. Richards provides fourfold distinction of meaning – ‘sense’, ‘feeling’, ‘tone’ and ‘intention’. Wimsatt and Beardsley think that Richards’ distinction is ‘the most influential statement of intentionalism during the last fifteen years’.

Section III

In this section, Wimsatt and Beardsley discuss the various views expressed by scholars regarding the value of poet's views or opinions.

For Socrates (Plato's *Apology*) poets are the best commentators of their own poetry. Further he asserts that poets do not write poetry with wisdom, but with a sort of genius and inspiration.

The most inspirational and the most affectionately remembered criticism has been produced by the poets themselves. Whatever the poets can say that cannot be said by the analyst or a professor. For example,

For John Keats, poetry should come as naturally as leaves to a tree

For Lord Byron, poetry is the lava of imagination

William Wordsworth thinks that poetry is emotions recollected in tranquillity.

However, Wimsatt and Beardsley advise that it is necessary to check the character and authority of such testimony for it is very difficult to identify romantic expressions from the earnest advice given by the authors.

Similar opinion has also been expressed by Houseman in his *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (1933). Houseman gives an eloquent confession of how poems are written: "Drink a pint of beer, relax, go yourself, search for the truth in your own soul, listen to the sound of your own inside voice, discover and express the *vraie verite* (true truth)"

However, these and such advices for composing poems cannot be called criticism; Wimsatt and Beardsley propose the term 'psychology of composition' to refer to them. Therefore, Wimsatt and Beardsley argue, Coleridge and Arnold were both poets and critics. But their critical tendency dried up their poetry. Their example thus shows that 'judgment of poems is different from the art of producing them'. It is quite possible that, Wimsatt and Beardsley assert, the 'psychology of composition' will be unified with the science of 'objective evaluation'; but when the essay was written, they were treated separate.

Professor Curt Ducasse, a renowned theorist of expression, thinks that production of art involves 'the conscious objectification of feeling', whereby the artist tries to disown the self. However, neither Professor Ducasse nor anybody else provides a mechanism of disowning or accepting the self. Therefore, Wimsatt and

Beardsley conclude the section with a statement: “The evaluation of a work of art remains public; the work is measured against something outside the author.”

Section IV

Mr Tillyard argues that the personal study of a poem is both distinct and parallel to the poetic studies. However, there is always a danger of confusing personal with the poetic studies. To avoid this, Wimsatt and Beardsley provide a distinction between the internal and external evidence for the meaning of a poem.

- (1) The verbal or the superficial part of the text is the internal evidence; it is also public. It is discovered through the semantics and syntax of a poem, through our habitual knowledge of the language, through grammars, dictionaries, and all that make a language and culture.
- (2) External evidence is private or idiosyncratic. It is not the part of the work of art as linguistic fact; it consists of revelations (in journals, or letters or reported conversation) about how or why the poet wrote the poem, to what lady while sitting on what lawn, or at the death of what friend or brother.
- (3) Intermediate evidence – it is about the character of the author or private or semi-private meanings attached to words or topics by an author or by a coterie (group) of which he is a member. Therefore, the meaning of the word is a type of history of the word while it also includes the associations *he* had for the word.

However, in the context of criticism, it is difficult to draw a line between evidence (2) and (3) for they shed into one another very subtly. The use of biographical evidence does not mean intentionalism, for it may also be the meaning of his words and dramatic character of his utterances. As a result, the critical comments produced with evidence (1) and (3) will be quite different from the one produced using evidence (2) and (3).

As an example of criticism bordering on evidence (2) and (3) or based on romantic reign of evidence (2), Wimsatt and Beardsley give views of Professor Lowes on *Kubla Khan*, a poem by Coleridge. He says, *Kubla Khan*:

“is a fabric of vision, but every image that rose up in its weaving had passed that way before. And it would seem that there is nothing haphazard or fortuitous in their return.”

Commenting on this, Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that for Professor Lowes, Coleridge has produced only *that he has read and experienced* and therefore the

value of the poem should be described in terms of the experiences on which the author had to draw.

In order to cite the example of criticism based on evidence (3), Wimsatt and Beardsley give the quote from Charles M. Coffin's book *John Donne and the New Philosophy* for the following quatrain from a well-known poem by Donne:

Moving of th' earth brings harmes and feares,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheares,
Through greater farre, is innocent

The quote from Coffin runs like the following:

. . . he touches the emotional pulse of the situation by a skillful allusion to the new and the old astronomy. . . . Of the new astronomy, the "moving of the earth" is the most radical principle; of the old, the "trepidation of the spheres" is the motion of the greatest complexity. . . . As the poem is a valediction forbidding mourning, the poet must exhort his love to quietness and calm upon his departure; and for this purpose the figure based upon the latter motion (trepidation), long absorbed into the traditional astronomy, fittingly suggests the tension of the moment without arousing the "harmes and feares" implicit in the figure of the moving earth.

These arguments of Coffin are based on a well-accepted thesis that Donne was deeply interested in the new astronomy and its repercussions in the theological realms. This is proved by the familiarity of Donne with books like Kepler's *De Stella Nova*, Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius*, William Gilbert's *De Magnete* and Clavius's commentary on the *De Sphaera* of Sacrobosco.

Section V

Wimsatt and Beardsley further argue that the distinction between the various types of evidence is equally important for both the historical critics (critics working on poets of the past) and also to the poets and the critics of the present. In this section, Wimsatt and Beardsley try to show the implications of these evidence for the poets and critics of the present. For the purpose they have taken the question 'allusiveness' (as to be constantly noted in Eliot's poems). The false judgments about the allusions are likely to involve intentional fallacy. The constant use of allusions by many modern poets has made many critics to go to James Frazer's *The Golden*

Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion and Elizabethan drama, for they thought that unless the critic knows what the poet has read it is not possible to understand its complete meaning. In regard to the allusions of Eliot, the stand taken by F O Matthiessen is sound one and partially foretells the difficulty. He argues that “Eliot’s allusions work when we know them – and to a great extent even when we do not know them, through their suggestive power.” Many allusions in the poetry of Eliot are supported by notes. In this connection Matthiessen says “nearly everything of importance . . . has been incorporated into the structure of the poem itself or into Eliot’s notes.”

Commenting on the views of Matthiessen on notes, Wimsatt and Beardsley write:

Ultimately the inquiry must focus on the integrity of such notes as part of the poem, for where they constitute special information about the meaning of phrases in the poem, they ought to be subject to the same scrutiny as any of the other words in which it is written.

It means, both the notes and the text should be analyzed for their implications. If at all a poet thinks of using the notes as an additional resource so that the readers of his poem do not get muffled, still the notes will be like “unassimilated material lying loose beside the poem, necessary for the meaning of the verbal symbol, but not integrated, so that the symbol stands incomplete.”

Wimsatt and Beardsley, however, are not against notes. But when notes are justified as the external indexes to the author’s *intention*, they need to be judged like any other part of the composition (i.e. the text). Such a judgment would question the reality of notes as the part of the poem or their imaginative integration to the rest of the poem. Matthiessen also asserts that Eliot’s title of the poems and his epigraphs are also informative apparatus, like his notes. In his notes, Eliot himself has justified his poetic practice in terms of intention in the following words:

The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. . . . The man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

In order to show the practical implications the above discussion regarding allusiveness in poems, Wimsatt and Beardsley take the example of Eliot’s poem *Love*

Song of J Alfred Prufrock. Towards the end of the poem, the line occurs – “I have heard the mermaids singing each to each.” This line has some resemblance to a line in ‘Song’, a poem by John Donne – “Teach me to hear mermaids singing”. The readers acquainted to Donne’s poem may ask the questions:

Is Eliot’s line an allusion to Donne’s?

Is Prufrock thinking about Donne?

Is Eliot thinking about Donne?

Wimsatt and Beardsley propose two answers to these questions. The first answer is given in the form of a question – whether it makes any sense if Eliot’s Prufrock is thinking about Donne? It means among other things, that the core meaning of the poem doesn’t change, even though the line has some resemblance to Donne’s. However, since Donne has used ‘mermaids’ as a symbol of romance and Dynamism, which can incidentally have literary authentication. This method of inquiry may lead to the conclusion that ‘the given resemblance between Eliot and Donne is without significance and is better not thought of. This method, according to Wimsatt and Beardsley, is the true and objective way of criticism. In the second type, the critic would undertake the biographical or genetic inquiry. If the poet is alive, the critic would write to the poet and ask what he meant. It is quite possible that Eliot or any other poet might say that he meant nothing at all, had nothing in his mind. Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that “such an answer to such an inquiry would have nothing to do with the poem ‘Prufrock’, it would not be a critical inquiry.” They further argue “critical inquiries . . . are not settled in this way. Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle.”

Conclusion

Many critics have argued that the essay is a very powerful argument regarding the fallacy of intention in the appreciation of a literary text. However, the position of Wimsatt and Beardsley also has some confusions. As an example, how convincing is the distinction that the authors draw between the inside and the outside of the text. They further insist that a poem is a public utterance and therefore, it does not depend on the private knowledge of the author or on the biography for its success. To refute this argument one can easily say, for example, that whatever the author says or whatever information of the author that the scholar collects are equally public. It is for this reason that critics like Kenneth Burke, E. D. Hirsch Jr., Harold Bloom and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have challenged the validity of the idea that a text

has discrete inside and outside meanings that clearly separate the private and the public. It therefore has to be accepted that though the distinction between the private and the public seem to be useful, it has not held up under attack.

The intentional fallacy also has its relevance in the pedagogical practices. Both the teacher and the students in the class can concentrate on the text at hand with the view that for its interpretation they do not require either information about the author or the historical period. In this regard, Wimsatt and Beardsley have expressed their views – ‘if the information about the author or period is relevant, it will be *in* the poem; if it is not realized in the poem already, then it is not relevant.’ Thus for Wimsatt and Beardsley, all references to psychology, social history and anthropology are extraneous and not relevant for the interpretation of the text. Still their claim creates certain pedagogical problems: In his books *Validity of Interpretation* (1967) and *The Aims of Interpretation* (1976) E. D. Hirsch challenges Wimsatt and Beardsley’s stand: “We have no way to determine which reading of a poem is correct”. The words on the page may generate many interpretations, and then the question will be which one of them is ‘original meaning’. The only way to answer this is to consult the author’s intention, says Hirsch.

In spite of all these criticisms, the fact remains that the essay has been one of the most important documents regarding the fallacy of author’s intention in the critical judgment of the text. Moreover, it is one of the core tenets of the school of New Criticism in general.

4.1.3 Check Your Progress:

1. Which book popularized the debate of author’s intention?
2. Who remarked that ‘the words of a poem come out of a head not a hat’?
3. Who says that ‘a poem should not mean but be’?
4. Who asserts that the poem belongs to public?
5. Why do Wimsatt and Beardsley refer the poem as belonging to the public?

4.1.4 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1. The Personal Heresy: A Controversy by Lewis and Tillyard
2. Professor Stoll
3. Archibald MacLeish, American poet
4. Wimsatt and Beardsley

5. For it is realized in language, which is the possession of the public and also because it is about human beings

4.1.5 Exercises

Short Notes

1. The five propositions proposed by Wimsatt and Beardsley about intention
2. The three types of evidence that the critic can use
3. Intention as a romantic idea
4. Psychology of Composition
5. Criticism of Intentional Fallacy

Broad Questions:

1. Discuss the views of Wimsatt and Beardsley about the Intentional Fallacy
2. Discuss intentional fallacy as a major tenet of New Criticism
3. Bring out the views of various scholars about the Intentional Fallacy.

4.1.6 Books for Reference:

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Jancovich, Mark. *The Cultural Politics of the New Criticism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Leitch, Vincent B. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York and London: Norton and Company, 2001.

Litz, A. Walton, Louis Menand, and Lawrence Rainey, eds. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Volume VII: Modernism and the New Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Ransom, John Crowe. *The World's Body*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, Routledge. Second Edition, 2006.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A Use-Friendly Guide*. New York and London: 1968.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.

SECTION II: TZVETAN TODOROV'S ESSAY "STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE"

Contents

- 4.2.0 Objectives
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4.2.0 Objectives:

The present section will discuss in detail the major critic Tzvetan Todorov's essay "Structural Analysis of Narrative" prescribed in the syllabus. Todorov employed structuralist method to analyse narrative structure. We will understand Todorov's argument regarding the goal of structural analysis of narrative and his theory of narrative equilibrium that he explains through analysis of a few stories from Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

1. What Todorov means by the theoretical approach and the descriptive approach to literature,

2. How Todorov contrasts structural analysis with Marxist and psychoanalytic thought,
3. Todorov's arguments regarding using the term "science" with regard to literature and how he tackles protests such as that of Henry James,
4. Todorov's structural analysis of plot using the stories from Boccaccio's *The Decameron*,
5. Todorov's grammatical interpretation involving analysis of how the clause corresponds to the plot
6. His summation of the plots of *The Decameron* as a move from one equilibrium to another,
7. Contribution of Todorov to structuralism and to the study of narrative in particular.

4.2.1 A short introduction to Tzvetan Todorov

Tzvetan Todorov (1939 –2017), a French-Bulgarian scholar, was a historian, philosopher, structuralist literary critic, sociologist, essayist and geologist. He wrote numerous books and essays which have influenced a variety of fields such as anthropology, sociology, semiotics, literary theory, intellectual history and culture theory. He studied under Roland Barthes in the 1960s. A pre-eminent French structuralist, he started outlining a "narrative grammar" in his *Grammaire du Décameron* (1969) and elaborated it further in his later work *Poetics of Prose* (1971).

As The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism (Leitch, 2018:2771-72) says, Todorov's work falls into three periods.

- a) Phase 1: the Structuralist phase which includes his works such as *Grammar of the Decameron*, *The Fantastic*, *The Poetics of Prose*, etc.)
- b) Phase 2: Todorov turned from questions of structure to those of interpretation as in *Theories of the Symbol*, *Symbolism and Interpretation*, *Genres in Discourse*, and *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*.
- c) Phase 3: Todorov took up broader issues of culture, social history, and politics, for example, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, *The Morals of History*, *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps*, *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations* and *The Inner Enemies of Democracy*.

Tzvetan Todorov is considered one of the fundamental figures in French structuralism. He advocated the scientific study of narrative based on linguistics. The editors of Norton Anthology say about him the following:

“He was responsible for renewing attention to the narrative theory put forth in the early twentieth century by the Russian formalists, such as Boris Eichenbaum and Viktor Shklovsky, and for an effort, with his mentor Roland Barthes, to establish a universal “grammar” of narrative. In “Structural Analysis of Narrative” (1969), Todorov presents a condensed manifesto for the narratological approach.” (Leitch, 2018: 1916)

4.2.3 Tzvetan Todorov and Russian Formalism, Czech Formalism and French Structuralism

Todorov introduced French readers to Russian Formalism through his translations from the Russian in the collection entitled *Théorie de la littérature, textes des formalistes russes* (1965). So it is essential not only to see his connection with Narratology and Structuralism but also with Russian and Czech Formalism.

Todorov was a Bulgarian and had come to Paris in the 1960s to study with Roland Barthes. Formalism and the French Structuralism of the 1960s sought to apply Ferdinand de Saussure’s ideas about language and structure to works of literature. Todorov’s translations of the Formalist work from Russian were instrumental in bringing these two movements together and in paving the way for the new field of narratology.

Russian Formalism, a movement that barely lasted sixteen years was so influential that it paved the way for the development of structuralism and the study of narrative. It emerged through the work of a group of scholars based in St. Petersburg and Moscow from about 1915 to 1930. The Formalists had to move to Prague during Stalin’s rule in the 1930s. Referred to as Prague Linguistic Circle or Czech Formalism, it developed more explicitly structuralist aspects related to all kinds of sign systems, including literature. Roman Jakobson was instrumental in bringing about the change from formalism to a structuralism which could deal with both the synchronic and diachronic aspects of literature.

The Russian Formalists introduced a new way of looking at literature. They aimed at developing a ‘science of literature’ through a systematic study of the structure of literary form. The Russian Formalists felt that the earlier theories were

vague and so rejected the trend of looking at literature as something that is mysterious, waiting to be deciphered. The Formalists rejected the use of biological, psychological and sociological explanation in the study of literature and saw literature as an autonomous verbal art. They stressed that literature and life are different and hence they focused on the ‘medium’ to understand how literature alters common language to make it strange. This estranged language, forces the reader to look at the everyday world from a different perspective. Thus, literary language ‘defamiliarizes’ the everyday world. Later this thought was further refined through the concept of ‘foregrounding’.

Formalism was instrumental in furthering work in three areas – the narrative, the literary-historical process, and ‘Genre’. The formalist work on *fabula* (the story) and *sujet* (the plot) was instrumental in the development of narratology. The story is the events in their chronological sequence, while the plot selects and arranges the events of the story and is the narrative.

Norton anthology describes this development thus:

“The 1960s witnessed a flourishing of structuralism in fields as diverse as anthropology, psychology, philosophy, and literature. Influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) as well as by contemporary linguists, structuralists applied the scientific model of linguistics to other aspects of human culture, seeking to chart their underlying structures and rules. For instance, fashion or courtship rituals might be seen as operating according to their own distinctive codes. The Saussurean model treats words and other minimal linguistic elements not as freestanding units but as components of a larger, abstract system; the overall system of language rather than individual speech utterances thus becomes the primary object of analysis. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss became famous for applying structuralist methods to the analysis of the myths and rituals of the primitive societies he observed, and his “Structural Analysis of Myth” (1958) provided an influential early example for work in literary studies. Defining literary study as one of the “human sciences” instead of a humanistic pursuit, structuralist critics aimed to describe and categorize the systematic operation of literature, whose general codes were exhibited and instantiated in individual literary works.” (Leitch, 2018: 1917)

4.2.4 The Essay – Structural Analysis of Narrative

The essay in a nutshell:

The essay brings together the important tenets of Todorov's books *Grammar of The Decameron* (1969) and *Poetics of Prose* (1971). It seeks to develop a "poetics," that is, a theoretical study of literary techniques and categories.

In the very beginning of the essay Todorov distinguishes his kind of structural analysis from the Anglo-American New Criticism. While both kinds of structuralisms focus on internal literary features of works rather than on external concerns such as historical context and psychology, Todorov notes that the New Criticism deals only with the individual work. The structuralist method, on the other hand, seeks to understand the overall system of which the work is a part. Todorov's structuralism is not interested in individual tales of Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. It is more interested in the abstract plot structures that are common to all these tales. For Todorov, as editors of Norton Anthology (Leitch, 2018: 1917) summarise,

"The New Critical method results only in paraphrase and thus does not create new knowledge; the structuralist method, in contrast, charts the systematic laws and patterns that generate literary works. It therefore yields a scientific knowledge of literature, as physics yields a scientific knowledge of the laws of nature, or as linguistics yields a scientific knowledge of the laws of language."

In this structural analysis, plot is 'the central abstract structure' to be analysed.

"Following Aristotle's view of plot as the prime category of tragedy, Todorov (and narratology in general) takes plot as the central abstract structure of narrative, analyzing the hundred tales in the *Decameron* on the basis of the similarity of their plots. They lead him to the insight that plot moves from an equilibrium to a disequilibrium—hence the action of the narrative—and concludes in a new equilibrium, which displays either "avoided punishment" or "conversion." (Leitch, 2018: 1917)

Todorov in his essay states, "All of the stories of the *Decameron* can be entered into this very broad schema" (Todorov, 2018: 1924)

The importance given to plot by Todorov shows the influence of the Russian formalists and especially of the folklorist Vladimir Propp. Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) identified a limited number of basic plot motifs or patterns common to folktales. Todorov uses the model of the sentence to designate the

specific elements of each plot, as subject, predicate, and adjective. In an effort to adopt the technical precision of linguistics, he discerns the “grammar” rather than semantic meaning of narrative.

Todorov notes in “Structural Analysis of Narrative,” poetics does not deny “the relation between literature and . . . social life” (Todorov, 2018: 1919); therefore it does not contradict “external” approaches, but serves a different purpose.

The essay in detail:

In the beginning of the essay Todorov describes the outline of the essay thus:

- a. An abstract description of the Structural approach to literature
- b. Illustration of the approach through concrete problem of narrative – specifically the plot – through an analysis of some stories from Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*
- c. General conclusions about the nature of narrative and the principles of its analysis

For ease of understanding, let’s follow the same outline to understand his arguments regarding structural analysis of narrative.

A. Structural Approach:

Todorov begins by differentiating between the theoretical and descriptive approaches to literature and states in clear terms that the nature of structural approach is ‘theoretical and non-descriptive’ and the focus of the structural analysis is an understanding of the abstract structure of the work:

“The nature of structural analysis will be essentially theoretical and non-descriptive; in other words, the aim of such a study will never be the description of a concrete work. The work will be considered as the manifestation of an abstract structure, merely one of its possible realizations; an understanding of that structure will be the real goal of structural analysis” (Todorov, 2018:1918)

Then Todorov turns to the opposite perspectives of looking at literature: the internal and the external approach. He cites Marxism and psychoanalysis as external approaches as they are interested in understanding the abstract (social or psychic) structure of the work and not in the work itself. So, these approaches are both theoretical and external and not internal like the approach of New Criticism which aims to understand the work itself. According to Todorov the attempts of the New

Critic thus produces only a paraphrase of the work itself and doesn't contribute to an understanding of the abstract structure of the work.

Then Todorov proceeds to differentiate Structural analysis from both these approaches. His arguments are summarised in the following table:

New Criticism	Marxism/ Psychoanalysis	Structural Analysis
Interested in the pure description of the work	Interested in the understanding of an abstract structure (social or psychological)	Interested in proposing a theory of the structure and operation of the literary discourse
Object is the text itself	Object is the social or psychic structure	Object is the literary discourse, theory, poetics of literature; both poetics and description as complementary activities
Produces a paraphrase of the work that reveals the meaning of the text	Produces an understanding of the social or psychic structure that manifests through the text	Proposes a theory of the structure and operation of the literary discourse Discovers in each work what it has in common with others (as in study of genres, study of periods), or even with all other works (theory of literature)
Internal approach	External approach	Internal but moving constantly from abstract literary properties to individual works and vice versa

Todorov then establishes the affinity of this structural approach with the modern notion of science and says that this kind of analysis is propaedeutic – that is – preliminary knowledge essential for further study. However, as there are many

objections raised against using the term “scientific” in relation to literature, he first addresses some of these objections.

1. Todorov first takes up Henry James’s argument put forth in his famous essay ‘The Art of Fiction’ where James is critical of literary critics who use terms like ‘dialogue’, ‘description’, ‘narration’, etc., on two counts- first, these are never present as pure dialogue, pure narration, pure description and so on and secondly, these terms are unnecessary or even harmful as the novel is “a living thing, all one and continuous”. Todorov dismisses both the objections on the following grounds: there is no need to find concepts like “description” or “action”, etc., in a pure state. Abstract concepts cannot be analyzed directly, at the level of empirical reality. A property such as temperature in Physics cannot be isolated by itself. It has to be observed in bodies possessing many other qualities such as resistance and volume. Temperature is a theoretical concept, and it does not need to exist in a pure state; such is also true for concepts such as “description” or “action”, etc. The same is true of Biology too. The fact that blood, nerves, muscles are present together in any part of the body doesn’t mean that they can’t be distinguished from each other.

2. Todorov then tackles the popular argument that science must be objective and the interpretation of literature is always subjective. He sees this opposition between science and interpretation of literature as very crude and untenable. The critic’s work on a piece of literature has varying degrees of subjectivity. The degree of subjectivity mostly depends on the perspective chosen by the critic and the strata of the work analysed. An analysis of the metrical or phonic level of a poem will have less degree of subjectivity than that discussing the nature of images in the same work. An analysis of the semantic patterns of the poem will have more subjectivity than both these.

3. Todorov further argues that no social science (and even science) is free of subjectivity completely. All social scientists – be it a linguist, anthropologist or economist – is subjective to some extent but “they try to limit this subjectivity, to make allowance for it within the theory. One can hardly attempt to repudiate the subjectivity of the social sciences at a time when even the natural sciences are affected by it.” (Todorov: 1921).

After refuting the objections used against using the term “scientific” in relation with literary analysis, Todorov in the next part of the essay goes on to exemplify his structural analysis method

B. Structural Analysis of plots of some stories from Boccaccio's *The Decameron*:

Todorov chooses the abstract literary concept of plot for the analysis. He does this not because he regards plot the most important concept but because critics undervalue it whereas common readers consider a book as the narration of a plot. So he proposes to use terms such as action, character, recognition to analyse plot. He also chooses to use a few stories from Boccaccio's *The Decameron* to display the abstract literary concept – plot.

Todorov discusses specifically four stories from Boccaccio's *The Decameron* in the analysis - Story (I, 4), (IX, 2), (VII, 2) and (VII, 1). In the later part of this section he refers to another story – (I, 8)). So it is essential to first know some things about Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, its general organization and the stories referred to by Todorov.

Boccaccio's *The Decameron*:

The Decameron (1349-53) is written by the Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). Boccaccio is considered the greatest European prose writer of his time. *The Decameron* is considered by scholars as the text that changed the way prose was written in Italy and as foundation of Italian prose literature. Numerous authors from England and elsewhere – Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Christine de Pizan, John Keats, Edgar Allan Poe, Martin Luther – were inspired by *The Decameron*.

The word 'Decameron' is derived from Ancient Greek and means "Ten Days". It consists of 100 stories in all told by ten story tellers over a period of ten days. Each day each story teller tells one story thus making the number 100. The ten story tellers – seven young women and three young men- are residing in a secluded villa outside Florence to protect themselves from the Black Death epidemic. This epidemic, also called the Plague or the Pestilence, was a bubonic plague and is considered the most fatal epidemic in human history. It spread in Western Eurasia and North Africa from 1346 to 1353 killing about 40 to 60% of population of Europe. Even if none of the stories has internal reference to the plague, the book throws much light on the impact of the plague in Europe.

Boccaccio functions as the narrator only the preface and introduction of *The Decameron*. The rest of the work is a collection of frame stories. Each evening, to pass time, each member tells a story over the course of two weeks. Each of the ten

evenings, one member of the group is designated as King or Queen and decides on a theme and opens the day with an introduction, which is followed by 10 stories, each told by a different member of the group. The themes of these tales are love, wit, religion, trickery, life lessons, etc., and range from erotic to tragic shades.

Now let's look at the tales used by Todorov in his analysis. These are referred to as - Story (I, 4), (IX, 2), (VII, 2) and (VII, 1) – where “I, 4” refers to the 4th story on the 1st day and so on.

a) First Day, Fourth Story (I, 4) (Teller- Dioneo)

A young monk sneaks into his room a beautiful girl and while they are enjoying each other's company, the abbot walks past. The abbot decides to wait for good time to punish the monk.

But the monk guesses that probably abbot has understood that he had a girl in his room. He makes plan to save himself. He goes to the abbot and makes the excuse of completing the task of fetching firewood and goes outside the monastery. The abbot believes him and, while the monk is away, visits the monk's room. Feeling lust for the beautiful girl in the monk's room, he enjoys her company. Meanwhile, the monk who had expected something like this would happen has come back and has watched them together in bed. The abbot leaves the room and is waiting to scold the monk but the monk lets the abbot know he has seen the whole encounter. The abbot is now ashamed and knows that the monk has outwitted him. He now helps the monk sneak out the girl out of the monastery secretly. The narrator drops it that the monk and the abbot bring the girl back into the monastery whenever they wish.

b) Ninth Day, Second Story (IX, 2) (Teller – Elissa)

Isabetta, a nun, has an affair with a young man. One night other nuns see him leaving from her room. The nuns feel it will be better if the abbess herself sees Isabetta during the act instead of merely reporting the incident to her. So they keep a watch on Isabetta and when the young man visits her again, they go to fetch the abbess. However, the abbess herself has sneaked into her room her lover. When the nuns come to call her, the abbess has to dress up in the darkness and by mistake puts on her head her lover's pants instead of her veil. She is led to Isabetta's room by the nuns who in their excitement fail to notice what the abbess is wearing. However, when the abbess starts reprimanding Isabetta in front of all the nuns, Isabetta points out to everybody that the abbess herself is wearing a man's pants as a veil on her

head. The abbess understands that everyone now knows what she has up to and asks the nuns to be discreet about such acts.

Seventh Day, Second Story (VII, 2) (Teller- Filostrato)

Peronella is a beautiful young woman married to a poor man in Naples. A young man named Giannello Scrignario falls in love with her beauty and they start an affair. The young man starts visiting her after Peronella's husband leaves for work.

One day, however, the husband returns home earlier than expected and at that time Giannello is with Peronella. Peronella before opening the door for her husband makes Giannello hide in a barrel. She castigates her husband for not finding work for the day. He tells her that there is no work to be found as it is the Festival of Saint Galeone. However to have some money he has bargained with man to sell the barrel they have for five silver pieces and brought home the man to see the barrel.

Clever Peronella does some quick thinking and tells her husband that she just sold the barrel for seven silver pieces and the buyer is at the moment inspecting the barrel from inside. Peronella's husband is happy and asks the man with him to leave and goes to the barrel. Giannello has overheard everything and pretends to be the buyer of the barrel. Now he says that the barrel is dirty, he demands that it be cleaned before he takes it. Peronella orders her husband to clean it. While her husband cleans the barrel, Giannello enjoys carnal pleasure. He pays her husband the money when the barrel is clean and makes her husband take the barrel to his home.

Seventh Day, First Story (VII, 1) (Teller- Emilia)

Gianni Lotteringhi's wife Monna Tessa has a secret lover Federigo who visits her when Gianni isn't home. One night, Gianni is home and Federigo knocks on their bedroom door. Monna Tessa convinces her husband it's a werewolf knocking. She tells him that she has an effective prayer that makes the werewolf go away. She says the prayer aloud which is actually a warning to Federigo that her husband is with her. Federigo gets the message and leaves while Gianni is completely unaware of what has happened. Later, Monna Tessa and Federigo laugh over her prayer.

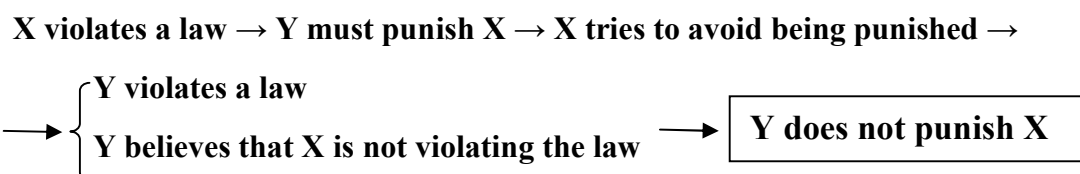
First Day, Eighth Story (I, 8) (Teller- Lauretta)

A rich Genoese man named Ermino de' Grimaldi is an extreme miser. A visiting courtier Guiglielmo Borsiere hears of this and visits Grimaldi. Grimaldi seeks Guiglielmo's advice on the painting he should commission to decorate his hall. Grimaldi plans to have on the wall something no one has ever seen. Guiglielmo can't

suggest something totally new; however, he says he can suggest something that Grimaldi hasn't ever seen: generosity. Grimaldi gets his lesson from this and becomes the most generous man in Genoa from that day.

Todorov's analysis:

Todorov says that there is something in common between these plots. In fact, there are many similar stories in *The Decameron* with common elements. Todorov expresses this common element in a schematic way:



The sign → will indicate a relation of entailment between two actions.

C. General conclusions about the nature of narrative and principles of analysis:

Todorov gives eight explanations to this schematic representation.

1. The minimal schema of the plot can be considered as equivalent to a clause. There is similarity between the categories of language and the categories of narrative.
2. Todorov shows how each narrative 'clause' contains an agent / subject and a predicate that may consist of a verb (an action which will modify the preceding situation) and / or an adjective / epithet which describes the former.

He says that an analysis of the narrative clause leads us to discover the existence of two entities which correspond to the "parts of speech" – **the agent** (the initiator or the doer of an action) and **the predicate** (the words in a sentence or clause that describe the action). Todorov (1922) says:

- a. "The agents, designated here by X and Y, correspond to proper nouns. They serve as subject or object of the clause; moreover, they permit identification of their reference without its being described" (1922)
- b. "The predicate, which is always a verb here: violate, punish, avoid. The verbs have a semantic characteristic in common: they denote an action which modifies the preceding situation" (1922).

- c. "An analysis of other stories would have shown us a third part of narrative speech, which corresponds to quality and does not alter the situation in which it appears: the adjective. Thus in (I, 8), at the beginning of the action Ermino is stingy, whereas Guillaume is generous. Guillaume finds a way to ridicule Ermino's stinginess, and since then Ermino is "the most generous and pleasant of gentlemen." The qualities of the two characters are examples of adjectives" (1922).
3. Actions (for example, violate, punish, etc.) can have a positive or a negative form. So Todorov points out the need to have the category of positive or negative status.
4. Todorov introduces one more relevant category - modality. Each clause possesses a particular modality (e.g. the indicative or the imperative). Modalities differ from each other by the fact that they refer to actions that have actually transpired (the indicative) or exist in potentiality. Todorov explains:

"When we say "X must punish Y," we denote thereby an action which has not yet taken place (in the imaginary universe of the story) but which is nonetheless present in a virtual state" (Todorov: 1922).

He also refers to the work of André Jolles which suggests that entire genres could be characterized by their mood, for example, legends may be characterised by the imperative (as they offer an example to follow) or, the fairy tale by the optative (as they express the fulfilled wish).
5. Todorov further says that every clause also contains a particular perspective. Todorov says the verb "believe" in "Y believes that X is not violating the law" is different because of perception or point of view and not because of a different action. "It is not a question of a different action here but of a different perception of the same action We could therefore speak of a kind of "point of view" which refers not only to the relation between reader and narrator, but also to the characters" (1922-23). In simple terms, the clause may be about the same action seen from different 'points of view' of narrator and character/s.
6. The analysis of the stories shows that relations between clauses are identifiable. For example, the relation could be of succession (temporal) or could be such that one causes the other to happen (causal) or may involve parallelism (spatial).
7. Todorov talks about the arrangement of the clauses in a sequential order:

“An organized succession of clauses forms a new syntagmatic pattern, sequence. Sequence is perceived by the reader as a finished story; it is the minimal narrative in a completed form. This impression of completion is caused by a modified repetition of the initial clause; the first and the last clause will be identical but they will either have a different mood or status, for instance, or they will be seen from different points of view. In our example it is punishment which is repeated: first changed in modality, and then denied. In a sequence of temporal relations, repetition can be total. (1923)

That is, the sequential or syntagmatic development of the clauses forms a sequence. This sometimes could be the entire narrative, sometimes part of the narrative. Sequence is seen by the reader as the finished story and that is due to the repetition of the initial clause at the end in a modified way (it may have a different mood or status, etc.

8. Todorov asks the question – “How does one get from the abstract, schematic representation to the individual tale?” and offers three answers:
 - (a) A more concrete analysis of the structure of the narrative - of each clause of the sequence can be attempted. This will make the analysis more specific or general. So this will not basically change the nature of the analysis, but only the level of generality.
 - (b) A study of the concrete actions (for example, the different laws that get violated and the different punishments given in the stories of the Decameron) would lead to a thematic study.
 - (c) A study of the language of the book - the dialogue or description, figurative or literal discourse, etc. – will be a rhetorical study.

Todorov summarises these three directions thus:

“These three directions correspond to the three major categories of narrative analysis: study of narrative syntax, study of theme, study of rhetoric” (Todorov, 1923).

By analysing the plot of the stories from Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*, Todorov reaches the important argument that Boccaccio’s narratives move from one state of equilibrium or ecological balance, to another. This argument and the preceding analysis anticipated his narrative theory of equilibrium. Todorov extended his structural analysis of Boccaccio in his later work *The Two Principles of Narrative*

(1971) in which he hypothesised that all narratives contain the same five elements - equilibrium, disequilibrium, recognition, resolution, and new equilibrium.

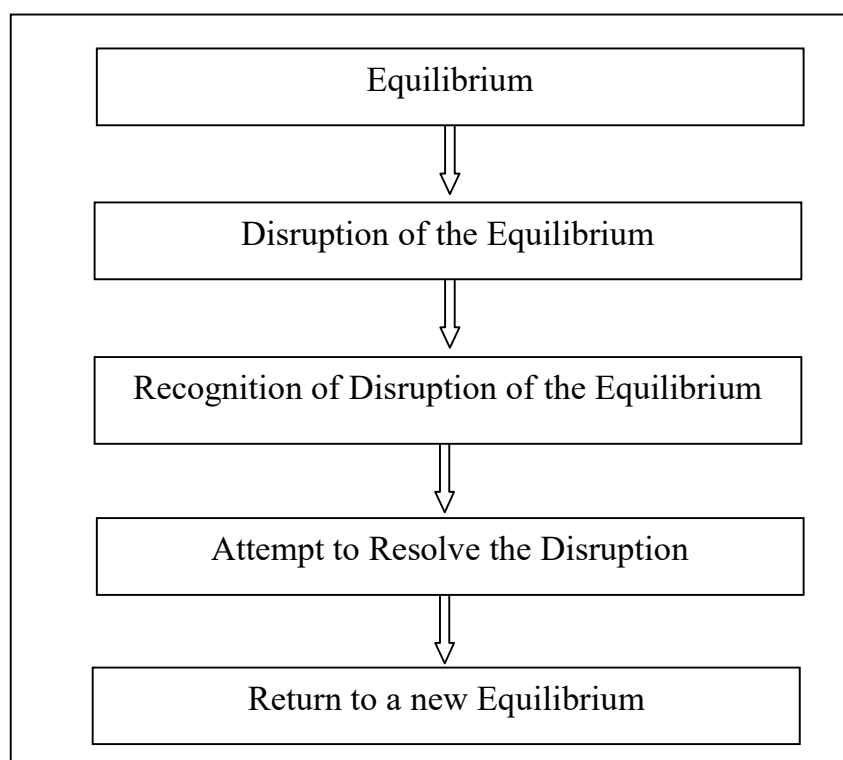


Figure 1: Equilibrium in a narrative according to Todorov

In *The Two Principles of Narrative*, Todorov analysed a Russian fairy tale ‘The Magic Swan Geese’ (Story number 113 in Alexander Afanasyev’s collection). He states that other texts such as *The Decameron*, Arthurian legend, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, and Henry James’s *In the Cage* also display this narrative model and the same five elements.

Boccaccio’s narratives move from one state of equilibrium, or ecological balance, to another. Todorov claims:

“The minimal complete plot can be seen as the shift from one equilibrium to another. This term “equilibrium,” which I am borrowing from genetic psychology, means the existence of a stable but not static relation between the members of a society; it is a social law, a rule of the game, a particular system of exchange. The two moments of equilibrium, similar and different, are separated by a period of

imbalance, which is composed of a process of degeneration and a process of improvement.

All of the stories of the Decameron can be entered into this very broad schema” (Todorov, 1924)

However, within this broad schema, there are two kinds of stories in *The Decameron*:

1. Stories where punishment is avoided: He labels them as “avoided punishment”. Stories (I,4), (IX,2), (VII, 2) and (VII, 1) are of this kind. They follow a complete cycle: there is a state of equilibrium which is broken by a violation of the law. Punishment would have restored the initial balance; the fact that punishment is avoided establishes a new equilibrium.
2. Stories involving conversion of a character: he labels these stories as “conversion”. The story which is about Ermino (I,8) is an example of this kind. “This story begins in the middle of a complete cycle, with a state of imbalance created by a flaw in one of the characters. The story is basically the description of an improvement process—until the flaw is no longer there” (Todorov, 1924).

He further says,

“The categories which help us to describe these types tell us much about the universe of a book. With Boccaccio, the two equilibriums symbolize (for the most part) culture and nature, the social and the individual; the story usually consists in illustrating the superiority of the second term over the first” (Todorov, 1924).

Audiences cannot recognise a narrative unless it contains the sequential developments that typify the genre. This plot type comprises “the imaginary universe of [a] book”. In this imaginary universe, culture, nature, society and subjectivity intersect and structural analysis acknowledges that the social norms and literary conventions that influence a book and so have influenced *The Decameron* too.

Finally Todorov returns to the question – What is the object of structural analysis of literature? He says it seems it has to be literature, or literariness (reference to Jakobson’s work). But on closer inspection, he says, it is rather an image of literature: “From this perspective, literature becomes only a mediator, a language, which poetics uses for dealing with itself (Todorov, 1924). However, he is quick to add that literature is not secondary to poetics. He says both poetics and literature involve a continuous movement between two poles – auto reference and object:

“Poetics, like literature, consists of an uninterrupted movement back and forth between the two poles: the first is auto-reference, preoccupation with itself; the second is what we usually call its object” (Todorov, 1924).

4.2.5 Contribution of Todorov to Narratology:

Todorov’s work is considered a major contribution to narratology. As we have seen earlier, it was Todorov who gave the name ‘narratology’ to the study of the narrative. His writing on detective fiction and other early books strongly influenced subsequent work on narrative by Gerald Genette and Gerald Prince.

Tzvetan Todorov made significant contributions to the field of narratology, particularly through his concept of the "narrative equilibrium." According to Todorov, narratives typically begin with an initial state of equilibrium, where characters and their world are established. This equilibrium is disrupted by an event or conflict, leading to a state of disequilibrium. The narrative then follows the characters' journey to restore equilibrium or reach a new equilibrium.

Todorov's theory of narrative equilibrium has been influential in understanding the structure and dynamics of narratives. It highlights the importance of conflict and resolution in storytelling, and how narratives engage readers by creating suspense and anticipation for the resolution of the initial disruption.

In addition to his work on narrative structure, Todorov also explored the concept of the fantastic in literature. He proposed that the fantastic genre exists on the border between the real and the supernatural, where readers are uncertain about the nature of the events or entities portrayed. Todorov's analysis of the fantastic genre has been widely discussed and has influenced the study of speculative fiction.

Todorov's contributions to narratology have enriched our understanding of narrative structure, conflict, and the fantastic genre. His theories continue to be studied and applied in literary analysis and storytelling.

4.2.6 Check your progress:

1. The essay "Structural Analysis of Narrative” belongs to the phase of his work.
2. Tzvetan Todorov was a philosopher and historian. Say if this statement is true or false.

3. The essay “Structural Analysis of Narrative” brings together the important tenets of Todorov’s books..... and
4. Which two structuralisms focus on internal literary features of works according to Todorov?
5. According to Todorov, what is the only output of using the New Critical method to analyse literature?
6. What is the ‘central abstract structure’ in Todorov’s analysis?
7. Which method of analysing literature is characterised as ‘Internal but moving constantly from abstract literary properties to individual works and vice versa’ by Todorov?
8. Name the critic who is the author of ‘The Art of Fiction’.
9. Who is the teller/ narrator of the First Day, Fourth Story (I, 4)?
10. What are the two kinds of stories in *The Decameron* according to Todorov?
11. Who is critical of using terms like ‘dialogue’, ‘description’, ‘narration’ in literary analysis according to Todorov?
12. Who is the teller/ narrator of the First Day, Eighth Story (I, 8)?
13. What are the two poles between which there is an uninterrupted movement of literature and poetics?
14. According to Todorov, the two equilibriums in the work of Boccaccio generally symbolize and
15. The stories of Boccaccio, according to Todorov, illustrate the superiority of which of the terms from ‘the social and the individual’ equilibriums?

4.2.7 Summary

Todorov's essay "Structural Analysis of Narrative" expounds the fundamental elements and structure of narratives. Todorov emphasizes the importance of analyzing the narrative structure. Todorov compares Structuralism with other approaches to literature. He says that the structuralist approach is distinct from the internal work (looking at itself) of the New Critics, as well as the external work of Marxism or Psychoanalysis (looking at the external society or the surrounding the text). He argues structural analysis is “theoretical and non-descriptive” and internal. Structuralism looks at both the internal and the external and goes to the structure

underneath the text and applies it to literature as a whole. He also addresses some of the objections raised to applying scientific principles to literary criticism.

Todorov applies narrative theory to plots of four stories from Boccaccio's *Decameron* and finds a schematic representation that applies to all the four. Todorov defines "three major categories of narrative analysis: study of narrative syntax, study of theme, study of rhetoric".

In this essay, Todorov proposes a framework for understanding narratives through a sequence of events that involve a disruption of equilibrium, a series of actions to restore the equilibrium, and the establishment of a new equilibrium.

4.2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Structuralist phase
2. True
3. *Grammar of The Decameron* (1969) and *Poetics of Prose* (1971)
4. Anglo-American New Criticism and Structural Analysis of Narrative
5. paraphrase
6. plot
7. Structural Analysis of literature
8. Henry James
9. Dioneo
10. "avoided punishment" and "conversion"
11. Henry James
12. Lauretta
13. auto-reference/ preoccupation with itself and its object
14. culture and nature/ the social and the individual
15. the individual

4.2.9 Exercises

Q1. Write short notes on the following in about 200 words each.

1. Todorov's arguments regarding using the term "science"

2. Todorov's answer to Henry James's arguments
3. Todorov's grammatical interpretation involving analysis of how the clause corresponds to the plot
4. Todorov's expresses this common element in a schematic way:

Q 2. Answer the following questions in about 600 words each.

1. Write a detailed note on Todorov's structural analysis of plot of tales from Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.
2. Why does Todorov say that the tales from *The Decameron* can be described as a move from one equilibrium to another? Discuss with examples.
3. Elaborate Todorov's schematic representation of the common in the plots of tales from *The Decameron*.

4.2.10 Glossary

Frame stories: a narrative that frames or surrounds another story or set of stories/ a secondary story or stories embedded in the main story/ a narrative providing the framework for connecting a series of otherwise unrelated stories.

Modality: the determination of whether a sentence expresses a fact, a command, a wish, and so on, as set by the form (the mood) of the verb and its auxiliaries.

Optative: relating to or denoting a mood of verbs in Greek and certain other languages, expressing a wish, equivalent in meaning to English *let's* or *if only*.

4.2.11 References

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4.2.12 Books and e-Resources for Further Study

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