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UNIT I

NEW CRITICISM

1.0. Introduction:

The New Criticism was a formalist movement in literary theory that dominated American literary criticism in the middle decades of the 20th century. It emphasized close reading, particularly of poetry, to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. The movement derived its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. The work of English scholar I. A. Richards, especially his *Practical Criticism* and *The Meaning of Meaning*, which offered what was claimed to be an empirical, scientific approach, were important to the development of New Critical methodology. Also very influential were the critical essays of T. S. Eliot, such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Hamlet and His Problems", in which Eliot developed his notion of the "objective correlative". Eliot's evaluative judgments, such as his condemnation of Milton and Shelley, his liking for the so-called metaphysical poets, and his insistence that poetry must be impersonal, greatly influenced the formation of the New Critical canon.

One of the most influential movements in modern critical scholarship, the New Criticism is a philosophy of literary interpretation that stresses the importance of studying literary texts as complete works of art in themselves.

Although the term New Criticism was first coined in the nineteenth century, it was not until American critic and poet John Crow Ransom, founder of the *Kenyon Review* wrote a book titled *The New Criticism* (1941) that it became established in common academic and literary usage. In essence, the New Critics were reacting against established trends in American criticism, arguing for the primacy of the literary text instead of focusing on interpretations based on context. However, as René Wellek has noted in various essays detailing the principles of New Criticism, proponents of this theory had many differences among them, and beyond the importance the New Critics afforded the literary text itself, there were many differences in the way they approached critical study of literary texts. Wellek writes that among the growing number of New Critics in the 1930s, there were few that could be easily grouped together. For example, he puts Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren among the leaders of what he calls the “Southern Critics.” Mostly, they are grouped together due to their reaction against previously established schools of criticism, such as impressionist criticism, the humanist movement, the naturalist movement, and the Marxists, and the fact that many of them taught at Southern universities at the time they created the theory of New Criticism. In addition to rallying against traditional modes of literary interpretations, the most significant contribution made by the New Critics, according to Wellek, was the success with which they established criticism itself as a major academic discipline.

The most simplistic definitions of New Criticism identify it as a critical movement that propagates the idea of “art for art's sake.” Yet, according to Gerald Graff, Wellek, and others, the New Critics did concern themselves with the history and context of a work of literature. For them, to truly understand a work of literature, it was important to “embrace a total historical scheme,” using it as the standard against which one judges a literary text. But in contrast to traditional

literary criticism, which emphasized the context and background of a text almost as much as the text itself, the New Critics argued that literary texts were complete in and of themselves. Additionally, theories of New Criticism elevate the role of criticism in academics—according to them, criticism is crucial to help maintain poetry and language, and in aiding their development, the New Critics propose, criticism is really an integral part of social development. Most studies of New Criticism identify it as a formalist mode of critical interpretation, focusing on a close reading of the technicalities, structure, themes, and message of the literary text. Many of the literary qualities held in high esteem by the New Critics were first espoused in the prose works of Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the New Critics considered his work on critical theory as a fundamental starting point in their principles of literary criticism. One of the most well-known texts detailing New Criticism theory was published by Cleanth Brooks in 1947, titled *The Well-Wrought Urn*. In this work, Brooks, in addition to articulating the theories of New Criticism, also interprets many seminal poetic texts using the principles of the New Critics.

Although New Critics applied their principles of literary study to many genres in literature, they held poetry in high regard, viewing it as the best exemplification of the literary values they espoused. Among the American New Critics, a nucleus of writers and critics, including Penn Warren, Ransom, and Tate set about defining their notion of a literary aesthetic, especially as it related to poetry, during the 1920s. They published their views in a bi-monthly literary review called *The Fugitive*, and worked to create what they believed was a literary renaissance in the South, a view of writing and studying poetry that they saw as the essence of modernism, and a sustained and valid response to the traditionally sentimental literary conventions of the South. In later years, the New Critics expanded their definition of the poetic aesthetic, theorizing that poetry, as a work

of art, is the ultimate form of communication, complete in meaning and form in itself. One of the most influential writers of New Criticism poetic theory was I. A. Richards—his book *Practical Criticism* (1929) detailed experiments in critical interpretations of poetry in which students were asked to study texts of poems with no accompanying information on the author, or even the title of the works. An unexpected result of the wide variety of student responses was a realization regarding the importance of teaching the act of critical thinking and interpretation. For later New Critics, including William Empson, it was this, the study of language and form that became the subject of his book *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), a work in which he explored the development of systematic modes of literary interpretation.

1.1. History:

New Criticism developed as a reaction to the older philological and literary history schools of the US North, which, influenced by nineteenth-century German scholarship, focused on the history and meaning of individual words and their relation to foreign and ancient languages, comparative sources, and the biographical circumstances of the authors. These approaches, it was felt, tended to distract from the text and meaning of a poem and entirely neglect its aesthetic qualities in favor of teaching about external factors. On the other hand, the literary appreciation school, which limited itself to pointing out the "beauties" and morally elevating qualities of the text, was disparaged by the New Critics as too subjective and emotional. Condemning this as a version of Romanticism, they aimed for newer, systematic and objective method.

It was felt, especially by creative writers and by literary critics outside the academy, that the special aesthetic experience of poetry and literary language was lost in the welter of extraneous erudition and emotional effusions. Heather Dubrow notes that the prevailing focus of literary scholarship was on "the study of ethical values and philosophical issues through literature, the tracing of literary history, and . . . political criticism". Literature was approached and literary scholarship did not focus on analysis of texts.

New Critics believed the structure and meaning of the text were intimately connected and should not be analyzed separately. In order to bring the focus of literary studies back to analysis of the texts, they aimed to exclude the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts, and moralistic bias from their analysis. These goals were articulated in Ransom's "Criticism, Inc." and Allen Tate's "Miss Emily and the Bibliographers."

Close reading (or *explication de texte*) was a staple of French literary studies, but in the United States, aesthetic concerns, and the study of modern poets was the province of non-academic essayists and book reviewers rather than serious scholars. But the New Criticism changed this. Though their interest in textual study initially met with resistance from older scholars, the methods of the New Critics rapidly predominated in American universities until challenged by Feminism and structuralism in the 1970s. Other schools of critical theory, including, post-structuralism, and deconstructionist theory, the New Historicism, and Receptions studies followed.

Although the New Critics were never a formal group, an important inspiration was the teaching of John Crowe Ransom of Vanderbilt University, whose students (all Southerners), Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren would go on to develop the aesthetics that came to be known as the New Criticism. In his essay, "The New Criticism," Cleanth Brooks notes that "The New Critic, like the Snark, is a very elusive beast," meaning that there was no clearly defined "New Critical" manifesto, school, or stance. Nevertheless, a number of writings outline inter-related New Critical ideas.

In 1946, William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published a classic and controversial New Critical essay entitled "The Intentional Fallacy", in which they argued strongly against the relevance of an author's intention, or "intended meaning" in the analysis of a literary work. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the words on the page were all that mattered; importation of meanings from outside the text was considered irrelevant, and potentially distracting.

In another essay, "The Affective Fallacy," which served as a kind of sister essay to "The Intentional Fallacy" Wimsatt and Beardsley also discounted the reader's personal/emotional reaction to a literary work as a valid means of analyzing a text. This fallacy would later be repudiated by theorists from the reader-response school of literary theory. Ironically, one of the leading theorists from this school, Stanley Fish, was himself trained by New Critics. Fish criticizes Wimsatt and Beardsley in his essay "Literature in the Reader" (1970).

The hey-day of the New Criticism in American high schools and colleges was the Cold War decades between 1950 and the mid-seventies, doubtless because

it offered a relatively straightforward and politically uncontroversial approach to the teaching of literature.. Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction* both became staples during this era.

Studying a passage of prose or poetry in New Critical style required careful, exacting scrutiny of the passage itself. Formal elements such as rhyme, meter, setting, characterization, and plot were used to identify the theme of the text. In addition to the theme, the New Critics also looked for paradox, ambiguity, irony, and tension to help establish the single best and most unified interpretation of the text.

Although the New Criticism is no longer a dominant theoretical model in American universities, some of its methods (like close reading) are still fundamental tools of literary criticism, underpinning a number of subsequent theoretic approaches to literature including poststructuralism, deconstruction theory, and reader-response theory.

2.0. Definition:

The New Criticism is a type of formalist literary criticism that reached its height during the 1940s and 1950s and that received its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. New Critics treat a work of literature as if it were a self-contained, self-referential object. Rather than basing their interpretations of a text on the reader's response, the author's stated intentions, or parallels between the text and historical contexts (such as author's life), New

Critics perform a close reading, concentrating on the relationships within the text that give it its own distinctive character or form. New Critics emphasize that the structure of a work should not be divorced from meaning, viewing the two as constituting a quasi-organic unity. Special attention is paid to repetition, particularly of images or symbols, but also of sound effects and rhythms in poetry. New Critics especially appreciate the use of literary devices, such as irony, to achieve a balance or reconciliation between dissimilar, even conflicting, elements in a text.

Because it stresses close textual analysis and viewing the text as a carefully crafted, orderly object containing formal, observable patterns, the New Criticism has sometimes been called an "objective" approach to literature. New Critics are more likely than certain other critics to believe and say that the meaning of a text can be known objectively. For instance, reader-response critics see meaning as a function either of each reader's experience or of the norms that govern a particular interpretive community, and deconstructors argue that texts mean opposite things at the same time.

The foundations of the New Criticism were laid in books and essays written during the 1920s and 1930s by I. A. Richards (*Practical Criticism* [1929]), William Empson (*Seven Types of Ambiguity* [1930]), and T. S. Eliot ("The Function of Criticism" [1933]). The approach was significantly developed later, however, by a group of American poets and critics, including R. P. Blackmur, Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and William K. Wimsatt. Although we associate the New Criticism with certain principles and terms—such as *affective fallacy* (the notion that the reader's response is relevant to the meaning of a work) and *intentional fallacy* (the notion

that the author's intention determines the work's meaning)—the New Critics were trying to make a cultural statement rather than to establish a critical dogma. Generally southern, religious, and culturally conservative, they advocated the inherent value of literary works (particularly of literary works regarded as beautiful art objects) because they were sick of the growing ugliness of modern life and contemporary events. Some recent theorists even link the rising popularity after World War II of the New Criticism (and other types of formalist literary criticism such as the Chicago School) to American isolationism. These critics tend to view the formalist tendency to isolate literature from biography and history as symptomatic of American fatigue with wider involvements. Whatever the source of the New Criticism's popularity (or the reason for its eventual decline), its practitioners and the textbooks they wrote were so influential in American academia that the approach became standard in college and even high school curricula through the 1960s and well into the 1970s.

To the New Critics, poetry was a special kind of discourse, a means of communicating feeling and thought that could not be expressed in any other kind of language. It differed qualitatively from the language of science or philosophy, but it conveyed equally valid meanings. Such critics set out to define and formalize the qualities of poetic thought and language, utilizing the technique of close reading with special emphasis on the connotative and associative values of words and on the multiple functions of figurative language—symbol, metaphor, and image—in the work. Poetic form and content could not be separated, since the experience of reading the particular words of a poem, including its unresolved tensions, is the poem's "meaning." As a result, any rewording of a poem's language alters its content, a view articulated in the phrase "the heresy of paraphrase," which was coined by Brooks in his *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947).

3.0. Concepts in New Criticism:

3.1. Objective Correlative:

An objective correlative is a literary term first set forth by T.S. Eliot in the essay "Hamlet and His Problems" and published in *The Sacred Wood* (1920). According to the theory,

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

The term was originally used in the 19th century by the painter Washington Allston in his lectures on art to suggest the relation between the mind and the external world. This notion was enlarged upon by George Santayana in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). Santayana suggested that correlative objects could not only express a poet's feeling but also evoke it. Critics have argued that Eliot's idea was influenced, as was much of Eliot's work, by the poetics of Ezra Pound and that the theory dates at least to the criticism of Edgar Allan Poe.

Popularized by T. S. Eliot in his essay "Hamlet and His Problems", the term was first used by Washington Allston around 1840 in the "Introductory Discourse" of his *Lectures on Art*:

Take an example from one of the lower forms of organic life,--a common vegetable. Will any one assert that the surrounding inorganic elements of air, earth, heat, and water produce its peculiar form? Though some, or all, of these may be essential to its development, they are so only as its predetermined correlatives, without which its existence could not be manifested; and in like manner must the peculiar form of the vegetable preexist in its life, — in its idea, — in order to evolve by these assimilants its own proper organism.

No possible modification in the degrees or proportion of these elements can change the specific form of a plant, — for instance, a cabbage into a cauliflower; it must ever remain a cabbage, small or large, good or bad. So, too, is the external world to the mind; which needs, also, as the condition of its manifestation, its objective correlative. Hence the presence of some outward object, predetermined to correspond to the preexisting idea in its living power, is essential to the evolution of its proper end, — the pleasurable emotion.

Eliot used the term exclusively to refer to his claimed artistic mechanism whereby emotion is evoked in the audience:

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It seems to be in deference to this principle that Eliot famously described *Hamlet* as "most certainly an artistic failure": Eliot felt that Hamlet's strong emotions "exceeded the facts" of the play, which is to say they were not supported by an "objective correlative." He acknowledged that such a circumstance is "something which every person of sensibility has known"; but felt that in trying to represent it dramatically, "Shakespeare tackled a problem which proved too much for him.

The theory of the objective correlative as it relates to literature was largely developed through the writings of the poet and literary critic T.S. Eliot, who is associated with the literary group called the New Critics. Helping define the objective correlative, T.S. Eliot's essay "Hamlet and His Problems" in his book *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* discusses his view of Shakespeare's incomplete development of Hamlet's emotions. In this essay, Eliot states: "The artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion....". According to Eliot, the feelings of Hamlet are not sufficiently supported by the story and the other characters surrounding him. The objective correlative's purpose is to express the character's emotions by showing rather than describing feelings as pictured earlier by Plato and referred to by Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* as "...perhaps little more than the ancient distinction (first made by Plato) between mimesis and diegesis....". According to Formalist critics, this action of creating an emotion through external factors and evidence linked together and thus forming an objective correlative should produce an author's detachment from the depicted character and unite the emotion of the literary work. The "occasion" of E. Montale is a further form of correlative.

One possible criticism of Eliot's theory includes his assumption that an author's intentions concerning expression will be understood in one way only. This point is stated by Balachandra Rajan as quoted in David A. Goldfarb's "New Reference Works in Literary Theory" with these words: "Eliot argues that there is a verbal formula for any given state of emotion which, when found and used, will evoke that state and no other."

3.2. The Intentional Fallacy:

Intentional Fallacy is a term used in 20th-century literary criticism to describe the problem inherent in trying to judge a work of art by assuming the intent or purpose of the artist who created it.

Introduced by W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley in *The Verbal Icon* (1954), the approach was a reaction to the popular belief that to know what the author intended—what he had in mind at the time of writing—was to know the correct interpretation of the work. Although a seductive topic for conjecture and frequently a valid appraisal of a work of art, the intentional fallacy forces the literary critic to assume the role of cultural historian or that of a psychologist who must define the growth of a particular artist's vision in terms of his mental and physical state at the time of his creative act.

Broadly, it is the idea that the meaning of a work does not originate with the author's intention. Authors are unreliable beings; what they say their work means may not be what it means at all, and in any case there can be a huge discrepancy between intention and end result. At the Brisbane Writers Festival a

few years ago Elizabeth Jolley summed it up when she was asked by a member of the audience for the meaning of her novel, *The Well* (1986). She said: “I have written what I have written. It's up to you to work it out”.

The concepts of “intentional fallacy” and “affective fallacy” began with W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's essay “The Intentional Fallacy” (1946). Literary criticism at that time was heavily reliant on author-biography approaches, and Wimsatt and Beardsley put forward the radical idea that for literary works arguments about interpretation are not settled by consulting the oracle that is the author. The meaning of a work is not what the writer had in mind at some moment during composition of the work, or what the writer thinks the work means after it is finished, but, rather, what he or she succeeded in embodying in the work. The “affective fallacy” (from an essay published three years later in 1949) is the idea that subjective effects or emotional reactions a work provokes in readers are irrelevant to the study of the verbal object itself, since its objective structure alone contains the meaning of the work.

The intentional fallacy is part of the arguments of American New Criticism, which holds that the proper object of literary study is literary texts and how they work rather than authors' lives or the social and historical worlds to which literature refers. The “intentional fallacy” names the act of delimiting the object of literary study and separating it from biography or sociology. The meaning resides in the literary work itself, and not in statements regarding his or her intention that the author might make. These statements become separate texts that may become subject to a separate analysis.

The New Critics used the method of “close reading” to arrive at interpretation of a text. Close reading is the elucidation of the way literature embodies or concretely enacts universal truth. These truths were called “concrete universals”. Of course this method has since been questioned and challenged on many grounds, particularly the neglect of context and the belief in universal truth.

The response to claims that the author's intention was irrelevant came with E.D. Hirsch's, *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) which opposed the stance taken by the New Critics and Wimsatt and Beardsley, arguing rather harshly that the intentional fallacy is a “false and facile dogma that what an author intended is irrelevant to the meaning of the text”. It must be remembered that this was a time immediately after Freud, where there was a tendency to see literature as the symptom of the author's mind. Also, the figure of the author was seen as a genius, so the intentional fallacy argument raised a few hackles among those who saw meaning as the privilege of the author and the product of his or her genius.

Hirsch argued that the only possible source for determining what a work means is the author. In his intentionalist view, words cannot mean anything by themselves, so their meaning must be determined by a mind: the author or the critic. The critic may aid authors in bringing their meaning out into the world.

Beardsley's response to Hirsch was that some texts have no authors, yet still have meaning (such as computer generated poems), authors die without commenting on their works, and words can change their meaning over time. Also, aside from the occasional visit to a writers' festival or literary lunch, there is no discourse between author and reader for clarification.

Roland Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author" (1968) resumed the debate about author and intention. He attacks the common and traditional view of the author as the ultimate "explanation" of a work. The author ceases to be a figure who creates meaning. Instead, meaning is created by the reader, who also takes over as the prime source of power in the text. In this respect, the last line of Barthes's essay is a memorable one: "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author".

Michel Foucault's essay "What Is An Author?" (1969) extends Barthes's argument by saying that the idea of the author as a source of meaning has been substituted with other concepts and ideas which keep up the authorial privileges. The author's function limits meaning and the author should therefore be done away with.

In summary, and Elizabeth Jolley would have agreed, the author may write the text, but he or she does not (and should not) have the last word.

3.3. Affective Fallacy:

Affective fallacy is a term from literary criticism used to refer to the supposed error of judging or evaluating a text on the basis of its emotional effects on a reader. The term was coined by W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley as a principle of New Criticism. The New Criticism represented a new, largely academic, approach to literary studies that focused on the literary text itself as the object of study and not as a social artifact that expressed the inner life of the artist or the society in which it was written. The New Critics attempted to make literary

criticism into a more rigorous field, modeled on the dominant paradigm of knowledge in modern society—science. In the process they forced critics to address the work of art itself and examine the nature of human creativity and artistic creation.

Wimsatt was a literary critic who joined the English Department at Yale University in 1939, where he taught until he died in 1975. Beardley was a philosopher of art and aesthetics. As a staunch formalist critic, Wimsatt believed in the authority of the poem and that any analysis of a poem must center on the text itself. In literary criticism, Formalism refers to a style of inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively, on features of the literary text itself, to the exclusion of biographical, historical, or intellectual contexts. The name "Formalism" derives from one of the central tenets of Formalist thought: That the *form* of a work of literature is inherently a part of its content, and that the attempt to separate the two is a fallacious undertaking. By focusing on literary form and excluding superfluous contexts, Formalists believed that it would be possible to trace the evolution and development of literary forms, and thus, literature itself.

Formalism arose in part as a reaction to the prevailing form of criticism prior to the twentieth century had focused largely on the author's life or social class. Such an approach failed to take into account the rules and structure that governs the production of the art itself. Much of Wimsatt's theory stems from an ambivalence towards "impressionism, subjectivism, and relativism" in criticism. In *Hateful Contraries* Wimsatt refers to a "New Amateurism," an "anti-criticism" emerging in works such as Leslie Fiedler's "Credo," which appeared in the *Kenyon Review*. "The only reservation the theorist need have about such critical impressionism or expressionism," says Wimsatt, "is that, after all, it does not carry

on very far in our cogitation about the nature and value of literature...it is not a very mature form of cognitive discourse”.

Part of the animus toward "impressionism" and "subjectivism" can also be attributed to the goal of Wimsatt and his fellow Formalists; they were concerned with ensuring a level of legitimacy in English studies by creating a more scientific approach to criticism, one that would gain for literary criticism a greater status and credibility. They decried the so-called "affective" approaches as “less a scientific view of literature than a prerogative —that of a soul adventuring among masterpieces”.

For Wimsatt and his fellow Formalists, such an approach fails to take account of that fact that art is produced according to certain sets of rules and with its own internal logic. New forms of art represent a break with past forms and an introduction of new rules and logic. According to Formalis, the goal of the critic should be to examine this feature of art. In the case of literature, the object of reflection is the text's "literariness," that which makes it a work of art and not a piece of journalism. This attention to the details of the literary text was an attempt on the part of literary scholars to turn its discipline into a science on a par with the other academic disciplines.

Wimsatt worked out this position in his two influential essays written with Monroe Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy”). They were designed to create an “objective criticism,” which required that the critic essentially disregard the intentions of the poet and the effect of the poem on the audience as the sole (or even the major) factors of analysis.

That does not mean that such approaches to the work of art are not interesting or important, but they are not the domain of the literary critic. Nor does it mean that poems are mathematical operations with a single correct interpretation. As Wimsatt notes, “no two different words or different phrases ever mean fully the same”. The text allows for a certain degree of variation in the analysis of poetry, and the application of different methods of analysis. Different methods will necessarily produce different meanings and different results.

First defined in an article published in *The Sewanee Review* in 1946, the concept of an affective fallacy was most clearly articulated in *The Verbal Icon*, Wimsatt's collection of essays published in 1954. Wimsatt used the term to refer to all forms of criticism that understood a text's effect upon the reader to be the primary route to analyzing the importance and success of that text. This definition of the fallacy includes nearly all of the major modes of literary criticism prior to the 20th century, from Aristotle's catharsis and Longinus's concept of the sublime to late-nineteenth century belles-lettres and even his contemporaries, the Chicago Critics. All these approaches heavily emphasized the impact of literature on the reader or hearer. Aristotle, for example, made catharsis, the purging of emotions, the very *raison d'être* of Ancient Greek tragedy. For Longinus, the goal of art was the creation of the sublime state in the audience, leading to loss of rationality through a profound emotional effect. In the modern era, [[The Chicago School of literary criticism, reintroduced a kind of neo-Aristotelianism. Developed in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s at the University of Chicago, they countered the "new critics" emphasis on form, (what Aristotle calls diction), with a more holistic approach to literary analysis. They followed Aristotle's hierarchical list of the narrative elements, attempting to expand on Aristotle's notion of catharsis, employing it to

talk generally about the effect that dramatic works produce, and the moral implications of these effects.

Of all these critical approaches, Wimsatt singles out the belletristic tradition, exemplified by critics such as Arthur Quiller-Couch and George Saintsbury, as an instance of a type of criticism that relies on subjective impressions and is thus unrepeatable and unreliable. These approaches amounted to a fallacy for Wimsatt because it led to a number of potential errors, most of them related to emotional relativism. In his view, a critical approach to literature based on its putative emotional effects will always be vulnerable to mystification and subjectivity.

For Wimsatt, as for all the New Critics, such impressionistic approaches pose both practical and theoretical problems. In practical terms, it makes reliable comparisons of different critics difficult, and largely irrelevant. In this light, the affective fallacy ran afoul of the New Critics' desire to place literary criticism on a more objective and principled basis. On the theoretical plane, the critical approach denoted as affective fallacy was fundamentally unsound because it denied the iconic nature of the literary text. New Critical theorists stressed the unique nature of poetic language, and they asserted that—in view of this uniqueness—the role of the critic is to study and elucidate the thematic and stylistic "language" of each text on its own terms, without primary reference to an outside context, whether of history, biography, or reader-response.

In practice, Wimsatt and the other New Critics were less stringent in their application of the theory than in their theoretical pronouncements. Wimsatt

admitted the appropriateness of commenting on emotional effects as an entry into a text, as long as those effects were not made the focus of analysis.

As with many concepts of New Criticism, the concept of the affective fallacy was both controversial and, though widely influential, never accepted wholly by any great number of critics.

The first critiques of the concept came, naturally enough, from those academic schools against whom the New Critics were ranged in the 1940s and 1950s, principally the historical scholars and the remaining belletristic critics. Early commentary deplored the use of the word "fallacy" itself, which seemed to many critics unduly combative. More sympathetic critics, while still objecting to Wimsatt's tone, accepted as valuable and necessary his attempt to place criticism on a more objective basis.

However, the extremism of Wimsatt's approach was ultimately judged untenable by a number of critics. Just as New Historicism repudiated the New Critics' rejection of historical context, so reader-response criticism arose partly from dissatisfaction with the concept of the text as icon. Reader-response critics denied that a text could have a quantifiable significance apart from the experience of particular readers at particular moments. These critics rejected the idea of text as icon, focusing instead on the ramifications of the interaction between text and reader.

While the term remains current as a warning against unsophisticated use of emotional response in analyzing texts, the theory underlying the term has been largely eclipsed by more recent developments in criticism.

3.4. Close Reading:

Close reading describes, in literary criticism, the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text. Such a reading places great emphasis on the single particular over the general, paying close attention to individual words, syntax, and the order in which sentences and ideas unfold as they are read.

The technique as practiced today was pioneered (at least in English) by I. A. Richards and his student William Empson, later developed further by the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century. It is now a fundamental method of modern criticism. Close reading is sometimes called *explication de texte*, which is the name for the similar tradition of textual interpretation in French literary study, a technique whose chief proponent was Gustave Lanson.

Literary close reading and commentaries have extensive precedent in the exegesis of religious texts, and more broadly, hermeneutics of ancient works. For example, *Pazand*, a genre of middle Persian literature, refers to the *Zend* (literally: 'commentary'/'translation') texts that offer explanation and close reading of the *Avesta*, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. The scriptural commentaries of the *Talmud* offer a commonly cited early predecessor to close reading. In Islamic studies, the close reading of the *Quran* has flourished and produced an immense corpus. But the closest religious analogy to contemporary literary close reading,

and the principal historical connection with its birth, is the rise of the higher criticism, and the evolution of textual criticism of the *Bible* in Germany in the late eighteenth century.

A truly attentive close reading of a two-hundred-word poem might be thousands of words long without exhausting the possibilities for observation and insight. To take an even more extreme example, Jacques Derrida's essay *Ulysses Gramophone*, which J. Hillis Miller describes as a "hyperbolic, extravagant... explosion" of the technique of close reading, devotes more than eighty pages to an interpretation of the word "yes" in James Joyce's modernist novel *Ulysses*.

3.5. Organic Unity:

Organic Unity is the idea that a thing is made up of interdependent parts. For example, a body is made up of its constituent organs, or a society is made up of its constituent social roles.

In literature, Organic unity is a concept founded by the philosopher, Plato. The structure in itself, started to take rudimentary form through certain works by Plato including *The Republic*, *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*. Organic unity lacked a true definitive role or theme in literary history until the principle was adopted by Aristotle. Aristotle's writings all maintained respective, metaphoric reflections of organic unity. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, organic unity is described by how writing relies internally on narration and drama to remain cohesive to one another, not as separate entities. Without balance on both sides, the whole concept suffers. The main theme of organic unity relies on a free spirited style of writing and by

following any guidelines or genre-based habits, the true nature of a work becomes stifled and unreliable on an artistic plane.

The concept of organic unity gained popularity through the New Critics movement. Cleanth Brooks played an integral role in modernizing the organic unity principle. In a study based around the poem, *The Well Wrought Urn*, Brooks relayed the importance of a work's ability to flow and maintain a theme, so that the work can only gain momentum, from beginning to end. Organic unity is the common thread that keeps a theme from becoming broken and disjointed as a work moves forward.

4.0. Chief Exponents of New Criticism:

4.1. I.A. Richards:

Ivor Armstrong Richards, together with Eliot, is the most influential critic in the twentieth century Anglo-American criticism. Among the moderns he is the only critic who has formulated a systematic and complete theory of the literary art. In the words of George Watson, "Richards' claim to have pioneered Anglo-American New Criticism of the thirties and forties is unassailable. He provided the theoretical foundations on which the technique of verbal analysis was built. "

His reputation as a critic lies on a limited number of critical books he wrote. The relevance of psychology to literary studies emerges clearly in his first book, *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922), written in collaboration with his two friends. In this book the authors have tried to define 'beauty' by studying its effects on the readers. His second book, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) was written with Ogden; it distinguished between the symbolic use of language in science and its emotive use in poetry. In *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), Richards alone explains his psychological theory of value and explores the emotive language of poetry. *Practical Criticism* (1929) was based on the lecture-room experiments conducted in Cambridge in which he distributed poems, stripped of all evidence of authorship and period, to his pupils and asked them to comment freely on those poems. The only other important critical work of Richards is *Coleridge on Imagination* which was published in 1935.

As a critic, I. A. Richards is not only learned and abstract but also iconoclastic and original. He is a staunch advocate of close textual and verbal study and analysis of a work of art without reference to its author and the age. His approach is pragmatic and empirical. He is the father of the psychological criticism as well as of New Criticism. Such new critics as John Crowe Ransom, Kenneth Burke, Cleanth Brooks, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, William Empson, despite differences in their theory and practice, have repeatedly acknowledged their indebtedness to him. He has made literary criticism factual, scientific and complete. It no longer remains a matter of the application of set rules or mere intuition or impressions. He developed the unhistorical method of criticism.

He holds that adequate knowledge of psychology is essential for a literary critic to enter into the author's mind. He also gives paramount importance to the art of communication and brings out a distinction between the scientific and the motive uses of the language. Before coming to the value of imaginative literature he first formulates a general psychological theory of value, and then applies it to literature. This is scientific or psychological approach to literature. Poetry, according to him, represents a certain systematization in the poet, and the critic, for a proper understanding of the poem, must enter and grasp this systematization and experience of the poet. He should also be able to judge the value of different experiences, i.e., he should be able to distinguish between experiences of greater and lesser value.

"The qualities of a good critic are three," says I. A.: Richards. "He must be an adept at experiencing, without eccentricities, the state of mind relevant to the work of art he is judging. Secondly, he must be able to distinguish experiences from one another as regards their less superficial features. Thirdly, he must be a sound judge of values." Richards himself possesses these qualities.

Richards' value as a critic also lies in his conclusions about what imaginative literature is, how it employs language, how its use of language differs from the scientific use of language, and what is its special function and value. His conclusion, at this stage in the development of his critical ideas (for it should be noted that Richards developed his views in different directions in his later works), is that a satisfactory work of imaginative literature represents a kind of psychological adjustment in the author which is valuable for personality, and that the reader, if he knows how to read properly, can have this adjustment communicated to him by reading the work. Training in reading with care and

sensitivity is therefore insisted on by him and again this has had a great influence on modern criticism, which has more and more come to insist on the importance of a proper reading of the text.

In conclusion we may say that Richards did a great service to literary criticism by linking it with psychology. But some people are of the opinion that this psychological approach to literary criticism makes it too technical and dull a subject. Furthermore, Richards' conclusions are based on psychology as it is today, and with the changes and development of psychology and our understanding of the human mind, this theory might lose its importance or vanish completely. Some people also doubt whether literary criticism based on individual psychology can ever explain fully the mystic nature of the poetic experience.

Just as Shelley used Platonism to remove Plato's objections to poets, in the same way Richards tried to use science to remove the scientist's objections to poetry. He called his book, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, "a machine for thinking with," and the arguments are expressed with scientific rigour. In the first two chapters of this book he criticises the prevalent notions about artistic value. The questions which a critic must ask, according to Richards, are "what gives the experience of reading a certain poem its value? How is this experience better than another? Why prefer this picture to that? In which ways should we listen to music so as to receive the most valuable moments? Why is one opinion about works of art not so good as another? These are the fundamental questions which criticism is required to answer, together with such preliminary questions— What is a picture, a poem, a piece of music? How can experiences be compared? What is value?—as may be required in order to approach these questions.

4.2. Cleanth Brooks:

Cleanth Brooks was an influential American teacher and critic whose work was important in establishing the New Criticism, which stressed close reading and structural analysis of literature.

Educated at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., and at Tulane University, New Orleans, Brooks was a Rhodes scholar (Exeter College, Oxford) before he began teaching at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, in 1932. From 1935 to 1942, with Charles W. Pipkin and poet and critic Robert Penn Warren, he edited *The Southern Review*, a journal that advanced the New Criticism and published the works of a new generation of Southern writers. Brooks's critical works include *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939) and *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). Authoritative college texts by Brooks, with others, reinforced the popularity of the New Criticism: *Understanding Poetry* (1938) and *Understanding Fiction* (1943), written with Warren, and *Understanding Drama* (1945), with Robert Heilman.

Brooks taught at Yale University from 1947 to 1975 and was also a Library of Congress fellow (1951–62) and cultural attaché at the U.S. embassy in London (1964–66). Brooks's later works included *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957; cowritten with William K. Wimsatt); *A Shaping Joy: Studies in the Writer's Craft* (1972); *The Language of the American South* (1985); *Historical Evidence and the Reading of Seventeenth Century Poetry* (1991); and several books on William Faulkner, including *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha*

Country (1963), *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (1978), *William Faulkner: First Encounters* (1983), and *Firm Beliefs of William Faulkner* (1987).

4.2.1. Brooks and New Criticism:

Brooks was the central figure of New Criticism, a movement that emphasized structural and textual analysis—close reading—over historical or biographical analysis. Brooks advocates close reading because, as he states in *The Well Wrought Urn*, "by making the closest examination of what the poem says as a poem" (qtd. in Leitch 2001), a critic can effectively interpret and explicate the text. For him, the crux of New Criticism is that literary study be "concerned primarily with the work itself" (qtd. in Leitch 2001). In "The Formalist Critics," Brooks offers "some articles of faith" (qtd. in Leitch 2001) to which he subscribes. These articles exemplify the tenets of New Criticism:

- That the primary concern of criticism is with the problem of unity—the kind of whole which the literary work forms or fails to form, and the relation of the various parts to each other in building up this whole.
- That in a successful work, format and content cannot be separated.
- That form is meaning.
- That literature is ultimately metaphorical and symbolic.
- That the general and the universal are not seized upon by abstraction, but got at through the concrete and the particular.

- That literature is not a surrogate for religion.
- That, as Allen Tate says, "specific moral problems" are the subject matter of literature, but that the purpose of literature is not to point a moral.
- That the principles of criticism define the area relevant to literary criticism; they do not constitute a method for carrying out the criticism (qtd. in Leitch 2001).

New Criticism involves examining a poem's "technical elements, textual patterns, and incongruities" (Leitch 2001) with a kind of scientific rigor and precision. From I. A. Richards' *The Principles of Literary Criticism and Practical Criticism*, Brooks formulated guidelines for interpreting poetry (Leitch 2001). Brooks formulated these guidelines in reaction to ornamentalist theories of poetry, to the common practice of critics going outside the poem (to historical or biographical contexts), and his and Warren's frustration with trying to teach college students to analyze poetry and literature (Leitch 2001).

Brooks and Warren were teaching using textbooks "full of biographical facts and impressionistic criticism" (Singh 1991). The textbooks failed to show how poetic language differed from the language of an editorial or a work of non-fiction. From this frustration, Brooks and Warren published *Understanding Poetry*. In the book, the authors assert poetry should be taught as poetry, and the critic should resist reducing a poem to a simple paraphrase, explicating it through biographical or historical contexts, and interpreting it didactically (Singh 1991). For Brooks and Warren, paraphrase and biographical and historical background

information is useful as a means of clarifying interpretation, but it should be used as means to an end (Singh 1991).

Brooks took this notion of paraphrase and developed it further in his classic *The Well Wrought Urn*. The book is a polemic against the tendency for critics to reduce a poem to a single narrative or didactic message. He describes summative, reductionist reading of poetry with a phrase still popular today: "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (Leitch 2001). In fact, he argued poetry serves no didactic purpose because producing some kind of statement would be counter to a poem's purpose. Brooks argues "through irony, paradox, ambiguity and other rhetorical and poetic devices of his or her art, the poet works constantly to resist any reduction of the poem to a paraphrasable core, favoring the presentation of conflicting facets of theme and patterns of resolved stresses" (Leitch 2001).

In addition to arguing against historical, biographical, and didactic readings of a poem, Brooks believed that a poem should not be criticized on the basis of its effect on the reader. In an essay called "The Formalist Critics," he says that "the formalist critic assumes an ideal reader: that is, instead of focusing on the varying spectrum of possible readings, he attempts to find a central point of reference from which he can focus upon the structure of the poem or novel" (qtd. in Rivkin, 24). While he admits that it is problematic to assume such a reference point, he sees it as the only viable option. Since the other options would be either to give any reading equal status with any other reading, or to establish a group of "'qualified' readers" and use those as a range of standard interpretations. In the first case, a correct or "standard" reading would become impossible; in the second case, an ideal reader has still been assumed under the guise of multiple ideal readers (Rivkin 24). Thus, Brooks does not accept the idea of considering critics'

emotional responses to works of literature as a legitimate approach to criticism. He says that "a detailed description of my emotional state on reading certain works has little to do with indicating to an interested reader what the work is and how the parts of it are related" (Rivkin 24). For Brooks, nearly everything a critic evaluates must come from within the text itself. This opinion is similar to that expressed by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley in their famous essay "The Affective Fallacy," in which they argue that a critic is "a teacher or explicator of meanings," not a reporter of "physiological experience" in the reader (qtd. in Adams, 1029, 1027).

Because New Criticism isolated the text and excluded historical and biographical contexts, critics argued as early as 1942 that Brooks' approach to criticism was flawed for being overly narrow and for "disabl[ing] any and all attempts to relate literary study to political, social, and cultural issues and debates" (1350). His reputation suffered in the 1970s and 1980s when criticism of New Criticism increased. Brooks rebuffed the accusations that New Criticism has an "antihistorical thrust" (Leitch 2001) and a "neglect of context" (Leitch 2001). He insisted he was not excluding context because a poem possesses organic unity, and it is possible to derive a historical and biographical context from the language the poet uses (Singh 1991). He argues "A poem by Donne or Marvell does not depend for its success on outside knowledge that we bring to it; it is richly ambiguous yet harmoniously orchestrated, coherent in its own special aesthetic terms" (Leitch 2001).

New Criticism was accused by critics of having a contradictory nature. Brooks writes, on the one hand, "the resistance which any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it" (qtd. in Leitch 2001) is the result of the poet

manipulating and warping language to create new meaning. On the other hand, he admonishes the unity and harmony in a poem's aesthetics. These seemingly contradictory forces in a poem create tension and paradoxical irony according to Brooks, but critics questioned whether irony leads to a poem's unity or undermines it (Leitch 2001). Poststructuralists in particular saw a poem's resistance and warped language as competing with its harmony and balance that Brooks celebrates (Leitch 2001).

Ronald Crane was particularly hostile to the views of Brooks and the other New Critics. In "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks," Crane writes that under Brooks's view of a poem's unity being achieved through the irony and paradox of the opposing forces it contains, the world's most perfect example of such an ironic poem would be Albert Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$, which equates matter and energy at a constant rate (Searle).

In his later years, Brooks criticized the poststructuralists for inviting subjectivity and relativism into their analysis, asserting "each critic played with the text's language unmindful of aesthetic relevance and formal design" (Leitch 2001). This approach to criticism, Brooks argued, "denied the authority of the work" (Leitch 2001).

4.3. William Kurtz Wimsatt:

William Kurtz Wimsatt, Jr. was an American professor of English, literary theorist, and critic. Wimsatt is often associated with the discussion of the

intentional fallacy which he developed with Monroe Beardsley in order to discuss the importance of an author's intentions with the creation of a work of art.

Wimsatt was born in Washington D.C., attended Georgetown University and, later, Yale University, where he received his Ph.D. In 1939, Wimsatt joined the English Department at Yale, where he taught until his death in 1975. During his lifetime, Wimsatt became known for his studies of eighteenth-century literature (Leitch et al. 1372). He wrote many works of literary theory and criticism such as *The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson* (1941) and *Philosophic Words: A Study of Style and Meaning in the "Rambler" and Dictionary of Samuel Johnson* (1948; Leitch et al. 1372). His major works include *Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954); *Hateful Contraries* (1965) and *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (1957, with Cleanth Brooks). Wimsatt was considered crucial to New Criticism (particularly New Formalist Criticism; 1372).

Wimsatt was influenced by Monroe Beardsley, with whom he wrote some of his most important pieces. Wimsatt also drew on the work of both ancient critics, such as Longinus and Aristotle, and some of his own contemporaries, such as T. S. Eliot and the writers of the Chicago School, to formulate his theories, often by highlighting key ideas in those authors' works in order to refute them.

Wimsatt's ideas have affected the development of reader-response criticism, and his influence has been noted in the works of writers such as Stanley Fish, and in works such as Walter Benn Michaels' and Steven Knapp's "Against Theory" (Leitch et al. 1373-1374).

Wimsatt contributed several theories to the critical landscape, particularly through his major work, *Verbal Icon* (of which some of the ideas are discussed below). His ideas generally centre around the same questions tackled by many critics: what is poetry and how does one evaluate it?

Perhaps Wimsatt's most influential theories come from the essays "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy" (both are published in *Verbal Icon*) which he wrote with Monroe Beardsley. Each of these texts "codifies a crucial tenet of New Critical formalist orthodoxy," making them both very important to twentieth-century criticism (Leitch et al. 1371).

The **Intentional Fallacy**, according to Wimsatt, derives from "confusion between the poem and its origins" (*Verbal Icon* 21) – essentially, it occurs when a critic puts too much emphasis on personal, biographical, or what he calls "external" information when analyzing a work (they note that this is essentially the same as the "Genetic fallacy" in philosophical studies; 21). Wimsatt and Beardsley consider this strategy a fallacy partly because it is impossible to determine the intention of the author — indeed, authors themselves are often unable to determine the "intention" of a poem — and partly because a poem, as an act that takes place between a poet and an audience, has an existence outside of both and thus its meaning cannot be evaluated simply based on the intentions of or the effect on either the writer or the audience. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, intentional criticism becomes subjective criticism, and so ceases to be criticism at all. For them, critical inquiries are resolved through evidence in and of the text — not "by consulting the oracle" (18).

The **Affective fallacy** (identified in the essay of the same name, which Wimsatt co-authored with Monroe Beardsley, as above) refers to “confusion between the poem and its results” (*Verbal Icon* 21; italics in original). It refers to the error of placing too much emphasis on the effect that a poem has on its audience when analyzing it.

Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that the effect of poetic language alone is an unreliable way to analyze poetry because, they contend, words have no effect in and of themselves, independent of their meaning. It is impossible, then, for a poem to be “pure emotion” (38), which means that a poem’s meaning is not “equivalent to its effects, especially its emotional impact, on the reader” (Leitch et al. 1371).

As with the **Intentional fallacy**, engaging in affective criticism is too subjective an exercise to really warrant the label “criticism” at all — thus, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, it is a fallacy of analysis.

In **The Concrete Universal**, Wimsatt attempts to determine how specific or general (i.e., concrete or universal) a verbal representation must be in order to achieve a particular effect. What is the difference, for example, between referring to a “purple cow” and a “tan cow with a broken horn” (*Verbal Icon* 74)? In addressing such questions, Wimsatt attempts to resolve what it is that makes poetry different from other forms of communication, concluding that “what distinguishes poetry from scientific or logical discourse is a degree of concreteness which does not contribute anything to the argument but is somehow enjoyable or valuable for its own sake.” For Wimsatt, poetry is “the vehicle of a metaphor

which one boards heedless of where it runs, whether cross-town or downtown — just for the ride” (76).

In **The Domain of Criticism**, Wimsatt “[defends] the domain of poetry and poetics from the encircling (if friendly) arm of the general aesthetician” (*Verbal Icon* 221) — that is, he discusses the problems with discussing poetry in purely aesthetic terms. Wimsatt questions the ability of a poem to function aesthetically in the same way as a painting or sculpture. For one, visual modes such as sculpture or painting are undertaken using materials that directly correlate with the object they represent — at least in terms of their “beauty.” A beautiful painting of an apple, for example, is done with beautiful paint.

Verbal expression, however, does not function this way — as Wimsatt points out, there is no such thing as a “beautiful” or “ugly” word (or, at least, there is no general consensus as to how to apply such concepts in such a context; 228). There is no correlation between words and their subject, at least in terms of aesthetics — “the example of the dunghill (or equivalent object) beautifully described is one of the oldest in literary discussion” (228).

More importantly, language does not function merely on the level of its effects on the senses, as (for example) visual modes do. A poem does not just derive its meaning from its rhyme and meter, but these are the domains of aesthetics (231) — to analyse poetry on the basis of its aesthetics, then, is insufficient in one is to adequately explore its meaning.

4.4. Robert Penn Warren:

Robert Penn Warren (April 24, 1905 – September 15, 1989) was an American poet, novelist, and literary critic and was one of the founders of New Criticism. He was also a charter member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. He founded the influential literary journal *The Southern Review* with Cleanth Brooks in 1935. He received the 1947 Pulitzer Prize for the Novel for his novel *All the King's Men* (1946) and the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1958 and 1979. He is the only person to have won Pulitzer Prizes for both fiction and poetry.

While still an undergraduate at Vanderbilt University, Warren became associated with the group of poets there known as the Fugitives, and somewhat later, during the early 1930s, Warren and some of the same writers formed a group known as the Southern Agrarians. He contributed "The Briar Patch" to the Agrarian manifesto *I'll Take My Stand* along with 11 other Southern writers and poets (including fellow Vanderbilt poet/critics John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Donald Davidson). In "The Briar Patch" the young Warren defends racial segregation, in line with the traditionalist conservative political leanings of the Agrarian group, although Davidson deemed Warren's stances in the essay so progressive that he argued for excluding it from the collection. However, Warren recanted these views in an article on the Civil Rights Movement, "Divided South Searches Its Soul", which appeared in the July 9, 1956 issue of *Life* magazine. A month later, Warren published an expanded version of the article as a small book titled *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South*. He subsequently adopted a high profile as a supporter of racial integration. In 1965, he published *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, a collection of interviews with black civil rights leaders including Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, thus further distinguishing his political

leanings from the more conservative philosophies associated with fellow Agrarians such as Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and particularly Davidson. Warren's interviews with civil rights leaders are at the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky.

Warren's best-known work is *All the King's Men*, a novel that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. Main character Willie Stark resembles Huey Pierce Long (1893–1935), the radical populist governor of Louisiana whom Warren was able to observe closely while teaching at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge from 1933 to 1942. *All the King's Men* became a highly successful film, starring Broderick Crawford and winning the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1949. A 2006 film adaptation by writer/director Steven Zaillian featured Sean Penn as Willie Stark and Jude Law as Jack Burden. The opera *Willie Stark* by Carlisle Floyd to his own libretto based on the novel was premiered in 1981.

Warren served as the Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, 1944–1945 (later termed Poet Laureate), and won two Pulitzer Prizes in poetry, in 1958 for *Promises: Poems 1954–1956* and in 1979 for *Now and Then*. *Promises* also won the annual National Book Award for Poetry.

In 1974, the National Endowment for the Humanities selected him for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. Warren's lecture was entitled "Poetry and Democracy" (subsequently published under the title *Democracy and Poetry*). In 1980, Warren was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter. In 1981, Warren was selected as a MacArthur Fellow and later was named as the

first U.S. Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry on February 26, 1986. In 1987, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts.

Warren was co-author, with Cleanth Brooks, of *Understanding Poetry*, an influential literature textbook. It was followed by other similarly co-authored textbooks, including *Understanding Fiction*, which was praised by Southern Gothic and Roman Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor, and *Modern Rhetoric*, which adopted what can be called a New Critical perspective.

5.0. Conclusion:

New Criticism emphasizes explication, or "close reading," of "the work itself." It rejects old historicism's attention to biographical and sociological matters. Instead, the objective determination as to "how a piece works" can be found through close focus and analysis, rather than through extraneous and erudite special knowledge. It has long been the pervasive and standard approach to literature in college and high school curricula.

New Criticism, incorporating Formalism, examines the relationships between a text's ideas and its form, between what a text says and the way it says it. New Critics "may find tension, irony, or paradox in this relation, but they usually resolve it into unity and coherence of meaning" (Biddle 100). New Criticism attempts to be a science of literature, with a technical vocabulary, working with patterns of sound, imagery, narrative structure, point of view, and other techniques discernible on close reading of the text, they seek to determine the function and appropriateness of these to the self-contained work.

New Critics, especially American ones in the 1940s and 1950s, attacked the standard notion of "expressive realism," the romantic fallacy that literature is the efflux of a noble soul, that for example love pours out onto the page in 14 iambic pentameter lines rhyming ABABCD etc. The goal then is not the pursuit of sincerity or authenticity, but subtlety, unity, and integrity--and these are properties of the text, not the author. The work is not the author's; it was detached at birth. The author's intentions are "neither available nor desirable" (nor even to be taken at face value when supposedly found in direct statements by authors). Meaning exists on the page. Thus, New Critics insist that the meaning of a text is intrinsic and should not be confused with the author's intentions nor the work's affective dimension (its impressionistic effects on the reader). The "intentional fallacy" is when one confuses the meaning of a work with the author's purported intention (expressed in letters, diaries, interviews, for example). The "affective fallacy" is the erroneous practice of interpreting texts according to the psychological or emotional responses of readers, confusing the text with its results.

Sources/Suggested Reading:

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
2. http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/virtualit/poetry/critical_define/crit_newcrit.html
3. http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/siryan/academy/theory_history/Intentional_fallacy.htm
4. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/411305/New-Criticism>
5. <http://faculty.goucher.edu/eng215/New_Criticism_terms.htm>

PAPER XVI

UNIT II

THE HERESY OF PARAPHRASE by CLEANTH BROOKS

0.0. Introduction: Cleanth Brooks

Cleanth Brooks (October 16, 1906 – May 10, 1994) was an influential American literary critic and professor. He is best known for his contributions to New Criticism in the mid-20th century and for revolutionizing the teaching of poetry in American higher education. His best-known works, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947) and *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939), argue for the centrality of ambiguity and paradox as a way of understanding poetry. With his writing, Brooks helped to formulate formalist criticism, emphasizing “the interior life of a poem” (Leitch 2001) and codifying the principles of close reading.

Brooks was also the preeminent critic of Southern literature, writing classic texts on William Faulkner, and co-founder of the influential journal *The Southern Review* (Leitch 2001) with Robert Penn Warren.

On October 16, 1906, in Murray, Kentucky, Brooks was born to a Methodist minister, the Reverend Cleanth Brooks, Sr., and Bessie Lee Witherspoon Brooks (Leitch 2001). He was one of three children: Cleanth and

William, natural born sons, and Murray Brooks, actually born Hewitt Witherspoon, whom Bessie Lee Witherspoon kidnapped from her brother Forrest Bedford Witherspoon as a young baby after the natural mother had died. She later was able to change his name to Murray Brooks and continued to raise him as her own, causing quite a rift in her own family and alienating herself from Cleanth and William. Cleanth mentioned on more than one occasion that she so doted on Murray (Hewitt) that she no longer had a relationship with Cleanth and William. Attending McTyeire School, a private academy, he received a classical education and went on to study at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he received his B.A. in 1928 (Leitch 2001). In 1928, Brooks received his Master of Arts from Tulane University and went on to study at Exeter College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar. He received his B.A. (with honors) in 1931 and his Bachelor of Letters the following year. Brooks then returned to the United States and from 1932 to 1947 was a professor of English at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge (Singh 1991). In 1934, he married Edith Amy Blanchard. He was also very kind and loving to Murray's daughter Diana Rae Brooks.

During his studies at Vanderbilt, he met literary critics and future collaborators Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Andrew Lytle, and Donald Davidson (Singh 1991). Studying with Ransom and Warren, Brooks became involved in two significant literary movements: the Southern Agrarians and the Fugitives (Singh 1991). Brooks admitted to reading the Southern Agrarian manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand* (1930) "over and over" (qtd. in Leitch 2001). While he never argued for the movement's conservative Southern traditions, he "learned a great deal" (qtd. in Leitch 2001) and found the Agrarian position valuable and "unobjectionable" (qtd. in Leitch 2001): "They asked that we consider what the good life is or ought to be" (qtd. in Leitch 2001).

The Fugitive Movement similarly influenced Brooks' approach to criticism. The Fugitives, a group of Southern poets consisting of such influential writers as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, and Robert Penn Warren, met Saturday evenings to read and discuss poetry written by members of the group (Singh 1991). The discussion was based on intensive readings and included considerations of a poem's form, structure, meter, rhyme scheme, and imagery (Singh 1991). This close reading formed the foundation on which the New Critical movement was based and helped shape Brooks' approach to criticism (Singh 1991).

While attending the University of Oxford, Brooks continued his friendship with fellow Vanderbilt graduate and Rhodes Scholar, Robert Penn Warren (Leitch 2001). In 1934, Warren joined the English department at Louisiana State, leading Brooks and Warren to collaborate on many works of criticism and pedagogy. In 1935, Brooks and Warren founded *The Southern Review*. Until 1942, they co-edited the journal, publishing works by many influential authors, including Eudora Welty, Kenneth Burke, and Ford Madox Ford. The journal was known for its criticism and creative writing, marking it as one of the leading journals of the time (Leitch 2001).

In addition, Brooks's and Warren's collaboration led to innovations in the teaching of poetry and literature. At Louisiana State University, prompted by their students' inability to interpret poetry, the two put together a booklet that modeled close reading through examples (Leitch 2001). The booklet was a success and laid the foundation for a number of best-selling textbooks: *An Approach to Literature* (1936), *Understanding Poetry* (1938), *Understanding Fiction* (1943), *Modern*

Rhetoric (1949), and, in collaboration with Robert Heilman, *Understanding Drama* (1945). Brooks' two most influential works also came out of the success of the booklet: *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939) and *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947) (Leitch 2001).

From 1941 to 1975, Brooks held many academic positions and received a number of distinguished fellowships and honorary doctorates. In 1941, he worked as a visiting professor at the University of Texas, Austin. From 1947 to 1975, he was an English professor at Yale University, where he held the position of Gray Professor of Rhetoric and Gray Professor of Rhetoric Emeritus from 1960 until his retirement, except 1964 to 1966 (Singh 1991). His tenure at Yale was marked by ongoing research into Southern literature, which resulted in the publication of Brooks' studies of William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County (1963, 1978) (Leitch 2001). At Yale, he accepted honorary membership in Manuscript Society. In 1948, he was a fellow of the Kenyon School of English. From 1951 to 1953, he was a fellow of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and was a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. During this time, he received the Guggenheim Fellowship and held it again in 1960. From 1963 to 1972, he was awarded honorary doctorates of literature from Upsala College, the University of Kentucky, the University of Exeter, Washington and Lee University, Saint Louis University, Tulane University, and Centenary College NJ (Singh 1991).

Brooks' other positions included working as a cultural attaché for the American embassy in London from 1964 to 1966. Further, he held memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the American Philosophical Society (Singh 1991).

The National Endowment for the Humanities selected Brooks for the 1985 Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. He delivered the lecture both in Washington and at Tulane University in New Orleans, and it was subsequently included as "Literature in a Technological Age" in a collection of his essays.

1.0.1. Brooks and New Criticism:

Brooks was the central figure of New Criticism, a movement that emphasized structural and textual analysis—close reading—over historical or biographical analysis. Brooks advocates close reading because, as he states in *The Well Wrought Urn*, "by making the closest examination of what the poem says as a poem" (qtd. in Leitch 2001), a critic can effectively interpret and explicate the text. For him, the crux of New Criticism is that literary study be "concerned primarily with the work itself" (qtd. in Leitch 2001). In "The Formalist Critics," Brooks offers "some articles of faith" (qtd. in Leitch 2001) to which he subscribes. These articles exemplify the tenets of New Criticism:

- That the primary concern of criticism is with the problem of unity—the kind of whole which the literary work forms or fails to form, and the relation of the various parts to each other in building up this whole.
- That in a successful work, format and content cannot be separated.
- That form is meaning.
- That literature is ultimately metaphorical and symbolic.

- That the general and the universal are not seized upon by abstraction, but got at through the concrete and the particular.
- That literature is not a surrogate for religion.
- That, as Allen Tate says, "specific moral problems" are the subject matter of literature, but that the purpose of literature is not to point a moral.
- That the principles of criticism define the area relevant to literary criticism; they do not constitute a method for carrying out the criticism (qtd. in Leitch 2001).

New Criticism involves examining a poem's "technical elements, textual patterns, and incongruities" (Leitch 2001) with a kind of scientific rigor and precision. From I. A. Richards' *The Principles of Literary Criticism and Practical Criticism*, Brooks formulated guidelines for interpreting poetry (Leitch 2001). Brooks formulated these guidelines in reaction to ornamentalist theories of poetry, to the common practice of critics going outside the poem (to historical or biographical contexts), and his and Warren's frustration with trying to teach college students to analyze poetry and literature (Leitch 2001).

Brooks and Warren were teaching using textbooks "full of biographical facts and impressionistic criticism" (Singh 1991). The textbooks failed to show how poetic language differed from the language of an editorial or a work of non-fiction. From this frustration, Brooks and Warren published *Understanding Poetry*. In the book, the authors assert poetry should be taught as poetry, and the critic should resist reducing a poem to a simple paraphrase, explicating it through biographical or historical contexts, and interpreting it didactically (Singh 1991).

For Brooks and Warren, paraphrase and biographical and historical background information is useful as a means of clarifying interpretation, but it should be used as means to an end (Singh 1991).

Brooks took this notion of paraphrase and developed it further in his classic *The Well Wrought Urn*. The book is a polemic against the tendency for critics to reduce a poem to a single narrative or didactic message. He describes summative, reductionist reading of poetry with a phrase still popular today: "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (Leitch 2001). In fact, he argued poetry serves no didactic purpose because producing some kind of statement would be counter to a poem's purpose. Brooks argues "through irony, paradox, ambiguity and other rhetorical and poetic devices of his or her art, the poet works constantly to resist any reduction of the poem to a paraphrasable core, favoring the presentation of conflicting facets of theme and patterns of resolved stresses" (Leitch 2001).

In addition to arguing against historical, biographical, and didactic readings of a poem, Brooks believed that a poem should not be criticized on the basis of its effect on the reader. In an essay called "The Formalist Critics," he says that "the formalist critic assumes an ideal reader: that is, instead of focusing on the varying spectrum of possible readings, he attempts to find a central point of reference from which he can focus upon the structure of the poem or novel" (qtd. in Rivkin, 24). While he admits that it is problematic to assume such a reference point, he sees it as the only viable option. Since the other options would be either to give any reading equal status with any other reading, or to establish a group of "'qualified' readers" and use those as a range of standard interpretations. In the first case, a correct or "standard" reading would become impossible; in the second case, an ideal reader has still been assumed under the guise of multiple ideal readers

(Rivkin 24). Thus, Brooks does not accept the idea of considering critics' emotional responses to works of literature as a legitimate approach to criticism. He says that "a detailed description of my emotional state on reading certain works has little to do with indicating to an interested reader what the work is and how the parts of it are related" (Rivkin 24). For Brooks, nearly everything a critic evaluates must come from within the text itself. This opinion is similar to that expressed by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley in their famous essay "The Affective Fallacy," in which they argue that a critic is "a teacher or explicator of meanings," not a reporter of "physiological experience" in the reader (qtd. in Adams, 1029, 1027).

Because New Criticism isolated the text and excluded historical and biographical contexts, critics argued as early as 1942 that Brooks' approach to criticism was flawed for being overly narrow and for "disabling any and all attempts to relate literary study to political, social, and cultural issues and debates" (1350). His reputation suffered in the 1970s and 1980s when criticism of New Criticism increased. Brooks rebuffed the accusations that New Criticism has an "antihistorical thrust" (Leitch 2001) and a "neglect of context" (Leitch 2001). He insisted he was not excluding context because a poem possesses organic unity, and it is possible to derive a historical and biographical context from the language the poet uses (Singh 1991). He argues "A poem by Donne or Marvell does not depend for its success on outside knowledge that we bring to it; it is richly ambiguous yet harmoniously orchestrated, coherent in its own special aesthetic terms" (Leitch 2001).

New Criticism was accused by critics of having a contradictory nature. Brooks writes, on the one hand, "the resistance which any good poem sets up

against all attempts to paraphrase it" (qtd. in Leitch 2001) is the result of the poet manipulating and warping language to create new meaning. On the other hand, he admonishes the unity and harmony in a poem's aesthetics. These seemingly contradictory forces in a poem create tension and paradoxical irony according to Brooks, but critics questioned whether irony leads to a poem's unity or undermines it (Leitch 2001). Poststructuralists in particular saw a poem's resistance and warped language as competing with its harmony and balance that Brooks celebrates (Leitch 2001).

Ronald Crane was particularly hostile to the views of Brooks and the other New Critics. In "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks," Crane writes that under Brooks's view of a poem's unity being achieved through the irony and paradox of the opposing forces it contains, the world's most perfect example of such an ironic poem would be Albert Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$, which equates matter and energy at a constant rate (Searle).

In his later years, Brooks criticized the poststructuralists for inviting subjectivity and relativism into their analysis, asserting "each critic played with the text's language unmindful of aesthetic relevance and formal design" (Leitch 2001). This approach to criticism, Brooks argued, "denied the authority of the work" (Leitch 2001).

Understanding Poetry was an unparalleled success and remains "a classic manual for the intellectual and imaginative skills required for the understanding of poetry" (Singh 1991). Further, critics praise Brooks and Warren for "introducing New Criticism with commendable clarity" (Singh 1991) and for teaching students

how to read and interpret poetry. Arthur Mizener commended Brooks and Warren for offering a new way of teaching poetry:

“For us the real revolution in critical theory...was heralded by the publication, in 1938, of *Understanding Poetry*...for many of us who were preparing ourselves to teach English in those years....this book...came as a kind of revelation. It made sense because it opened up for us a way of talking about an actual poem in an actual classroom, and because the technique of focusing upon a poem as language rather than as history or biography or morality, gave a whole new meaning to and justification for the teaching of poetry (qtd. in Singh 1991).”

In an obituary for Brooks, John W. Stevenson of Converse College notes Brooks “redirect[ed] and revolutionize[d] the teaching of literature in American colleges and universities” (1994). Further, Stevenson admits Brooks was “the person who brought excitement and passion to the study of literature” (1994) and “whose work...became the model for a whole profession” (1994).

Along with New Criticism, Brooks’ studies of Faulkner, Southern literature, and T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (appearing in *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*) remain classic texts. Mark Royden Winchell calls Brooks’ text on Faulkner “the best book yet on the works of William Faulkner” (1996). Eliot himself commended Brooks in a letter for Brooks’ critique of “The Waste Land” (Singh 1991). Further, Winchell praises Brooks for “helping invent the modern literary quarterly” (1996) through the success of *The Southern Review*.

As testament to Brooks' influence, fellow critic and former teacher John Crowe Ransom calls Brooks "the most forceful and influential critic of poetry that we have" (qtd. in Singh 1991). Elsewhere, Ransom has even gone so far as to describe Brooks as a "spell binder" (qtd. in Singh 1991).

2.0. The Heresy of Paraphrase: Introduction

"The Heresy of Paraphrase" is the title of a chapter in *The Well-Wrought Urn*, a seminal work of the New Criticism by Cleanth Brooks. Brooks argued that meaning in poetry is irreducible, because "a true poem is a simulacrum of reality...an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience." Brooks emphasized structure, tension, balance, and irony over meaning, statement, and subject matter. He relied on comparisons with non-verbal arts in order to shift discussion away from summarizable content:

The essential structure of a poem (as distinguished from the rational or logical structure of the 'statement' which we abstract from it) resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses. Or, to move closer still to poetry by considering the temporal arts, the structure of a poem resembles that of a ballet or musical composition. It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonizations, developed through a temporal scheme.

Proper criticism responds with suppleness and delicacy to such patterns, rather than paraphrasing their propositional content.

Central to "The Heresy of Paraphrase" was a vigorous critique of conventional distinctions between form and content:

The structure meant is certainly not 'form' in the conventional sense in which we think of form as a kind of envelope which 'contains' the 'content.' The structure obviously is everywhere conditioned by the nature of the material which goes into the poem. The nature of the material sets the problem to be solved, and the solution is the ordering of the material...The relationship between the intellectual and the non-intellectual elements in a poem is actually far more intimate than the conventional accounts would represent it to be: the relationship is not that of an idea 'wrapped in emotion' or a 'prose-sense decorated by sensuous imagery.

Though Brooks applied this theory to his reading of poetry from many periods, subsequent literary scholars have suggested that the doctrine was shaped by the aesthetics of modernist literature. They point out that the New Criticism emerged at the peak of T. S. Eliot's influence as both poet and critic. Archibald Macleish's "Ars Poetica" (written eleven years before *The Well Wrought Urn*) is often cited as prefiguring Brooks' doctrine:

A poem should be palpable and mute

As a globed fruit

Dumb

As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown –

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind –

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea –

A poem should not mean

But be.

Though many of the aesthetic assumptions of the New Criticism are now challenged or dismissed, the "heresy of paraphrase" is still commonly used to refer to reductive or utilitarian approaches to poetry.

3.0. The Heresy of Paraphrase: The Text

The ten poems that have been discussed were not selected because they happened to express a common theme or to display some particular style or to share a special set of symbols. It has proved, as a matter of fact, somewhat surprising to see how many items they do have in common: the light symbolism as used in "L'Allegro-Il Penseroso" and in the "Intimations" ode, for example; or, death as a sexual metaphor in "The Canonization" and in The Rape of the Lock; or

the similarity of problem and theme in the "Intimations" ode and "Among School Children."

On reflection, however, it would probably warrant more surprise if these ten poems did not have much in common. For they are all poems which most of us will feel are close to the central stream of the tradition. Indeed, if there is any doubt on this point, it will have to do with only the first and last members of the series-poems whose relation to the tradition I shall, for reasons to be given a little later, be glad to waive. The others, it will be granted, are surely in the main stream of the tradition.

As a matter of fact, a number of the poems discussed in this book were not chosen by me but were chosen for me. But having written on these, I found that by adding a few poems I could construct a chronological series which (though it makes no pretension to being exhaustive of periods or types) would not leave seriously unrepresented any important period since Shakespeare. In filling the gaps I tried to select poems which had been held in favor in their own day and which most critics still admire. There were, for example, to be no "metaphysical" poems beyond the first exhibit and no "modern" ones other than the last. But the intervening poems were to be read as one has learned to read Donne and the moderns. One was to attempt to see, in terms of this approach, what the masterpieces had in common rather than to see how the poems of different historical periods differed-and in particular to see whether they had anything in common with the "metaphysicals" and with the moderns.

The reader will by this time have made up his mind as to whether the readings are adequate. (I use the word advisedly, for the readings do not pretend to be exhaustive, and certainly it is highly unlikely that they are not in error in one detail or another.) If the reader feels that they are seriously inadequate, then the case has been judged; for the generalizations that follow will be thoroughly vitiated by the inept handling of the particular cases on which they depend.

If, however, the reader does feel them to be adequate, it ought to be readily apparent that the common goodness which the poems share will have to be stated, not in terms of "content" or "subject matter" in the usual sense in which we use these terms, but rather in terms of structure. The "content" of the poems is 'various, and if we attempt to find one quality of content which is shared by all the poems—a "poetic" subject matter or diction or imagery—we shall find that we have merely confused the issues. For what is it to be poetic? Is the schoolroom of Yeats's poem poetic or unpoetic? Is Shakespeare's "new-borne babe Striding; the blast" poetic whereas the idiot of his "Life is a tale told by an idiot" is unpoetic? If Herrick's "budding boy or girl" is poetic, then why is not that monstrosity of the newspaper's society page, the "society bud," poetic too?

To say this is not, of course, to say that all materials have precisely the same potentialities (as if the various pigments on the palette had the same potentialities, any one of them suiting the given picture as well as another). But what has been said, on the other hand, requires to be said: for, if we are to proceed at all, we must draw a sharp distinction between the attractiveness or beauty of any particular item taken as such and the "beauty" of the poem considered as a whole. The latter is the effect of a total pattern, and of a kind of pattern which can incorporate within itself items intrinsically beautiful or ugly, attractive or

repulsive. Unless one asserts the primacy of the pattern, a poem becomes merely a bouquet of intrinsically beautiful items.

But though it is in terms of structure that we must describe poetry, the term "structure" is certainly not altogether satisfactory as a term. One means by it something far more internal than the metrical pattern, say, or than the sequence of images. The structure meant is certainly not "form" in the conventional sense in which we think of form as a kind of envelope which "contains" the "content." The structure obviously is everywhere conditioned by the nature of the material which goes into the poem. The nature of the material sets the problem to be solved, and the solution is the ordering of the material.

Pope's *Rape of the Lock* will illustrate: the structure is not the heroic couplet as such, or the canto arrangement; for, important as is Pope's use of the couplet as one means by which he secures the total effect, the heroic couplet can be used-has been used many times -as an instrument in securing very different effects. The structure of the poem, furthermore, is not that of the mock-epic convention, though here, since the term "mock-epic" has implications of attitude, we approach a little nearer to the kind of structure of which we speak.

The structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes, and meanings. But even here one needs to make important qualifications: the principle is not one which involves the arrangement of the various elements into homogeneous groupings, pairing like with like. It unites the like with the unlike. It does not unite them, however, by the simple process of allowing one connotation to cancel out

another nor does it reduce the contradictory attitudes to harmony by a process of subtraction. The unity is not a unity of the sort to be achieved by the reduction and simplification appropriate to an algebraic formula. It is a .positive unity, not a negative; it represents not a residue but an achieved harmony.

The attempt to deal with a structure such as this may account for the frequent occurrence in the preceding chapters of such terms as "ambiguity," "paradox," "complex of attitudes," and-most frequent of all, and perhaps most annoying to the reader-"irony." I hasten to add that I hold no brief for these terms as such. Perhaps they are inadequate. Perhaps they are misleading. It is to be hoped in that case that we can eventually improve upon them. But adequate terms-whatever those terms may turn out to be-will certainly have to be terms which do justice to the special kind of structure which seems to emerge as the common structure of poems so diverse on other counts as are *The Rape of the Lock* and "Tears, Idle Tears."

The conventional terms are much worse than inadequate: they are positively misleading in their implication that the poem constitutes a "statement" of some sort, the statement being true or false, and expressed more or less clearly or eloquently or beautifully; for it is from this formula that most of the common heresies about poetry derive. The formula begins by introducing a dualism which thenceforward is rarely overcome, and which at best can be overcome only by the most elaborate and clumsy qualifications. Where it is not overcome, it leaves the critic lodged upon one or the other of the horns of a dilemma: the critic is forced to judge the poem by its political or scientific or philosophical truth; or, he is forced to judge the poem by its form as conceived externally and detached from human experience. Mr. Alfred Kazin, for example, to take an instance from a recent and

popular book, accuses the "new formalists"-his choice of that epithet is revealing--of accepting the latter horn of the dilemma because he notices that they have refused the former. In other words, since they refuse to rank poems by their messages, he assumes that they are compelled to rank them by their formal embellishments.

The omnipresence of this dilemma, a false dilemma, I believe, will also account for the fact that so much has been made in the preceding chapters of the resistance which any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it. The point is surely not that we cannot describe adequately enough for many purposes what the poem in general is "about" and what the general effect of the poem is: *The Rape of the Lock* is about the foibles of an eighteenth-century belle. The effect of "Corinna's going a-Maying" is one of gaiety tempered by the poignance of the fleetingness of youth. We can very properly use paraphrases as pointers and as shorthand references provided that we know what we are doing. But it is highly important that we know what we are doing and that we see plainly that the paraphrase is not the real core of meaning which constitutes the essence of the poem.

For the imagery and the rhythm are not merely the instruments by which this fancied core-of-meaning which-can-be-expressed-in-a-paraphrase is directly rendered. Even in the simplest poem their mediation is not positive and direct. Indeed, whatever statement we may seize upon as incorporating the "meaning" of the poem, immediately the imagery and the rhythm seem to set up tensions with it, warping and twisting it, qualifying and revising it. This is true of Wordsworth's "Ode" no less than of Donne's "Canonization." To illustrate: if we say that the "Ode" celebrates the spontaneous "naturalness" of the child, there is the poem

itself to indicate that Nature has a more sinister aspect-that the process by which the poetic lamb becomes the dirty old sheep or the child racing over the meadows becomes the balding philosopher is a process that is thoroughly "natural. Or, If we say that the thesis of the "Ode" is that the child brings into the natural world a supernatural glory which acquaintance with the world eventually and inevitably quenches in the light of common day, there is the last stanza and the drastic qualifications which It asserts: it is significant that the thoughts that he too deep for tears are mentioned in this sunset stanza of the "Ode" and that they are thoughts, not of the child, but of the man.

We have precisely the same problem if we make our example *The Rape of the Lock*. Does the poet assert that Belinda is a goddess? Or does he say that she is a brainless chit? Whichever alternative we take, there are elaborate qualifications to be made. Moreover, if the simple propositions offered seem in their forthright simplicity to make too easy the victory of the poem over any possible statement of its meaning, then let the reader try to formulate a proposition that will say what the poem "says." As his proposition approaches adequacy, he will find, not only that it has increased greatly in length, but that it has begun to fill itself up with reservations and qualifications-and most significant of all-the formulator will find that he has himself begun to fall back upon metaphors of his own in his attempt to indicate what the poem "says." In sum, his proposition, as it approaches adequacy, ceases to be a proposition.

Consider one more case, "Corinna's going a-Maying." Is the doctrine preached to Corinna throughout the first four stanzas true? Or is it damnably false? Or is it a "harmlesse follie"? Here perhaps we shall be tempted to take the last option as the saving mean-what the poem really says-and my account of the poem

at the end of the third chapter is perhaps susceptible of this interpretation--or misinterpretation. If so, it is high time to clear the matter up. For we mistake matters grossly if we take the poem to be playing with opposed extremes, only to point the golden mean in a doctrine which, at the end, will correct the falsehood of extremes. The reconciliation of opposites which the poet characteristically makes is not that of a prudent splitting of the difference between antithetical overemphases.

It is not so in Wordsworth's poem nor in Keats's nor in Pope's. It is not so even in this poem of Herrick's. For though the poem reflects, if we read it carefully, the primacy of the Christian mores, the pressure exerted throughout the poem is upon the pagan appeal; and the poem ends, significantly, with a reiteration of the appeal to Corinna to go a-Maying, an appeal which, if qualified by the Christian view, still, in a sense, has been deepened and made more urgent by that very qualification. The imagery of loss and decay, it must be remembered, comes in this last stanza after the admission that the May-day rites are not a real religion but a "harmless follie."

If we are to get all these qualifications into our formulation of what the poem says--and they are relevant--then, our formulation of the "statement" made by Herrick's poem will turn out to be quite as difficult as that of Pope's mock-epic. The truth of the matter is that all such formulations lead away from the center of the poem--not toward it; that the "prose-sense" of the poem is not a rack on which the stuff of the poem is hung; that it does not represent the "inner" structure or the "essential" structure or the "real" structure of the poem. We may use--and in many connections must use--such formulations as more or less convenient ways of referring to parts of the poem. But such formulations are scaffoldings which we

may properly for certain purposes throw about the building: we must not mistake them for the internal and essential structure of the building itself.

Indeed, one may sum up by saying that most of the distempers of criticism come about from yielding to the temptation to take certain remarks which we make about the poem-statements about what it says or about what truth it gives or about what formulations it illustrates- for the essential core of the poem itself. As W. M. Urban puts it in his *Language and Reality*: "The general principle of the inseparability of intuition and expression holds with special force for the aesthetic intuition. Here it means that form and content, or content and medium, are inseparable. The artist does not first intuit his object and then find the appropriate medium. It is rather in and through his medium that he intuits the object." So much for the process of composition. As for the critical process: "To pass from the intuitible to the nonintuitable is to negate the function and meaning of the symbol." For it "is precisely because the more universal and ideal relations cannot be adequately expressed directly that they are indirectly expressed by means of the more intuitible."

The most obvious examples of such error (and for that reason those which are really least dangerous) are those theories which frankly treat the poem as propaganda. The most subtle (and the most stubbornly rooted in the ambiguities of language) are those which, beginning with the "paraphrasable" elements of the poem, refer the other elements of the poem finally to some role subordinate to the paraphrasable elements. (The relation between all the elements must surely be an organic one-there can be no question about that. There is; however, a very serious question as to whether the paraphrasable elements have primacy.)

Mr. Winters' position will furnish perhaps the most respectable example of the paraphrastic heresy. He assigns primacy to the "rational meaning" of the poem. "The relationship, in the poem, between rational statement and feeling." he remarks in his latest book, "is thus seen to be that of motive to emotion." He goes on to illustrate his point by a brief and excellent analysis of the following lines from Browning:

So wore night; the East was gray,
White the broad-faced hemlock flowers...

"The verb wore," he continues, "means literally that the night passed, but it carries with it connotations of exhaustion and attrition which belong to the condition of the protagonist; and grayness is a color which we associate with such a condition. If we change the phrase to read: 'Thus night passed,' we shall have the same rational meaning. and a meter quite as respectable, but no trace of the power of the line: the connotation of wore will be lost, and the connotation of gray will remain in a state of ineffective potentiality."

But the word wore does not mean literally "that the night passed," it means literally "that the night wore" -whatever wore may mean, and as Winters' own admirable analysis indicates. wore "means." whether rationally or irrationally. a great deal. Furthermore, "So wore night" and "Thus night passed" can be said to have "the same rational meaning" only if we equate "rational meaning" with the meaning of a loose paraphrase. And can a loose para phrase be said to be the "motive to emotion"? Can it be said to "generate" the feelings in question? (Or, would Mr. Winters not have us equate "rational statement" and "rational meaning"?)

Much more is at stake here than any quibble. In view of the store which Winters sets by rationality and of his penchant for poems which make their evaluations overtly, and in view of his frequent blindness to those poems which do not-in view of these considerations, it is important to see that what "So wore night" and "Thus night passed" have in common as their "rational meaning" is not the "rational meaning" of each but the lowest common denominator of both. To refer the structure of the poem to what is finally a paraphrase of the poem is to refer it to something outside the poem. *

To repeat, most of our difficulties in Criticism are rooted in the heresy of paraphrase. If we allow ourselves to be misled by it, we distort the relation of the poem to its "truth," we raise the problem of belief in a vicious and crippling form, we split the poem between its "form" and its "content"-we bring the statement to be conveyed into an unreal competition with science or philosophy or theology. In short, we put our questions about the poem in a form calculated to produce the battles of the last twenty-five years over the "use of poetry."

If we allow ourselves to be misled by the heresy of paraphrase, we run the risk of doing even more violence to the internal order of the poem itself. By taking the paraphrase as our point of stance, we misconceive the function of metaphor and meter. We demand logical coherences where they are sometimes irrelevant, and we fail frequently to see imaginative coherences on levels where they are highly relevant. Some of the implications of the paraphrastic heresy are so stubborn and so involved that I have thought best to relegate them to an appendix. There the reader who is interested may find further discussion of the problem and,

I could hope, answers to certain misapprehensions of the positive theory to be adumbrated here.

But what would be a positive theory? We tend to embrace the doctrine of a logical structure the more readily because, to many of us, the failure to do so seems to leave the meaning of the poem hopelessly up in the air. The alternative position will appear to us to lack even the relative stability of an Ivory Tower: it is rather commitment to a free balloon. For, to deny the possibility of pinning down what the poem "says" to some "statement" will seem to assert that the poem really says nothing. And to point out what has been suggested in earlier chapters and brought to a head in this one, namely, that one can never measure a poem against the scientific or philosophical yardstick for the reason that the poem, when laid along the yardstick, is never the "full poem" but an abstraction from the poem—such an argument will seem to such readers a piece of barren logic-chopping—a transparent dodge.

Considerations of strategy then, if nothing more, dictate some positive account of what a poem is and does. And some positive account can be given, though I cannot promise to do more than suggest what a poem is, nor will my terms turn out to be anything more than metaphors. *

The essential structure of a poem (as distinguished from the rational or logical structure of the "statement" which we abstract from it) resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses. Or, to move closer still to poetry by considering the temporal arts, the structure of a poem resembles that

of a ballet or musical composition. It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonizations, developed through a temporal scheme. *

Or, to move still closer to poetry, the structure of a poem resembles that of a play. This last example, of course, risks introducing once more the distracting element, since drama, like poetry, makes use of words. Yet, on the whole, most of us are less inclined to force the concept of "statement" on drama than on a lyric poem; for the very nature of drama is that of something "acted out"-something which arrives at its conclusion through conflict-something which builds conflict into its very being. The dynamic nature of drama, in short, allows us to regard it as an action rather than as a formula for action or as a statement about action. For this reason, therefore, perhaps the most helpful analogy by which to suggest the structure of poetry is that of the drama, and for many readers at least, the least confusing way in which to approach a poem is to think of it as a drama.

The general point, of course, is not that either poetry or drama makes no use of ideas, or that either is "merely emotional"-whatever that is----or that there is not the closest and most important relationship between the intellectual materials which they absorb into their structure and other elements in the structure. The relationship between the intellectual and the nonintellectual elements in a poem is actually far more intimate than the conventional accounts would represent it to be: the relationship is not that of an idea "wrapped in emotion" or a "prose-sense decorated by sensuous imagery."

The dimension in which the poem moves is not one which excludes ideas, but one which does include attitudes. The dimension includes ideas, to be sure; we

can always abstract an "idea" from a poem--even from the simplest poem--even from a lyric so simple and unintellectual as

Western wind, when wilt thou blow
That the small rain down can rain~
Christ, that my love were in my arms
And I in my bed again!

But the idea which we abstract--assuming that we can all agree on what that idea is--will always be abstracted: it will always be the projection of a plane along a line or the projection of a cone upon a plane.

If this last analogy proves to be more confusing than illuminating, let us return to the analogy with drama. We have argued that any proposition asserted in a poem is not to be taken in abstraction but is justified, in terms of the poem, if it is justified at all, not by virtue of its scientific or historical or philosophical truth, but is justified in terms of a principle analogous to that of dramatic propriety. Thus, the proposition that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" is given its precise meaning and significance by its relation to the total context of the poem.

This principle is easy enough to see when the proposition is asserted overtly in the poem--that is, when it constitutes a specific detail of the poem. But the reader may well ask: is it not possible to frame a proposition, a statement, which will adequately represent the total meaning of the poem; that is, is it not possible to elaborate a summarizing proposition which will "say," briefly and in the form of a proposition, what the poem "says" as a poem, a proposition which will say it fully and will say it exactly, no more and no less? Could not the poet, if he had chosen,

have framed such a proposition? Cannot we as readers and critics frame such a proposition?

The answer must be that the poet himself obviously did not-else he would not have had to write his poem. We as readers can attempt to frame such a proposition in our effort to understand the poem; it may well help toward an understanding. Certainly, the efforts to arrive at such propositions can do no harm if we do not mistake them for the inner core of the poem-if we do not mistake them for "what the poem really says." For, if we take one of them to represent the essential poem, we have to disregard the qualifications exerted by the total context as of no account, or else we have assumed that we can reproduce the effect of the total context in a condensed prose statement.*

But to deny that the coherence of a poem is reflected in a logical paraphrase of its "real meaning" is not, of course, to deny coherence to poetry; it is rather to assert that its coherence is to be sought elsewhere. The characteristic unity of a poem (even of those poems which may accidentally possess a logical unity as well as this poetic unity) lies in the unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude. In the unified poem, the poet has "come to terms" with his experience. The poem does not merely eventuate in a logical conclusion. The conclusion of the poem is the working out of the various tensions-set up by whatever means-by propositions, metaphors, symbols. The unity is achieved by a dramatic process, not a logical; it represents an equilibrium of forces, not a formula. It is "proved" as a dramatic conclusion is proved: by its ability to resolve the conflicts which have been accepted as the *donnees* of the drama.

Thus, it is easy to see why the relation of each item to the whole context is crucial, and why the effective and essential structure of the poem has to do with the complex of attitudes achieved. A scientific proposition can stand alone. If it is true, it is true. But the expression of an attitude, apart from the occasion which generates it and the situation which it encompasses, is meaningless. For example, the last two lines of the "Intimations" ode,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,

when taken in isolation-I do not mean quoted in isolation by one who is even vaguely acquainted with the context-makes a statement which is sentimental if taken in reference to the speaker, and one which is patent nonsense if taken with a general reference. The man in the street (of whom the average college freshman is a good enough replica) knows that the meanest flower that grows does not give him thoughts that lie too deep for tears; and, if he thinks about the matter at all, he is inclined to feel that the person who can make such an assertion is a very fuzzy sentimentalist.

We have already seen the ease with which the statement "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" becomes detached from its context, even in the hands of able critics; and we have seen the misconceptions that ensue when this detachment occurs. To take one more instance: the last stanza of Herrick's "Corinna," taken in isolation, would probably not impress the average reader as sentimental nonsense. Yet it would suffer quite as much by isolation from its context as would the lines from Keats's "Ode." For, as mere statement, it would become something flat and obvious-- of course our lives are short! And the conclusion from the fact would

turn into an obvious truism for the convinced pagan, and, for the convinced Christian, equally obvious, though damnable, nonsense.

Perhaps this is why the poet, to people interested in hard-and-fast generalizations, must always seem to be continually engaged in blurring out distinctions, effecting compromises, or, at the best, coming to his conclusions only after provoking and unnecessary delays. But this last position is merely another variant of the paraphrastic heresy: to assume it is to misconceive the end of poetry--to take its meanderings as negative, or to excuse them (with the comfortable assurance that the curved line is the line of beauty) because we can conceive the purpose of a poem to be only the production, in the end, of a proposition--of a statement.

But the meanderings of a good poem (they are meanderings only from the standpoint of the prose paraphrase of the poem) are not negative, and they do not have to be excused; and most of all, we need to see what their positive function is; for unless we can assign them a positive function, we shall find it difficult to explain why one divergence from "the prose line of the argument" is not as good as another. The truth is that the apparent irrelevancies which metrical pattern and metaphor introduce do become relevant when we realize that they function in a good poem to modify, qualify, and develop the total attitude which we are to take in coming to terms with the total situation.

If the last sentence seems to take a dangerous turn toward some special "use of poetry"--some therapeutic value for the sake of which poetry is to be cultivated--I can only say that I have in mind no special ills which poetry is to cure. Uses for poetry are always to be found, and doubtless will continue to be found. But my

discussion of the structure of poetry is not being conditioned at this point by some new and special role which I expect poetry to assume in the future or some new function to which I would assign it. The structure described- a structure of "gestures" or attitudes-seems to me to describe the essential structure of both the *Odyssey* and *The Waste Land*. It seems to be the kind of structure which the ten poems considered in this book possess in common.

If the structure of poetry is a structure of the order described, that fact may explain (if not justify) the frequency with which I have had to have recourse, in the foregoing chapters, to terms like "irony" and "paradox." By using the term irony, one risks, of course, making the poem seem arch and self-conscious, since irony, for most readers of poetry, is associated with satire, *vers de société*, and other "intellectual" poetries. Yet, the necessity for some such term ought to be apparent; and irony is the most general term that we have for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context. This kind of qualification, as we have seen, is of tremendous importance in any poem. Moreover, irony is our most general term for indicating that recognition of incongruities which, again, pervades all poetry to a degree far beyond what our conventional criticism has been heretofore willing to allow.

Irony in this general sense, then, is to be found in Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears" as well as in Donne's "Canonization." We have, of course, been taught to expect to find irony in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, but there is a profound irony in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; and there is irony of a very powerful sort in Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode. For the thrusts and pressures exerted by the various symbols in this poem are not avoided by the poet: they are taken into account and played, one against the other. Indeed, the symbols-from a scientific

point of view-are used perversely: it is the child who is the best philosopher; it is from a kind of darkness-from something that is "shadowy"-that the light proceeds; growth into manhood is viewed, not as an extrication from, but as an incarceration within, a prison.

There should be no mystery as to why this must be so. The terms of science are abstract symbols which do not change under the pressure of the context. They are pure (or aspire to be pure) denotations; they are defined in advance. They are not to be warped into new meanings. But where is the dictionary which contains the terms of a poem? It is a truism that the poet is continually forced to remake language. As Eliot has put it, his task is to "dislocate language into meaning." And, from the standpoint of a scientific vocabulary, this is precisely what he performs: for, rationally considered, the ideal language would contain one term for each meaning, and the relation between term and meaning would be constant. But the word, as the poet uses it, has to be conceived of, not as a discrete particle of meaning, but as a potential of meaning, a nexus or cluster of meanings.

What is true of the poet's language in detail is true of the larger wholes of poetry. And therefore, if we persist in approaching the poem as primarily a rational statement, we ought not to be surprised if the statements seems to be presented to us always in the ironic mode. When we consider the statement immersed in the poem, it presents itself to us, like the stick immersed in the pool of water, warped and bent. Indeed, whatever the statement, it will always show itself as deflected away from a positive, straightforward formulation.

It may seem perverse, however, to maintain, in the face of our revived interest in Donne, that the essential structure of poetry is not logical. For Donne has been appealed to of late as the great master of metaphor who imposes a clean logic on his images beside which the ordering of the images in Shakespeare's sonnet 3 is fumbling and loose. It is perfectly true that Donne makes a great show of logic; but two matters need to be observed. In the first place, the elaborated and "logical" figure is not Donne's only figure or even his staple one. "Telescoped" figures like "Made one anothers hermitage" are to be found much more frequently than the celebrated comparison of the souls of the lovers to the legs of a pair of compasses. In the second place, where Donne uses "logic," he regularly uses it to justify illogical positions. He employs it to overthrow a conventional position or to "prove" an essentially illogical one.

Logic, as Donne uses it, is nearly always an ironic logic to state the claims of an idea or attitude which we have agreed, with our everyday logic, is false. This is not to say, certainly, that Donne is not justified in using his logic so, or that the best of his poems are not "proved" in the only senses in which poems can be proved.

But the proof is not a logical proof. "The Canonization" will scarcely prove to the hard-boiled naturalist that the lovers, by giving up the world, actually attain a better world. Nor will the argument advanced in the poem convince the dogmatic Christian that Donne's lovers are really saints.

In using logic, Donne as a poet is fighting the devil with fire. To adopt Robert Penn Warren's metaphor (which, though I lift it somewhat scandalously out

of another context, will apply to this one): "The poet, somewhat less spectacularly [than the saint], proves his vision by submitting it to the fires of irony-to the drama of the structure-in the hope that the fires will refine it. In other words, the poet wishes to indicate that his vision has been earned, that it can survive reference to the complexities and contradictions of experience."

The same principle that inspires the presence of irony in so many of our great poems also accounts for the fact that so many of them seem to be built around paradoxes. Here again the conventional associations of the term may prejudice the reader just as the mention of Donne may prejudice him. For Donne, as one type of reader knows all too well, was of that group of poets who wished to impress their audience with their cleverness. All of us are familiar with the censure passed upon Donne and his followers by Dr. Johnson, and a great many of us still retain it as our own, softening only the rigor of it and the thoroughness of its application, but not giving it up as a principle.

Yet there are better reasons than that of rhetorical vainglory that have induced poet after poet to choose ambiguity and paradox rather than plain, discursive simplicity. It is not enough for the poet to analyze his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts. His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of reality-in this sense, at least, it is an "imitation"-by being an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience.

Tennyson cannot be content with saying that in memory the poet seems both dead and alive; he must dramatize its life-in-death for us, and his dramatization involves, necessarily, ironic shock and wonder. The dramatization demands that the antithetical aspects of memory be coalesced into one entity which-if we take it on the level of statement-is a paradox, the assertion of the union of opposites. Keats's Urn must express a life which is above life and its vicissitudes, but it must also bear witness to the fact that its life is not life at all but is a kind of death. To put it in other terms, the Urn must, in its role as historian, assert that myth is truer than history. Donne's lovers must reject the world in order to possess the world.

Or, to take one further instance: Wordsworth's light must serve as the common symbol for aspects of man's vision which seem mutually incompatible-intuition and analytic reason. Wordsworth's poem, as a matter of fact, typifies beautifully the poet's characteristic problem itself. For even this poem, which testifies so heavily to the way in which the world is split up and parceled out under the growing light of reason, cannot rest in this fact as its own mode of perception, and still be a poem. Even after the worst has been said about man's multiple vision, the poet must somehow prove that the child is father to the man, that the dawn light is still somehow the same light as the evening light.

If the poet, then, must perforce dramatize the oneness of the experience, even though paying tribute to its diversity, then his use of paradox and ambiguity is seen as necessary. He is not simply trying to spice up, with a superficially exciting or mystifying rhetoric, the old stale stockpot (though doubtless this will be what the inferior poet does generally and what the real poet does in his lapses). He is rather giving us an insight which preserves the unity of experience and

which, at its higher and more serious levels, triumphs over the apparently contradictory and conflicting elements of experience by unifying them into a new pattern.

Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode, then, is not only a poem, but, among other things, a parable about poetry. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is quite obviously such a parable. And, indeed, most of the poems which we have discussed in this study may be taken as such parables.

In one sense, Pope's treatment of Belinda raises all the characteristic problems of poetry. For Pope, in dealing with his "goddess," must face the claims of naturalism and of common sense which would deny divinity to her. Unless he faces them, he is merely a sentimentalist. He must do an even harder thing: he must transcend the conventional and polite attributions of divinity which would be made to her as an acknowledged belle. Otherwise, he is merely trivial and obvious. He must "prove" her divinity against the common-sense denial (the brutal denial) and against the conventional assertion (the polite denial). The poetry must be wrested from the context: Belinda's lock, which is what the rude young man wants and which Belinda rather prudishly defends and which the naturalist asserts is only animal and which displays in its curled care the style of a particular era of history, must be given a place of permanence among the stars.

4.0. Summary of 'The heresy of Paraphrase':

'The Heresy of Paraphrase' is Brooks' theoretical afterword to his practical criticism of particular poems in the previous ten chapters. These all share a

“common goodness . . . not in terms of ‘content’ or ‘subject matter’ . . ., but rather in terms of structure”. Distinguishing between the “attractiveness or beauty of any particular item taken as such and the ‘beauty’ of the poem considered as a whole” which is the “effect of a total pattern”. He finds the term structure unsatisfactory in many ways. By it, he intends something more than mere “metrical pattern” or the “sequence of images”. It is not ‘form’ in the conventional sense in which we think of form as a kind of envelope which ‘contains’ the ‘content.’ The structure obviously is everywhere conditioned by the nature of the material which goes into the poem. The nature of the material sets the problem to be solved, and the solution is the ordering of the material. For this reason, Brooks defines structure as one of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonising connotations, attitudes and meanings. . . [T]he principle is not one which involves the arrangement of the various elements into homogeneous groupings, pairing like with like. It unites the like with the unlike. It does not unite them, however, by the simple process of allowing one connotation to cancel out another nor does it reduce the contradictory attitudes to harmony by a process of subtraction. The unity is not a unity of the sort to be achieved by the reduction and simplification appropriate to an algebraic formula. It is a positive unity, not a negative; it represents not a residue but an achieved harmony. Brooks stresses his quest to find “adequate terms” that do justice to the special kind of structure which seems to emerge as the common structure of poems so diverse on other counts as are *The Rape of the Lock* and “Tears, Idle Tears”, terms which include “‘ambiguity,’ ‘paradox,’ ‘complex of attitudes,’ and ‘irony’”.

Brooks rejects the “conventional” view that the poem “constitutes a statement of some sort, the statement being true or false, and expressed more or less clearly or eloquently or beautifully; for it is

from this formula that most of the common heresies about poetry derive". This formula introduces a "dualism", leaving the critic "lodged upon one or other horn of a dilemma: the critic is forced to judge the poem by its political or scientific or philosophic truth; or he is forced to judge the poem by its form as conceived externally and detached from human experience". He cites a critic of the New Critics, Alfred Kazin, who "accuses the 'new formalists' of accepting the latter horn of the dilemma": "since they refuse to rank poems by their messages, he assumes that they are compelled to rank them by their formal embellishments". This alleged dilemma, Brooks argues, is a false one not least because of the "resistance which any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it".

Though we can "very properly use paraphrases as pointers and shorthand references", the paraphrase is "not the real core of meaning which constitutes the essence of the poem" for the "imagery and the rhythm are not merely the instruments by which this fancied core-of-meaning-which-can-be-expressed-in-a-paraphrase is directly rendered". The reason for this is simple, Brooks feels: "whatever statement we seize upon as incorporating the 'meaning' of the poem, immediately the imagery and rhythm seem to set up tensions with it, warping and twisting it, qualifying and revising it". This is true, he argues, of Wordsworth's "Ode," Donne's "The Canonisation," Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," and Herrick's "Corinna's Going a-Maying," for example. The tension informing poems such as these is not resolved in any simplistic way. We "mistake matters grossly", he argues, if we take the poem to be playing with opposed extremes, only to point the golden mean in a doctrine which, at the end, will correct the falsehood of extremes. The reconcilment of opposites which the poet characteristically makes is not that of a prudent splitting of the difference between antithetical overemphases.

Arguing that all attempts to formulate the “‘statement’ made by” a poem “lead away from the centre of the poem – not toward it”, Brooks’ point is that the “‘prose-sense’ of the poem is not a rack on which the stuff of the poem is hung; that it does not represent the ‘inner’ structure or the ‘essential’ structure or the ‘real’ structure of the poem”. Such views, he argues, are merely “scaffoldings which we may properly for certain purposes throw about the building: we must not mistake them for the internal and essential structure of the building itself”. Indeed, he emphasises that:

"most of the distempers of criticism come about by yielding to the temptation to take certain remarks which we make about the poem – statements about what it says or about what truth it gives or about what formulations it illustrates – for the essential core of the poem itself."

To take such a view is to ignore the fact that “form and content, or content and medium are inseparable. The artist does not first intuit his object and then find the appropriate medium. It is rather in and through his medium that he intuits the object”. Theories of criticism that ignore this truth, Brooks argues, “frankly treat the poem as propaganda”: they “beginning with the ‘paraphrasable’ elements of the poem, refer the other elements of the poem finally to some role subordinate to the paraphrasable elements”. Such a view ignores the fact that the “relation between all the elements must surely be an organic one”.

Such critics are guilty of what Brooks terms the “paraphrastic heresy”. They “refer the structure of the poem to what is finally a paraphrase of the poem” which is to “refer it to something

outside the poem”. Most of our “difficulties in criticism are rooted in the heresy of paraphrase” by which “distort the relation of the poem to its ‘truth’” and “split the poem between its ‘form’ and its ‘content’” and get dragged into controversies over the “use of poetry”. We “run the risk of doing . . . violence to the internal order of the poem itself”, we “misconceive the function of metaphor and metre. We demand logical coherence where they are sometimes irrelevant, and we fail frequently to see imaginative coherences on levels where they are highly relevant”. Though “to deny the possibility of pinning down what the poem ‘says’ to some ‘statement’ will seem to assert that the poem really says nothing”, Brooks insists that “one can never measure a poem against the scientific or philosophical yardstick for the reason that the poem, when laid against the yardstick, is never the ‘full poem’ but an abstraction from the poem”.

Having asserted what a poem is not, Brooks then attempts to offer a “positive account of what a poem is and does”. The

“essential structure of a poem (as distinguished from the rational or logical structure of the ‘statement’ which we abstract from it) resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses. . . . [T]he structure of a poem resembles that of a ballet or musical composition. It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonisations, developed through a temporal scheme. . . . [T]he structure of a poem resembles that of a play . . . for the very nature of drama is that of something acted out – something which arrives at its conclusion through conflict – something which builds conflict into its very being.

The dynamic nature of drama . . . allows us to regard it as an action rather than as a formula for action or as a statement about action. . . . The general point . . . is not that either poetry or drama makes no use of ideas, . . . or that there is not the closest and most important relationship between the intellectual materials which they absorb into their structure and other elements in the structure. The relationship between the intellectual and non-intellectual elements in a poem is actually far more intimate than the conventional accounts would represent it to be: the relationship is not that of . . . ‘prose sense decorated by sensuous imagery.’

To be sure, ideas can always be abstracted from poems, but the “idea which we abstract . . . will always be abstracted”. Any “proposition asserted” in a poem is “justified in terms of the poem . . . not by virtue of its scientific or historical or philosophical truth, but . . . in terms of a principle analogous to dramatic propriety”. Such enigmatic phrases as Keats’ “Beauty is truth, truth beauty” is “given its precise meaning and significance by its relation to the total context of the poem”. Brooks considers the possibility that a reader may ask whether it is “possible to frame a proposition, a statement, which will adequately represent the total meaning of the poem”, a “summarising proposition which will ‘say’ . . . what the poem ‘says’ as a poem”. Brooks’ answer: the “poet himself obviously did not – else he would not have had to write his poem”. Such an undertaking “may well help toward an understanding” but we should not “mistake them for the inner core of the poem”. If “we take them to represent the essential poem, we have to disregard the qualifications exerted by the total context as of no account”.

Brooks argues that “to deny that the coherence of a poem is reflected in a logical paraphrase of its ‘real meaning’ is not . . . to deny coherence to poetry” but “to assert that its coherence is to be

sought elsewhere”. This is because the:

"characteristic unity of a poem . . . lies in the unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude. In the unified poem, the poet has ‘come to terms’ with his experience. The poem does not merely eventuate in a logical conclusion. The conclusion of the poem is a working out of the various tensions . . . by propositions, metaphors, symbols. The unity is achieved by a dramatic process, not a logical; it represents an equilibrium of forces, not a formula. It is ‘proved’ as a dramatic conclusion is proved: by its ability to resolve the conflicts which have been accepted as the *données* of the drama."

This is why the:

"relation of each item to the whole context is crucial, and why the . . . essential structure of the poem has to do with the complex of attitudes achieved. A scientific proposition can stand alone. If it is true, it is true. But the expression of an attitude, apart from the occasion which generates it and the situation which encompasses it, is meaningless."

The poet may appear to be “continually engaged in blurring our distinctions, effecting compromises, or at the best, coming to his conclusions only after provoking and unnecessary delays”. But this too is merely a variant of the paraphrastic heresy: “to assume it is to misconceive the end of poetry – to take its meanderings as negative, or to excuse them . . . because we can conceive the purpose of a poem to be only the production, in the end, of a proposition – of a

statement". The "meanderings of a good poem . . . are not negative, and they do not have to be excused". They perform a "positive function" : the "apparent irrelevancies which metrical pattern and metaphor introduce become relevant when we realise that they function in a good poem to modify, qualify, and develop the total attitude which we are to take in coming to terms with the total situation".

Brooks stresses that he is not positing "some new and special role" for poetry. He is merely, he believes, describing the "essential structure" common to all good poems: one of "'gestures' or attitudes". This is why terms like 'irony' and 'paradox' are essential to his project. By the former, associated as it often is with satire, etc., he does not mean to suggest that the poem is "arch and self-conscious", but rather to denote the "kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context". It is our "general term for indicating that recognition of

incongruities which . . . pervades all poetry". It captures the way in which the "thrusts and pressures exerted by the various symbols in this poem are not avoided by the poet: they are taken into account and played, one against the other". This is what differentiates poetry from science: because scientific terms are "abstract symbols which do not change under the pressure of the context. They are pure (or aspire to be pure) denotations" that "are not to be warped into new meanings". By contrast, "where is the dictionary which contains the terms of a poem? It is a truism that the poet is continually forced to remake language. As Eliot has put it, his task is to 'dislocate language into meaning'". The word, "as the poet uses it, has to be conceived of, not as a discrete particle of meaning, ut as a potential of meaning, a nexus or cluster of meanings".

“What is true of the poet’s language in detail is true of the larger wholes of poetry”, Brooks contends. “When we consider the statement immersed in the poem, it presents itself to us, like the stick

immersed in the pool of water, warped and bent. Indeed, whatever the statement, it will always show itself as deflected away from a positive, straightforward formulation”. Alluding to Eliot’s essay “The Metaphysical Poets,” Brooks stresses that Donne, though reputed to be the “great master of metaphor who imposes a clean logic on his images” by contrast to the images of other poets such as

Shakespeare deemed “fumbling and loose”, himself most often “uses ‘logic’ . . . to justify illogical positions. He employs it to overthrow a conventional position or to ‘prove’ an essentially illogical one”. He nearly always uses an “ironic logic to state the claims of an idea or attitude which we have agreed, without everyday logic, is false”. This is true, for example, of “The Canonisation” where the final paradoxical outcome of the poem is that two lovers deserved to be canonised as saints: this is shocking because one is not accustomed, Brooks argues, to thinking of erotic love as akin to agape or spiritual love. This is why Brooks suggests that the “same principle that inspires the presence of irony in so many of our great poems also accounts for the fact that so many of them seem to be built around paradoxes”. It is not a matter of “rhetorical vain-glory” that “poet after poet” chose “ambiguity and paradox rather than plain discursive simplicity”. This is because it is:

"not enough for the poet to analyse his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts. His task is finally to unify experience. He may return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it be a true

poem is a simulacrum of reality – in this sense, at least, it is an ‘imitation’ – by being an experience rather than a mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience."

A poem is a “dramatisation” of being which “demands that the antithetical aspects of memory be coalesced into one entity which – if we take it on the level of statement is a paradox, the assertion of the union of opposites”. “If the poet . . . must perforce dramatise the oneness of the experience, even though paying tribute to its diversity, then his use of paradox and ambiguity is seen as necessary”. He is “giving us an insight which preserves the unity of experience and which, at its higher and more serious levels, triumphs over the apparently contradictory and conflicting elements of experience by unifying them into a new pattern”.

5.0. Sources/Suggested Reading:

- 1. The Well Wrought Urn by Cleanth Brooks**
- 2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Heresy_of_Paraphrase**
- 3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleanth_Brooks**
- 4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Well_Wrought_Urn**

PAPER XVI

UNIT III

THE LINE OF WIT by F. R. LEAVIS

1.0. Introduction:

Frank Raymond "F. R." Leavis (14 July 1895 – 14 April 1978) was an influential British literary critic of the early-to-mid-twentieth century. He taught for much of his career at Downing College, Cambridge but often latterly at the University of York.

Frank Raymond Leavis was born in Cambridge, in 1895, about a decade after T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence and Ezra Pound, literary figures whose reputations he would later contribute to enhancing. His father, Harry Leavis, a cultured man, ran a small shop in Cambridge which sold pianos and other musical instruments (Hayman 1), and his son was to retain a respect for him throughout his life. Frank Leavis was educated at a local fee-paying independent school, The Perse School, whose headmaster at the time was Dr. W. H. D. Rouse. Rouse was a classicist and known for his "direct method," a practice which required teachers to carry on classroom conversations with their pupils in Latin and classical Greek. Though he had some fluency in foreign languages, Leavis felt that his native

language was the only one on which he was able to speak with authority. His extensive reading in the classical languages is not therefore strongly evident in his critical publications (Bell 3).

Leavis was nineteen when Britain declared war on Germany in 1914. Not wishing for a military role, he joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit, FAU, working in France immediately behind the Western Front, and carrying a copy of Milton's poems with him. On the introduction of conscription in 1916, he benefited from the blanket recognition of FAU members as conscientious objectors. His wartime experiences had a lasting effect on Leavis; mentally, he was prone to insomnia, while exposure to poison gas is often believed to have damaged his physical health, primarily his digestive system.

Leavis was slow to recover from the war, and he was later to refer to it as "the great hiatus." He had won a scholarship from the Perse School to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and in 1919 began to read for a degree in History. In his second year, he changed to English and became a pupil at the newly founded English School at Cambridge. Despite graduating with first-class honours, Leavis was not seen as a strong candidate for a research fellowship and instead embarked on a PhD, then a lowly career move for an aspiring academic. In 1924, Leavis presented a thesis on 'The Relationship of Journalism to Literature', which 'studied the rise and earlier development of the press in England' (Bell 4). This work contributed to his lifelong concern with the way in which the ethos of a periodical can both reflect and

mould the cultural aspirations of a wider public (Greenwood 8). In 1927, Leavis was appointed as a probationary lecturer for the university, and, when his first substantial publications began to appear a few years later, their style was very much influenced by the demands of teaching.

In 1929 Leavis married one of his students, Queenie Roth, and this union resulted in a productive collaboration which yielded many great critical works culminating with their annus mirabilis in 1932 when Leavis published *New Bearings in English Poetry*, his wife published *Fiction and the Reading Public*, and the quarterly periodical *Scrutiny* was founded (Greenwood 9). A small publishing house, The Minority Press, was founded by Gordon Fraser, another of Leavis' students, in 1930, and served for several years as an additional outlet for the work of Leavis and some of his students. Also in this year Leavis was appointed director of studies in English at Downing College where he was to teach for the next thirty years. He soon founded *Scrutiny*, the critical quarterly that he edited until 1953, using it as a vehicle for the new Cambridge criticism, upholding rigorous intellectual standards and attacking the dilettante elitism he believed to characterise the Bloomsbury Group. *Scrutiny* provided a forum for (on occasion) identifying important contemporary work and (more commonly) reviewing the traditional canon by serious criteria (Bell 6). This criticism was informed by a teacher's concern to present the essential to students, taking into consideration time constraints and a limited range of experience.

New Bearings in English Poetry was the first major volume of criticism Leavis was to publish, and it provides insight into his own critical positions. He has been frequently (but often erroneously) associated with the American school of New Critics, a group which advocated close reading and detailed textual analysis of poetry over, or even instead of, an interest in the mind and personality of the poet, sources, the history of ideas and political and social implications. Although there are undoubtedly similarities between Leavis's approach to criticism and that of the New Critics (most particularly in that both take the work of art itself as the primary focus of critical discussion), Leavis is ultimately distinguishable from them, since he never adopted (and was explicitly hostile to) a theory of the poem as a self-contained and self-sufficient aesthetic and formal artefact, isolated from the society, culture and tradition from which it emerged. *New Bearings*, devoted principally to Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Butler Yeats, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, was an attempt to identify the essential new achievements in modern poetry (Bell 6). It also discussed at length and praised the work of Ronald Bottrall, whose importance was not to be confirmed by readers and critics.

In 1933 Leavis published *For Continuity*, which was a selection of *Scrutiny* essays. This publication, along with *Culture and the Environment* (a joint effort with Denys Thompson), stressed the importance of an informed and discriminating, highly trained intellectual elite whose existence within university English departments would help preserve the cultural continuity of English life and literature. In *Education and the University* (1943), Leavis argued that 'there is a prior cultural achievement

of language; language is not a detachable instrument of thought and communication. It is the historical embodiment of its community's assumptions and aspirations at levels which are so subliminal much of the time that language is their only index' (Bell 9).

In 1948, Leavis focused his attention on fiction and made his general statement about the English novel in *The Great Tradition* where he traced this claimed tradition through Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. Contentiously, Leavis, and his followers, excluded major authors such as Charles Dickens, Laurence Sterne and Thomas Hardy from his canon, but eventually he changed his position on Dickens, publishing *Dickens the Novelist* in 1970. The Leavisites' downgrading of Hardy for a time damaged the novelist's reputation, but eventually may have damaged Leavis's own authority.

In 1950, in the introduction to *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*, a publication he edited, Leavis set out the historical importance of utilitarian thought. Leavis found Bentham to epitomize the scientific drift of culture and social thinking, which was in his view the enemy of the holistic, humane understanding he championed (Bell 9).

The Common Pursuit, another collection of his essays from *Scrutiny*, was published in 1952. Outside of his work on English poetry and the novel, this is Leavis's best-known and most influential work. A decade later Leavis

was to earn much notoriety when he delivered his Richmond lecture, *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow* at Downing College. Leavis vigorously attacked Snow's suggestion, from a 1959 lecture and book by C. P. Snow, that practitioners of the scientific and humanistic disciplines should have some significant understanding of each other, and that a lack of knowledge of twentieth-century physics was comparable to an ignorance of Shakespeare. Leavis's ad hominem attacks on Snow's intelligence and abilities were widely decried in the British press by public figures such as Lord Boothby and Lionel Trilling. Leavis introduced the idea of the 'third realm' as a name for the method of existence of literature; works which are not private like a dream or public in the sense of something that can be tripped over, but exist in human minds as a work of collaborative re-constitution (Greenwood 11).

In 1964 he resigned his fellowship at Downing; however, he took up visiting professorships at the University of Bristol, the University of Wales and the University of York. His final volumes of criticism were *Nor Shall My Sword* (1972), *The Living Principle* (1975) and *Thought, Words and Creativity* (1976). These later works are notable for their more discursive treatment of the issues he had debated with René Wellek in the 1930s.

Leavis died in 1978, at the age of 82, having been made a Companion of Honour in the previous New Year Honours. His wife, Queenie D. Leavis, died in 1981. He features as a main character, played by Sir Ian Holm, in the 1991 BBC TV feature, *The Last Romantics*. The story focuses on his

relationship with his mentor, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and the students. More recently, in a revival of interest in his work, he has been the subject of a series of conferences at the University of York and at Downing College, Cambridge.

Leavis' uncompromising zeal in promoting his views of literature drew mockery from some literary quarters. Leavis (as *Simon Lacerous*) and *Scrutiny* (as *Thumbscrew*) were satirized by Frederick Crews in the chapter *Another Book to Cross off your List* of his lampoon of literary criticism theory *The Pooh Perplex A Student Casebook*. In her novel *Possession*, A. S. Byatt wrote of one of her characters (Blackadder):

"Leavis did to Blackadder what he did to serious students: he showed him the terrible, the magnificent importance and urgency of English literature and simultaneously deprived him of any confidence in his own capacity to contribute to or change it."

Tom Sharpe, in his novel *The Great Pursuit*, depicts a ludicrous series of events ending in the hero teaching Leavisite criticism as a religion in the American Bible Belt. Leavis also appears as "Looseleaf" in Clive James's *Peregrine Prykke*.

2.0. Leavis' Criticism:

Leavis' proponents claimed that he introduced a "seriousness" into English studies, and some English and American university departments were shaped very much by Leavis's example and ideas. Leavis appeared to possess a very clear idea of literary criticism and he was well known for his decisive and often provocative, and idiosyncratic, judgements. Leavis insisted that valuation was the principal concern of criticism, and that it must ensure that English literature should be a living reality operating as an informing spirit in society, and that criticism should involve the shaping of contemporary sensibility (Bilan 61).

Leavis's criticism is difficult to directly classify, but it can be grouped into four chronological stages. The first is that of his early publications and essays including *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932) and *Revaluation* (1936). Here he was concerned primarily with reexamining poetry from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, and this was accomplished under the strong influence of T. S. Eliot. Also during this early period Leavis sketched out his views about university education.

He then turned his attention to fiction and the novel, producing *The Great Tradition* (1948) and *D. H. Lawrence, Novelist* (1955). Following this period Leavis pursued an increasingly complex treatment of literary, educational and social issues. Though the hub of his work remained

literature, his perspective for commentary was noticeably broadening, and this was most visible in *Nor Shall my Sword* (1972).

Two of his last publications embodied the critical sentiments of his final years; *The Living Principle: 'English' as a Discipline of Thought* (1975), and *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (1976). Although these later works have been sometimes called "philosophy", it has been argued that there is no abstract or theoretical context to justify such a description. In discussing the nature of language and value, Leavis implicitly treats the sceptical questioning that philosophical reflection starts from as an irrelevance from his standpoint as a literary critic - a position set out in his famous early exchange with René Wellek. Others, however, have argued that although Leavis's thinking in these later works is hard to classify - itself an important datum - it provides valuable insights into the nature of a language.

Though his achievements as a critic of fiction were impressive, Leavis is often viewed as having been a better critic of poetry than of the novel. In *New Bearings in English Poetry* Leavis attacked the Victorian poetical ideal, suggesting that nineteenth-century poetry sought the consciously 'poetical' and showed a separation of thought and feeling and a divorce from the real world. The influence of T. S. Eliot is easily identifiable in his criticism of Victorian poetry, and Leavis acknowledged this, saying in *The Common Pursuit* that, 'It was Mr. Eliot who made us fully conscious of the weakness of that tradition' (Leavis 31). In his later publication *Revaluation*, the

dependence on Eliot was still very much present, but Leavis demonstrated an individual critical sense operating in such a way as to place him among the distinguished modern critics.

The early reception of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound's poetry, and also the reading of Gerard Manley Hopkins, were considerably enhanced by Leavis's proclamation of their greatness. His criticism of John Milton, on the other hand, had no great impact on Milton's popular esteem. Many of his finest analyses of poems were reprinted in the late work, *The Living Principle*.

As a critic of the novel, Leavis's main tenet stated that great novelists show an intense moral interest in life, and that this moral interest determines the nature of their form in fiction (Bilan 115). Authors within this "tradition" were all characterised by a serious or responsible attitude to the moral complexity of life and included Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence, but excluded Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens. In *The Great Tradition* Leavis attempted to set out his conception of the proper relation between form/composition and moral interest/art and life. This proved to be a contentious issue in the critical world, as Leavis refused to separate art from life, or the aesthetic or formal from the moral. He insisted that the great novelist's preoccupation with form was a matter of responsibility towards a rich moral interest, and that works of art with a limited formal concern would always be of lesser quality.

3.0. The Line of Wit: A Brief Summary

Leavis derived his critical methods from the work of I. A. Richards, whose influence he absorbed as a postgraduate. He combined Richards's techniques of detailed textual analysis with an emphasis on the socio-cultural context and ethical responsibilities of literature. His sense of cultural crisis following upon the 'technologico-positivist or Benthamite enlightenment' is the principal theme of *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930), *For Continuity* (1933), and *Education and the University* (1943). *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), his first major publication, dismissed the legacy of Victorian verse and argued forcefully for the recognition of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Gerard Manley Hopkins as exemplary modern poets. In *Revaluation* (1936) he prescribed a radical and iconoclastic reordering of the canon of English poetry in favour of 'the line of wit' stemming from Donne and against what he considered the mechanically rhetorical tradition of Milton. His preoccupation with the novel from the mid-1940s onward arose from his view that 'in the nineteenth century and later the poetic and creative strength of the English language goes into prose fiction'; *The Great Tradition* (1948) concentrated on the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad, which he saw as exemplifying the morally educative qualities of literature. His early *D. H. Lawrence* (1930), whom he also numbered as a vessel of 'the great tradition' for the deeply affirmative spirit of his work, was superseded by *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), which did much to advance Lawrence's reputation. *Dickens the Novelist* (1970, with Q. D. Leavis) revised his views on that author, whose achievement Leavis had formerly tended to belittle.

The essays collected in *The Common Pursuit* (1952) indicate the scope of his criticism in their commentaries on a diverse range of writers which includes Bunyan, Shakespeare, Swift, Wyndham Lewis, and E. M. Forster.

Revaluation is a more impressive book in many ways. The improvement is possibly due just to the fact that Leavis wrote it later, but it may be that in writing on established poets he was able to give a fuller analysis than he could in making a 'case' for contemporary poets. The indebtedness to Eliot is again apparent, especially in the first two chapters and the evaluation of Shelley. Leavis opens chapter one, on 'The Line of Wit' by remarking:

The work has been done, the re-orientation effected: the heresies of ten years ago are orthodoxy. Mr Eliot's achievement is a matter for academic evaluation, his poetry is accepted, and his early observations on the Metaphysicals and on Marvell provide currency for university lectures.

Leavis follows Eliot in describing the line of wit, but has some minor points of disagreement about the lack of the quality of wit in Cowley and Milton's *Comus*. The topic of the 'dissociation of sensibility', introduced here, Leavis of course takes over from Eliot. Leavis discusses first the "line of wit" that sprang from Jonson and Donne, and then devotes a chapter each to Milton's verse, Pope, the Augustan tradition, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats.

PAPER XVI

UNIT IV

T. S. ELIOT'S TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT

1.0. Introduction:

"Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) is an essay written by poet and literary critic T. S. Eliot. The essay was first published in *The Egoist* (1919) and later in Eliot's first book of criticism, *The Sacred Wood* (1920). The essay is also available in Eliot's *Selected Prose* and *Selected Essays*.

While Eliot is most often known for his poetry, he also contributed to the field of literary criticism. In this dual role, he acted as poet-critic, comparable to Sir Philip Sidney and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is one of the more well known works that Eliot produced in his critic capacity. It formulates Eliot's influential conception of the relationship between the poet and the literary tradition which precedes him.

This essay is divided into three parts that are:

part one: The Concept of "Tradition".

part two: The Theory of Impersonal Poetry.

part three: The Conclusion or Summing up.

Eliot presents his conception of tradition and the definition of the poet and poetry in relation to it. He wishes to correct the fact that, as he perceives it, "in English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence." Eliot posits that, though the English tradition generally upholds the belief that art progresses through change – a separation from tradition, literary advancements are instead recognized only when they conform to the tradition. Eliot, a classicist, felt that the true incorporation of tradition into literature was unrecognized, that tradition, a word that "seldom... appear[s] except in a phrase of censure," was actually a thus-far unrealized element of literary criticism.

For Eliot, the term "tradition" is imbued with a special and complex character. It represents a "simultaneous order," by which Eliot means a historical timelessness – a fusion of past and present – and, at the same time, a sense of present temporality. A poet must embody "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer," while, simultaneously, expressing his contemporary environment. Eliot challenges the common perception that a poet's greatness and individuality lie in his departure from his predecessors; he argues that "the most individual parts of his (the poet) work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously." Eliot claims that this "historical sense" is not only a resemblance to traditional works but an awareness and understanding of their relation to his poetry.

This fidelity to tradition, however, does not require the great poet to forfeit novelty in an act of surrender to repetition. Rather, Eliot has a much more dynamic and progressive conception of the poetic process: Novelty is possible only through tapping into tradition. When a poet engages in the creation of new work, he realizes an aesthetic "ideal order," as it has been established by the literary tradition that has come before him. As such, the act of artistic creation does not take place in a vacuum. The introduction of a new work alters the cohesion of this existing order, and causes a readjustment of the old to accommodate the new. The inclusion of the new work alters the way in which the past is seen, elements of the past that are noted and realized. In Eliot's own words: "What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art that preceded it." Eliot refers to this organic tradition, this developing canon, as the "mind of Europe." The private mind is subsumed by this more massive one.

This leads to Eliot's so-called "Impersonal Theory" of poetry. Since the poet engages in a "continual surrender of himself" to the vast order of tradition, artistic creation is a process of depersonalization. The mature poet is viewed as a medium, through which tradition is channeled and elaborated. He compares the poet to a catalyst in a chemical reaction, in which the reactants are feelings and emotions that are synthesized to create an artistic image that captures and relays these same feelings and emotions. While the mind of the poet is necessary for the production, it emerges unaffected by the process. The artist stores feelings and emotions and properly unites them into a specific combination, which is the artistic product. What lends greatness to a work of art are not the feelings and emotions themselves, but the nature of the artistic process by which they are synthesized. The artist is responsible for creating "the pressure, so to speak, under

which the fusion takes place." And, it is the intensity of fusion that renders art great. In this view, Eliot rejects the theory that art expresses metaphysical unity in the soul of the poet. The poet is a depersonalized vessel, a mere medium.

Great works do not express the personal emotion of the poet. The poet does not reveal his own unique and novel emotions, but rather, by drawing on ordinary ones and channeling them through the intensity of poetry, he expresses feelings that surpass, altogether, experienced emotion. This is what Eliot intends when he discusses poetry as an "escape from emotion." Since successful poetry is impersonal and, therefore, exists independent of its poet, it outlives the poet and can incorporate into the timeless "ideal order" of the "living" literary tradition.

Another essay found in *Selected Essays* relates to this notion of the impersonal poet. In "Hamlet and His Problems" Eliot presents the phrase "objective correlative." The theory is that the expression of emotion in art can be achieved by a specific, and almost formulaic, prescription of a set of objects, including events and situations. A particular emotion is created by presenting its correlated objective sign. The author is depersonalized in this conception, since he is the mere effector of the sign. And, it is the sign, and not the poet, which creates emotion.

The implications here separate Eliot's idea of talent from the conventional definition (just as his idea of Tradition is separate from the conventional definition), one so far from it, perhaps, that he chooses never to directly label it as talent. Whereas the conventional definition of talent, especially in the arts, is a genius that one is born with. Not so for Eliot. Instead, talent is acquired through a

careful study of poetry, claiming that Tradition, "cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labour." Eliot asserts that it is absolutely necessary for the poet to study, to have an understanding of the poets before him, and to be well versed enough that he can understand and incorporate the "mind of Europe" into his poetry. But the poet's study is unique – it is knowledge which "does not encroach," and which does not "deaden or pervert poetic sensibility." It is, to put it most simply, a poetic knowledge – knowledge observed through a poetic lens. This ideal implies that knowledge gleaned by a poet is not knowledge of facts, but knowledge which leads to a greater understanding of the mind of Europe. As Eliot explains, "Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum."

2.0. Eliot and New Criticism:

New Criticism is one of the influential approaches in modern criticism. It is also termed as an Aesthetic Criticism, Analytical Criticism, Formalistic Criticism, Ontological Criticism, or Textual Criticism. Some of the practitioners of New Criticism are William Empson, J.C. Ransom, Allen Tate, Yvor Winters, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, W.K. Wimsatt, R.P. Blackmur, Eliseo Vivas and others, who dominated not only the American scene of 1930's- 50's but also other parts of the world with their creative-evaluative tradition and taught the whole generation how to read.

New Criticism is Post War-I school of critical theory that insisted on the intrinsic value of a work of art and focussed attention on the individual work alone as an independent unit of meaning, It was opposed to a critical practice of bringing historical or biographical data to bear on the interpretation of a work. It was a

reaction against the then prevalent trends of American Criticism, namely, impressionistic, humanist and marxist, etc. However the term came into its current use with the publication of J.C. Ransom's book, *The New Criticism* in 1941.

Defining the term 'New Criticism' Harold Beaver writes, 'It denotes such criticism which concentrates on semantics, meter, imagery, metaphor and symbol, placing emphasis always on text dissociated from biography and historical tradition and background, and applying extra-linguistic techniques whether from logic, sociology or psychology of literature (Beaver 1961 : xi). It is very difficult to define the term precisely. Nevertheless, it may be remarked that the New Criticism aims at intrinsic and aesthetics study, analysis and evaluation of an autonomous work of art with an application of formal critical tools ignoring all the extra literary features like biography, sociology, history and so on.

The aesthetics of New Criticism provides an alternative to understand the poem's formal structure, considering that it is as the organization of man's experience into an autonomous whole. There were a number of influences on the New Critics in rejecting romantic subjectivism for formal objectivity. T.E.Hulme, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards and William Empson were the important figures who provided necessary theoretical foundation to the New Critics like J.C. Ransom, W.K. Wimsatt, Cleanth Brooks and R.P. Blackmur.

Eliot's contribution to New Criticism is worth mentioning here. He is a poet and scholar, classed in the rank of Dryden and Dr. Johnson. He emerged from the new humanistic tradition of Babbitt and appeared on the scene after T.E.Hulme. He revolutionized the critical world's shifting importance from the

poet to the poem. His collection of essays published in 1920 in a book form entitled *The Sacred Wood* is a landmark in the field of modern criticism. In one of his essays entitled “Tradition and Individual Talent”, he defines the term ‘tradition’. Eliot writes:

‘Tradition’ is not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order (Eliot 1962 : 294).

So he uses the word ‘tradition’ for evaluation of literature while other critics in general use the term “to describe the creative act, the nature of literary work and proper function of literature in society” (Dolan 1966:4130). With frequent use, the term has become popular in the hands of the New Critics and they believed in the tradition of language that precise language progresses the society better. Amongst them, Cleanth Brooks is the central figure who is influenced by Eliot through the Fugitive-Agrarians and uses the term to explain the proper history of poetry in the realm of human communication. Brooks in his *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939), which “performs the marriage between Eliot’s unity of sensibility and Coleridge’s imagination modified by Richard’s broad interpretation” (Krieger 1957: 47) continued the tradition of ‘wit’ discussing the metaphysical and twentieth century poet’s like Eliot and Yeats. Further, the sense of tradition (i.e. ‘wit’) has been expanded when he included ‘irony’, ‘paradox’, ‘symbolism’, ‘ambiguity’, and dramatic structure in his celebrated book entitled *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947).

One of the key ideas of T.S. Eliot is his 'theory of impersonality' in which he compares the poet's mind with that of a chemical catalyst in the development of the consciousness of the poet. For him, 'the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality'. He carries this plea for impersonality in "Tradition and Individual Talent" as he asserts:

The poet has, not a personality to express but a particular medium which is only a medium and not a personality, and which impressions and experiences combine peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality...poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality apparently (Eliot 1928 : 56-58).

Eliot's poet is not a 'maker' in any conventional sense; he is rather, a man whose mind is a fine receptacle "for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, words and images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together (Eliot 1928:56-58). In the creative process the poet takes all sorts of desperate elements – emotions, remembered and imagined sensibility' compresses and fuses them all together into an artistic whole and this product will be new, individual and will alter the entire tradition of poetry (Day 1966 : 436).

In short, Eliot separates here the poet from poetry and ex- pounds the 'theory of impersonality' which is in a way, the death of the poet. It is an attack on the subjectivity of romantics to objectify the art such an 'impersonal' conception

of art is almost anti-romantic. It emphasizes the art subject as such. Thus, it represents a return to something like the Aristotelian theory.

The relations among the parts that make up the artwork become the important matter for critical investigation. That relationship is conceived to be complex. Eliot even suggested that a work of art is to be regarded as an organism with a life of its own. Thus, in the introduction to the 1928 edition of *The Sacred Wood*, he writes:

We can only say that a poem, in some sense has its own life; that its parts form something quite different from the body of neatly ordered biographical data; the feeling or emotion, or vision, resulting from the poem is something different from the feeling or emotion or vision in the mind of the poet (Eliot 1928:X).

It is here that Eliot has reduced the poet to automaton who produces the poem in some unconscious or brainless way. Again, for classicists like Eliot, and as for Pound, the essence of poetry is metaphor, but the special insights that he brings to metaphor come not from Chinese picture writing, but from the French Symbolist Poets of the nineteenth century and from the English ‘metaphysical’ poets of the seventeenth century. In fact, Eliot revived metaphysical poets and rehabilitated them in our age writing two seminal essays: “The Metaphysical Poets” and “Andrew Marvel”. The metaphysical Poets have wonderful power to amalgamate disparate experiences. They employ figurative language for achieving a ‘direct’ sensuous apprehension of thought into feeling. This is for Eliot, an act of ‘unification of sensibility’. Any lapse of this power to ‘amalgamate’ results in the separation of thought and feeling, the poetic and unpoetic, form and content, which is also the ‘dissociation of sensibility’ in a poet. “As applied to figurative

language, it has the effect of making metaphor non-structural, a mere echo of thought (illustration) or emotional excess baggage (ornamentation)", (Brooks 1957: 666).

Eliot's thought about and impersonal art arrived at their most celebrated formulation in an essay entitled "Hamlet and his Problems" (1919). Eliot's statement of his most famous dictum is brief:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of an art is finding on "objective correlative", in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of the particular emotion, and that where the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked (Eliot 1928: 100).

This was anticipated by Ezra Pound's phrase "equations for the human emotions". The concept of "objective correlative" gained currency beyond expectations. It is obvious that this notion puts the critical emphasis upon the work itself as a structure; and therefore, it is this notion of T.S. Eliot that can be called the touch-stone of New Criticism. Since the poet cannot transfer his emotion or his ideas from his own mind directly to his readers, there is a kind of mediation "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events". It is through these that the transaction between author and reader takes place. This is where "what the author has to say" is objectified and it is with the shape and character of this object that the critic is properly concerned. For this object is the primary source of, and warrant for, the reader's response, and is also primary basis for whatever inferences we may draw about what it is that the "author wanted to say". The genesis of the doctrine of the

“objective correlative” can be searched in the French Symbolist writings which are subsequently strengthened in the hands of Hulme, Pound and Eliot.

The concept of “objective correlative” places a thoroughly anti-romantic stress upon craftsmanship i.e. upon the formal aspects of poetry; but Eliot manages to involve himself in the language of expressionism too. These expressionisms, the “language of the emotions and Eliot’s classicism have been considered by the recent critics (Vivas 1944 : 7-18) and they arrived at the conclusion that Eliot’s thought is a complex blend of classicism and extreme form of romanticism against which he and his contemporaries had assumed themselves in rebellion.

We are shown here an interpretation of the creative process in which the poets’ emotions exist prior to the language, which expresses them, stored up in his subconscious. When the poet, by unifying capabilities of his sensibility, is able to combine a sufficient number of disparate experiences and impressions, he transfers his emotions to them, thereby giving concrete form to what had hitherto been amorphous. Thus there is no emotion as such in the poem itself, but the reader in apprehending the concrete images in the poem, will feel with force the identical emotion originally felt by the poet. The poem then is said to be the objective bridge between similar emotions of the poet and his audience. One can trace similar concepts in the Indian classical aesthetics such as ‘Sahridaya’. Murray Krieger rightly observes that “Eliot cleverly retains his ‘impersonal’ and would be classical theory of art by keeping the poem from exhibiting any emotion as such, although as in very romantic theory, it express the poet’s emotions and relays them to reader” (Krieger 1956 : 50). Cleanth Brooks commenting on the dubious position of Eliot, writes:

Eliot is at times inconsistent, but he seems never to subscribe seriously to the notion that the poet's main job is to hand over to the reader some determinate content, whether an emotion or an idea, or that the poet's effectiveness is to be measured by the success of this transaction: on the contrary, the weight of Eliot's prestige has been thrown behind a quite antithetical conception: an anti-romantic 'impersonal' art, in which the claims of art-object, with their complexity and indeterminacy have first consideration (Brooks 1957:669).

Another concept similar to "Objective Correlative" might be discovered in another of Eliot's essay, "The Metaphysical Poets" when he asserts that "The Metaphysical Poets were at best, engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling" (Eliot 1928:248). The phrase 'states of mind and feeling' has the merit of minimizing the notion of pure emotion, personal to the poet, with which the reader is to be directly infected.

It can, therefore, be said that Eliot's theory of impersonality, his concept of tradition, revival of metaphysical poets, objective correlative, unification of sensibility, his belief in the organic structure of poetry, his redefinition of wit, irony and conceit, and his close study of poems in terms of language, imagery and metaphor were adopted by the New Critics as well as the succeeding generations of poets and critics.

3.0. Tradition and the Individual Talent: The Text

I

IN English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to “the tradition” or to “a tradition”; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is “traditional” or even “too traditional.” Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archæological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archæology.

Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are “more critical” than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects

or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment, a comparison, in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value—a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say:

it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other.

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Some one said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I am alive to a usual objection to what is clearly part of my programme for the *métier* of poetry. The objection is that the doctrine requires a ridiculous amount of erudition (pedantry), a claim which can be rejected by appeal to the lives of poets in any pantheon. It will even be affirmed that much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility. While, however, we persist in believing that a poet ought to know as much as will not encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness, it is not desirable to confine knowledge to whatever can be put into a useful shape for examinations, drawing-rooms, or the still more pretentious modes of publicity. Some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it. Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum. What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I shall, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

II

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the susurrus of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers; if we seek not Blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for a poem, we shall seldom find it. In the last article I tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of "personality," not being necessarily more interesting, or having "more to say," but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. Canto XV of the *Inferno* (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation; but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of detail. The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which “came,” which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet’s mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to. The poet’s mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of “sublimity” misses the mark. For it is not the “greatness,” the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. Great variety is possible in the process of transmutation of emotion: the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently

closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the Agamemnon, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in Othello to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a “personality” to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

I will quote a passage which is unfamiliar enough to be regarded with fresh attention in the light—or darkness—of these observations:

And now methinks I could e'en chide myself

For doating on her beauty, though her death

Shall be revenged after no common action.

Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours

For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing—keeps horse and men
To beat their valours for her?...

In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express; and in this

search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that “emotion recollected in tranquillity” is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not “recollected,” and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is “tranquil” only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him “personal.” Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

III

ὁ δὲ νόϋς ἰσως θεϊότερόν τι καὶ ἀπαθές ἐστιν

This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry. To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good

and bad. There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.

4.0. Summary of the Essay:

In his essay “Tradition and individual talent” Eliot spreads his concept of tradition, which reflects his reaction against romantic subjectivism and emotionalism. He opines that tradition gives the reader something new, something arresting something intellectual and something vital for literary conception.

Tradition according to Eliot is that part of living culture inherited from the past and functioning in the formation of the present. Eliot maintains that tradition is bound up with historical sense, which is a perception that the past is not something lost and invalid.

According to Eliot, is the part of living culture which is inherited from the past and also has an important function in forming the present. Historical sense is a perception that past is not something that is lost or invalid. Rather it has a function in the present.

It exists with the present. It exerts its influence in our ideas, thoughts and consciousness. This is historical sense. It is an awareness not only of the pastness of the past but the presence of the past. On this sense the past is our contemporary as the present is. Eliot's view of tradition is not linear but spatial. Eliot does not believe that the past is followed by the presence and succession of a line. On the contrary, the past and the present live side by side in the space. Thus it is spatial. Then Eliot holds that not only the past influences the present but the present, too, influences the past. To prove this idea, he conceives of all literature as a total, indivisible order. All existing literary works belong to an order like the member of a family. Any new work of literature is like the arrival of a member or a new relative or a new acquaintance. Its arrival and presence bring about a readjustment of the previous relationship of the old members. A new work takes its place in the order. Its arrival and inclusion modifies the order and relationship among all works. The order is then modified. A new work of art influences all the existing literary work, as a new relative influences the old member of a family. It is in this sense that the present modifies the past as the past modifies the present. The past is modified by the present also in the sense that we can look at the past literature always through ever renewing perception of the present. A new work of art cannot be evaluated in isolation without reference to past literature and tradition. Evaluation is always comparative and relative. It calls for a comparison with the past that is with tradition. No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him for contrast and comparison among the dead.

A work of art has two dimensions-it is at once personal and universal. It is an individual composition, but at the same time, its inclusion into tradition determines its worth and universal appeal. A writer must be aware that he belongs to a larger tradition and there is always an impact of tradition on him. Individual is an element formed by and forming the culture to which he belongs. He should surrender his personality to something larger and more significant.

In his conscious cultivation of historical sense, a writer reduces the magnification of personal self, which leads to depersonalization and impersonal act. When a writer is aware the historical sense, it doesn't mean that he influenced by the past or his own self. Rather the writer should minimize the importance of his personal self, which will lead him to depersonalization and impersonal act. Tradition is a living stream. It is not a lump or dead mass. But the main current does not always flow through the most noted authoress. Eliot regrets that tradition in English world of letters is used in prerogative sense. This is one reason of the undeveloped critical sense of the English nation. They are too individualistic on intellectual habits. Eliot criticizes the English intellectuals. According to Eliot to the English intellectual tradition is something that should be avoided. They give much more importance on individualism and are critical about the historical sense or tradition.

Like Arnold, Eliot views tradition as something living. For both the word "tradition" implies growth. Eliot recalls Edmund Burke what burke did for political thought, by glorifying the idea of inheritance; Eliot has done for English literary criticism. Burke, famous English politician, gave emphasis on

the experience of the past in politics. In the same Eliot also gives emphasis on the past regarding English criticism.

Tradition does not mean uncritical imitation of the past. Nor does it mean only erudition. A writer draws on only the necessary knowledge of tradition. He must use his freedom according to his needs. He cannot be completely detached. Often the most original moments of a work of art echo the mind of earlier writers. Though it sounds paradoxical it is true. It is paradoxical but true that even the most original writings sometimes reflect the thinking of the past or earlier writers. So, there is nothing which is absolutely original.

A partial or complete break with the literary past is a danger. An awareness of what has gone before is necessary to know what is there to be done in the present or future. A balance between the control of tradition and the freedom of an individual is essential to art. Eliot said elsewhere that by losing tradition we lose our hold on the present. Hence, a writer should be aware of the importance of tradition.

The essay gives voice to the fact that modernist experiments seldom simply destroyed or rejected traditional methods of representation or traditional literary forms; rather, the modernists sought to enter into a sort of conversation with the art of the past, sometimes reverently, sometimes mockingly. No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervening of novelty,

the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered..... the past[is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.

Eliot emphasis both the way that tradition shapes the modern artist and the way that a “really new” work of art makes us see that tradition anew.

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the SUSURRUS of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers; if we seek no Blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for poem, we shall seldom find it. I have tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of “personality,” not being necessarily more interesting, or having “more to say,” but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in

particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely if you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of “sublimity” misses the mark. For it is not the “greatness,” the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore than the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the Agamemnon, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in Othello to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

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Remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may

Simple, crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a

Very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the

Emotions of people who have very complex or unusual

Emotions in life.”

According to this quote he told that the emotions which are described in the poetry by poets it shows the emotions of the poet which related with the particular event of his life which is remarkable or interesting for poet. It is possible that poetry is a complex thing but the complexity of emotions of poet is not Acceptable in poetry.

“The business of the poet is not to find new emotions; But to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has never Experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that “emotion recollected in tranquility” is an in exact formula.”

According to this quote the business of the poet is not to find new emotion but to use of an ordinary emotions in new way and create a new emotions from the ordinary one.

T.S.Eliot’s ‘tradition and individual is one of the critical essay in which Eliot has described with concept of tradition, individual talent, emotion and poetry as well as his concept of depersonalized art. In the opening of the essay, Eliot’s defines tradition, which is the literary history. He says that each and every

nation has its individual genius who creates literature. So many such individual writers produce a big bulk of writing which is tradition. In other words, tradition is the matter of past that is even related to present because it is in the process of formation. Eliot gives an example of English literature produced from the Anglo Saxon period up to the present day. It is like a wall where there are so many bricks working commonly. Eliot also says that when a writer comes to write at present. He should be aware of the tradition. To learn the tradition he should have a great labor but he should not imitate it. Learning the tradition is also called historical sense that is necessary to the present writer, because tradition as the past influences.

Eliot even says that the new writer writing at present becomes the part of tradition so he has to learn tradition but to imitate it. No writers and writings have value in isolation, the writer and his writing would not be evaluated with the writers of the past, he should be compared and contrasted with the tradition, it is possible to examine his individual talent. If the new writer has imitated the tradition, blindly such slavish imitation should be discouraged because it has not individual talent. Individual talent is the novelty or newness. If the present writer has brought something novelty in his writing, it is called individual talent such novelty should be encourage because it suggests the genius of the writer.

Eliot has also given his personal idea about the depersonalization of art, which is also called impersonal poetry. He says that emotions and feelings are related to poetry but they should be expressed indirectly and objectively. In other words, Eliot says that emotions of the poet are expressed in poetry but the poet should in personified them. His concept is against the concept of words being

involved in poetry. Instead, the poet should not be identified as the direct speaker in poetry but he should indirectly through the characters or other object, which is called objective correlative. So Eliot says “poetry is not the turning loose of emotions but escape from emotion. It is not the expression of personality but escape from it

In order to support his concept of depersonalized art, Eliot use and analogy related to a gas chamber. In a gas chamber during the process of forming sulphuric acid, sulphur dioxide and Oxygen are needed but they do not react until a plate of platinum is kept. When the platinum is kept there, it causes reaction between them so that, sulphuric acid is formed. In the acid platinum does not become present. This analogy is applied in the process of poetic creation.

The poet and his mind is catalyst like the platinum to change others, medium but as if the platinum is not present in the acid, the poet also should not be present in poetry. His role is very crucial because without the poet, poetry is not possible to create but, in the creation he should be totally dead or absent like the platinum absent in acid. It is his concept of impersonal art and he criticizes many English poets including Wordsworth who have not become impersonal. He appreciates metaphysical such as John Donne is to be impersonal in poetry.

T.S.Eliot spread his concept of Tradition which reflects his reaction against Romantic subjectivism and emotionalism. He describes the concept of historical senses very useful for better understanding of poetic sense or literary sense.

5.0. Criticism of Eliot:

Eliot's theory of literary tradition has been criticized for its limited definition of what constitutes the canon of that tradition. He assumes the authority to choose what represents great poetry, and his choices have been criticized on several fronts. For example, Harold Bloom disagrees with Eliot's condescension towards Romantic poetry, which, in *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921) he criticizes for its "dissociation of sensibility." Moreover, many believe Eliot's discussion of the literary tradition as the "mind of Europe" reeks of Euro-centrism. However, it should be recognized that Eliot supported many Eastern and thus non-European works of literature such as the *Mahabharata*. Eliot was arguing the importance of a complete sensibility: he didn't particularly care what it was at the time of tradition and the individual talent. His own work is heavily influenced by non-Western traditions. In his broadcast talk "The Unity of European Culture," he said, "Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility." His self-evaluation was confirmed by B. P. N. Sinha, who writes that Eliot went beyond Indian ideas to Indian form: "The West has preoccupied itself almost exclusively with the philosophy and thoughts of India. One consequence of this has been a total neglect of Indian forms of expression, i.e. of its literature. T. S. Eliot is the one major poet whose work bears evidence of intercourse with this aspect of Indian culture" (qtd. in *The Composition of The Four Quartets*). He does not account for a non-white and non-masculine tradition. As such, his notion of tradition stands at odds with feminist, post-colonial and minority theories. Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o advocated (in a memo entitled "On the Abolition of the English Department") a commitment to native works, which speak to one's own culture, as compared to deferring to an arbitrary notion of literary excellence. As

such, he implicitly attacks Eliot's subjective criterion in choosing an elite body of literary works. Post-colonial critic Chinua Achebe also challenges Eliot, since he argues against deferring to those writers, including Joseph Conrad, who have been deemed great, but only represent a specific (and perhaps prejudiced) cultural perspective.

Harold Bloom presents a conception of tradition that differs from that of Eliot. Whereas Eliot believes that the great poet is faithful to his predecessors and evolves in a concordant manner, Bloom (according to his theory of "anxiety of influence") envisions the "strong poet" to engage in a much more aggressive and tumultuous rebellion against tradition.

In 1964, his last year, Eliot published in a reprint of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, a series of lectures he gave at Harvard University in 1932 and 1933, a new preface in which he called "Tradition and the Individual Talent" the most juvenile of his essays (although he also indicated that he did not repudiate it.)

Sources/Suggested Reading:

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition_and_the_Individual_Talent
2. <http://www.bartleby.com/200/sw4.html>
3. <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/ojs/index.php/JLCMS/article/view/1651/0>
4. <http://flash.lakeheadu.ca/~engl4904/newcriticism.htm>

5. <https://litmusicadaptation.wikispaces.com/T.+S.+Eliot's%E2%80%9CTradition+and+the+Individual+Talent%E2%80%9D>
6. http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/eliot/tradition.htm
7. <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-15380521/t-s-eliot-and-the-new-criticism>

PAPER XVI

UNIT V

RUSSIAN FORMALISM

1.0. Introduction:

Russian formalism was an influential school of literary criticism in Russia from the 1910s to the 1930s. It includes the work of a number of highly influential Russian and Soviet scholars such as Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Tynianov, Vladimir Propp, Boris Eichenbaum, Roman Jakobson, Boris Tomashevsky, Grigory Gukovsky who revolutionised literary criticism between 1914 and the 1930s by establishing the specificity and autonomy of poetic language and literature. Russian formalism exerted a major influence on thinkers like Mikhail Bakhtin and Yuri Lotman, and on structuralism as a whole. The movement's members had a relevant influence on modern literary criticism, as it developed in the structuralist and post-structuralist periods. Under Stalin it became a pejorative term for elitist art.

Russian formalism was a diverse movement, producing no unified doctrine, and no consensus amongst its proponents on a central aim to their endeavours. In fact, "Russian Formalism" describes two distinct movements: the OPOJAZ (*Obshchestvo Izucheniia Poeticheskogo Yazyka, Society for the Study of Poetic Language*) in St. Petersburg and the Moscow Linguistic

Circle. Therefore, it is more precise to refer to the "Russian Formalists", rather than to use the more encompassing and abstract term of "Formalism".

The term "formalism" was first used by the adversaries of the movement, and as such it conveys a meaning explicitly rejected by the Formalists themselves. In the words of one of the foremost Formalists, Boris Eichenbaum: "It is difficult to recall who coined this name, but it was not a very felicitous coinage. It might have been convenient as a simplified battle cry but it fails, as an objective term, to delimit the activities of the "Society for the Study of Poetic Language."

Russian formalism is distinctive for its emphasis on the functional role of literary devices and its original conception of literary history. Russian Formalists advocated a "scientific" method for studying poetic language, to the exclusion of traditional psychological and cultural-historical approaches. As Erlich points out, "It was intent upon delimiting literary scholarship from contiguous disciplines such as psychology, sociology, intellectual history, and the list theoreticians focused on the 'distinguishing features' of literature, on the artistic devices peculiar to imaginative writing" (The New Princeton Encyclopedia 1101).

Two general principles underlie the Formalist study of literature: first, literature itself, or rather, those of its features that distinguish it from other human activities, must constitute the object of inquiry of literary theory;

second, "literary facts" have to be prioritized over the metaphysical commitments of literary criticism, whether philosophical, aesthetic or psychological (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 16). To achieve these objectives several models were developed.

The formalists agreed on the autonomous nature of poetic language and its specificity as an object of study for literary criticism. Their main endeavor consisted in defining a set of properties specific to poetic language, be it poetry or prose, recognizable by their "artfulness" and consequently analyzing them as such.

2.0. Types of Formalism:

2.0.1. Mechanistic Formalism:

The OPOJAZ, the Society for the Study of Poetic Language group, headed by Viktor Shklovsky was primarily concerned with the Formal method and focused on technique and device. "Literary works, according to this model, resemble machines: they are the result of an intentional human activity in which a specific skill transforms raw material into a complex mechanism suitable for a particular purpose" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 18). This approach strips the literary artifact from its connection with the author, reader, and historical background.

A clear illustration of this may be provided by the main argument of one of Viktor Shklovsky's early texts, "Art as Device" (*Iskusstvo kak priem*, 1916): art is a sum of literary and artistic devices that the artist manipulates to craft his work.

Shklovsky's main objective in "Art as Device" is to dispute the conception of literature and literary criticism common in Russia at that time. Broadly speaking, literature was considered, on the one hand, to be a social or political product, whereby it was then interpreted in the tradition of the great critic Belinsky as an integral part of social and political history. On the other hand, literature was considered to be the personal expression of an author's world vision, expressed by means of images and symbols. In both cases, literature is not considered as such, but evaluated on a broad socio-political or a vague psychologico-impressionistic background. The aim of Shklovsky is therefore to isolate and define something specific to literature or "poetic language": these, as we saw, are the "devices" which make up the "artfulness" of literature.

Formalists do not agree with one another on exactly what a device or "priem" is, nor how these devices are used or how they are to be analyzed in a given text. The central idea, however, is more general: poetic language possesses specific properties, which can be analyzed as such.

Some OPOJAZ members argued that poetic language was the major artistic device. Shklovsky, however, insisted that not all artistic texts defamiliarize language, and that some of them achieve defamiliarization (*ostranenie*) by manipulating composition and narrative.

The Formalist movement attempted to discriminate systematically between art and non-art. Therefore its notions are organized in terms of polar oppositions. One of the most famous dichotomies introduced by the mechanistic Formalists is a distinction between story and plot, or fabula and "sjuzhet". Story, fabula, is a chronological sequence of events, whereas plot, sjuzhet, can unfold in non-chronological order. The events can be artistically arranged by means of such devices as repetition, parallelism, gradation, and retardation.

The mechanistic methodology reduced literature to a variation and combination of techniques and devices devoid of a temporal, psychological, or philosophical element. Shklovsky very soon realized that this model had to be expanded to embrace, for example, contemporaneous and diachronic literary traditions (Garson 403).

2.0.2. Organic Formalism:

Disappointed by the constraints of the mechanistic method some Russian Formalists adopted the organic model. "They utilized the similarity between organic bodies and literary phenomena in two different ways: as it applied to individual works and to literary genres" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 19).

An artefact, like a biological organism, is not an unstructured whole; its parts are hierarchically integrated. Hence the definition of the device has been extended to its function in text. "Since the binary opposition – material vs. device – cannot account for the organic unity of the work, Zhirmunsky augmented it in 1919 with a third term, the teleological concept of style as the unity of devices" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 19).

The analogy between biology and literary theory provided the frame of reference for genre studies and genre criticism. "Just as each individual organism shares certain features with other organisms of its type, and species that resemble each other belong to the same genus, the individual work is similar to other works of its form and homologous literary forms belong to the same genre" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 19). The most widely known work carried out in this tradition is Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" (1928).

Having shifted the focus of study from an isolated technique to a hierarchically structured whole, the organic Formalists overcame the main shortcoming of the mechanists. Still, both groups failed to account for the literary changes which affect not only devices and their functions but genres as well.

2.0.3. Systemic Formalism:

The diachronic dimension was incorporated into the work of the systemic Formalists. The main proponent of the "systemo-functional" model was Yury Tynyanov. "In light of his concept of literary evolution as a struggle among competing elements, the method of parody, "the dialectic play of devices," becomes an important vehicle of change" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 21).

Since literature constitutes part of the overall cultural system, the literary dialectic participates in cultural evolution. As such, it interacts with other human activities, for instance, linguistic communication. The communicative domain enriches literature with new constructive principles. In response to these extra-literary factors the self-regulating literary system is compelled to rejuvenate itself constantly. Even though the systemic Formalists incorporated the social dimension into literary theory and acknowledged the analogy between language and literature the figures of author and reader were pushed to the margins of this paradigm.

2.0.4. Linguistic Formalism:

The figures of author and reader were likewise downplayed by the linguistic Formalists Lev Jakubinsky and Roman Jakobson. The adherents of this model placed poetic language at the centre of their inquiry. As Warner remarks, "Jakobson makes it clear that he rejects completely any notion of emotion as the touchstone of literature. For Jakobson, the emotional qualities of a literary work are secondary to and dependent on purely verbal, linguistic facts" (71).

The theoreticians of OPOJAZ distinguished between practical and poetic language. Practical language is used in day-to-day communication to convey information. In poetic language, according to Lev Jakubinsky, "the practical goal retreats into background and linguistic combinations acquire a value in themselves". When this happens language becomes de-familiarized and utterances become poetic" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 22).

Eichenbaum, however, criticised Shklovsky and Jakubinsky for not disengaging poetry from the outside world completely, since they used the emotional connotations of sound as a criterion for word choice. This recourse to psychology threatened the ultimate goal of formalism to investigate literature in isolation.

A definitive example of focus on poetic language is the study of Russian versification by Osip Brik. Apart from the most obvious devices such as rhyme, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and assonance, Brik explores various types of sound repetitions, e.g. the ring (kol'co), the juncture (styk), the fastening (skrep), and the tail-piece (koncovka) ("Zvukovye povtory" (Sound Repetitions); 1917). He ranks phones according to their contribution to the "sound background" (zvukovoj fon) attaching the greatest importance to stressed vowels and the least to reduced vowels. As Mandelker indicates, "his methodological restraint and his conception of an artistic 'unity' wherein no element is superfluous or disengaged, ... serves well as an ultimate model for the Formalist approach to versification study" (335).

In "A Postscript to the Discussion on Grammar of Poetry," Jakobson redefines poetics as "the linguistic scrutiny of the poetic function within the context of verbal messages in general, and within poetry in particular" (23). He fervently defends linguists' right to contribute to the study of poetry and demonstrates the aptitude of the modern linguistics to the most insightful investigation of a poetic message. The legitimacy of "studies devoted to questions of metrics or strophics, alliterations or rhymes, or to questions of poets' vocabulary" is hence undeniable (23). Linguistic devices that transform a verbal act into poetry range "from the network of distinctive features to the arrangement of the entire text" (Jakobson 23).

Jakobson opposes the view that "an average reader" uninitiated into the science of language is presumably insensitive to verbal distinctions:

"Speakers employ a complex system of grammatical relations inherent to their language even though they are not capable of fully abstracting and defining them" (30). A systematic inquiry into the poetic problems of grammar and the grammatical problems of poetry is therefore justifiable; moreover, the linguistic conception of poetics reveals the ties between form and content indiscernible to the literary critic (Jakobson 34).

3.0. Characteristics of Russian Formalism:

Along with 'literariness', the most important concept of the school was that of defamiliarization: instead of seeing literature as a 'reflection' of the world, Victor Shklovsky and his Formalist followers saw it as a linguistic dislocation, or a 'making strange'. In the period of Czech Formalism, Jan Mukarovsky further refined this notion in terms of foregrounding. In their studies of narrative, the Formalists also clarified the distinction between plot (*sjazet*) and story (*fabula*). Apart from Shklovsky and his associate Boris Eikhenbaum, the most prominent of the Russian Formalists was Roman Jakobson, who was active both in Moscow and in Prague before introducing Formalist theories to the United States. A somewhat distinct Russian group is the 'Bakhtin school' comprising Mikhail Bakhtin, Pavlev Medvedev, and Valentin Voloshinov; these theorists combined elements of Formalism and Marxism in their accounts of verbal multi-accentuality and of the dialogic text. Rediscovered in the West in the 1960s, the work of the Russian Formalists has had an important influence on structuralist theories of literature, and on some of the more recent varieties of Marxist literary criticism.

3.0.1. Defamiliarization:

Defamiliarization or *ostranenie* (*оcтpанeниe*) is the artistic technique of presenting to audiences common things in an unfamiliar or strange way, in order to enhance perception of the familiar. A central concept in 20th-century art and theory, ranging over movements including Dada, postmodernism, epic theatre, and science fiction, it is also used as a tactic by recent movements such as culture jamming.

The term “defamiliarization” was first coined in 1917 by Viktor Shklovsky in his essay “Art as Device” (alternate translation: “Art as Technique”) (Crawford 209). Shklovsky invented the term as a means to “distinguish poetic from practical language on the basis of the former’s perceptibility” (Crawford 209). Essentially, he is stating that poetic language is fundamentally different than the language that we use every day because it is more difficult to understand: “Poetic speech is framed speech. Prose is ordinary speech – economical, easy, proper, the goddess of prose [dea prosae] is a goddess of the accurate, facile type, of the “direct” expression of a child” (Shklovsky 20). This difference is the key to the creation of art and the prevention of “over-automatization,” which causes an individual to “function as though by formula” (Shklovsky 16). This distinction between artistic language and everyday language, for Shklovsky, applies to all artistic forms:

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects

'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (Shklovsky 16)

Thus, defamiliarization serves as a means to force individuals to recognize artistic language:

In studying poetic speech in its phonetic and lexical structure as well as in its characteristic distribution of words and in the characteristic thought structures compounded from the words, we find everywhere the artistic trademark – that is, we find material obviously created to remove the automatism of perception; the author's purpose is to create the vision which results from that deautomatized perception. A work is created "artistically" so that its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of the perception. (Shklovsky 19)

This technique is meant to be especially useful in distinguishing poetry from prose, for, as Aristotle said, "poetic language must appear strange and wonderful" (Shklovsky 19).

To illustrate what he means by defamiliarization, Shklovsky uses examples from Tolstoy, whom he cites as using the technique throughout his works: "The narrator of 'Kholstomer,' for example, is a horse, and it is the

horse's point of view (rather than a person's) that makes the content of the story seem unfamiliar" (Shklovsky 16). As a Russian Formalist, many of Shklovsky's examples use Russian authors and Russian dialects: "And currently Maxim Gorky is changing his diction from the old literary language to the new literary colloquialism of Leskov. Ordinary speech and literary language have thereby changed places (see the work of Vyacheslav Ivanov and many others)" (Shklovsky 19-20).

Defamiliarization also includes the use of foreign languages within a work. At the time that Shklovsky was writing, there was a change in the use of language in both literature and everyday spoken Russian. As Shklovsky puts it: "Russian literary language, which was originally foreign to Russia, has so permeated the language of the people that it has blended with their conversation. On the other hand, literature has now begun to show a tendency towards the use of dialects and/or barbarisms" (Shklovsky 19).

Shklovsky's defamiliarization can also be compared to Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance*:

*What Shklovskij wants to show is that the operation of defamiliarization and its consequent perception in the literary system is like the winding of a watch (the introduction of energy into a physical system): both "originate" difference, change, value, motion, presence. Considered against the general and functional background of Derridian *différance*, what*

Shklovskij calls “perception” can be considered a matrix for production of difference. (Crawford 212)

Since the term *différance* refers to the dual meanings of the French word *difference* to mean both “to differ” and “to defer,” defamiliarization draws attention to the use of common language in such a way as to alter one’s perception of an easily understandable object or concept. The use of defamiliarization both differs and defers, since the use of the technique alters one’s perception of a concept (to defer), and forces one to think about the concept in different, often more complex, terms (to differ).

Shklovskij’s formulations negate or cancel out the existence/possibility of “real” perception: variously, by

- (1) the familiar Formalist denial of a link between literature and life, connoting their status as non-communicating vessels,
- (2) always, as if compulsively, referring to a real experience in terms of empty, dead, and automatized repetition and recognition, and
- (3) implicitly locating real perception at an unspecifiable temporally anterior and spatially other place, at a mythic “first time” of naïve experience, the loss of which to

automatization is to be restored by aesthetic perceptual fullness. (Crawford 218)

The technique appears in English Romantic poetry, particularly in the poetry of Wordsworth, and was defined in the following way by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*: "To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar [. . .] this is the character and privilege of genius."

In more recent times, it has been associated with the poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht, whose *Verfremdungseffekt* ("alienation effect") was a potent element of his approach to theater. Brecht, in turn, has been highly influential for artists and filmmakers including Jean-Luc Godard and Yvonne Rainer.

3.0.2. Form and Content:

According to Russian Formalism, to understand literature one has to look at the form as well as the content. Form and content for the first time in critical literary analysis were considered as one and intrinsically linked. Formalism stresses that meaning is conveyed from the connotations of the

form and only by looking at the form can literary critics understand the text's meaning. The form of the text is not only the receptacle of the content, but it provides a way of understanding the literary devices employed by the text. The form thus conveys the notion of textuality and how a work of art achieves its effects through its employed literary devices.

3.0.3. Sjuzet and Fabula:

Russian Formalism made a distinction between sjuzet (plot) and fabula (story). The plot is strictly literary, whereas the story is merely raw material awaiting the organizing hand of a writer. The plot is not merely the events of the story but it also encompasses the literary devices used to narrate the story.

Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* employs digressions, displacement of parts of the book, and extended descriptions to make up the novel's form. In this case the plot is an actual violation of the expected chronological order of events.

3.0.4. Free and Bound Literary Motifs:

A further concept in Russian Formalism is what Tomashevsky called motivation. A motif is the smallest unit of the plot, a single statement of action. Tomashevsky made a distinction between a free motif and a bound motif.

A bound motif is required by the story, whereas a free motif while not essential to the story is the literary point of view of the text and its aesthetic quality. This concept is a reversal of the traditional view that literary devices are employed by content. According to Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* is a text totally devoid of motivation and entirely constructed out of formal devices which are bared. In contrast, motivation is employed by realism to give the illusion of the real and to allow the reader to naturalize the text.

3.0.5. Literariness:

The essence of literature is Literariness. They believed that Literariness, by virtue of its capacity to overturn common and expected patterns, could rejuvenate language.

Literariness is a feature that distinguishes literature from other human creations and is made of certain Artistic Techniques, or devices, employed in literary works.

They regarded language as “use of technical devices” and literature, then, is the “total of technical devices.” A poem is the sum of poetic and technical devices.

Literature is different from other disciplines, phenomenon, and activities where language is used, because literature uses language in a special and different way. Literature is a matter of use of language in a different way.

The emphasis on Form and Literariness was accompanied by an interest in the literary devices that makes the Foregrounding- and therefore rejuvenation of language is possible.

3.0.6. Foregrounding:

“Giving unusual prominence to one element or property of a text, relative to other less noticeable aspects.” Foregrounding, by Formalists, means drawing attention to how they say something rather than what they say. It is opposite of Background.

Literary devices were “deviation from everyday speech.” Formalists studied the special rhythmic patterns, syntax, structure, imagery that distinguish a literary work from other discourse.

Language is foregrounded in literature to make it strange, unusual, and defamiliarized.

e.g.,

The upright heart and pure.....

Here in this line Milton broke normal writing rules and made the language foregrounded. In general practice the Noun always comes first then Adjective.

4.0. Famous Theorists of Russian Formalism:

4.0.1. Viktor Shklovsky:

Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky was a Russian and Soviet literary theorist, critic, writer, and pamphleteer.

Shklovsky was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. His father was Jewish and his mother was of German/Russian origin. He attended St. Petersburg University.

During the First World War, he volunteered for the Russian Army and eventually became a driving trainer in an armoured car unit in St. Petersburg. There, in 1916, he founded OPOYAZ (Obshchestvo izucheniya POeticheskogo YAZyka—Society for the Study of Poetic Language), one of the two groups (with the Moscow Linguistic Circle) that developed the critical theories and techniques of Russian Formalism.

Shklovsky participated in the February Revolution of 1917. Subsequently the Russian Provisional Government sent him as an assistant Commissar to the Southwestern Front where he was wounded and got an award for bravery. After that he was an assistant Commissar of the Russian Expeditionary Corps in Persia.

Shklovsky returned to St. Petersburg in early 1918, after the October Revolution. He opposed bolshevism and took part in an anti-bolshevik plot organised by members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the conspiracy was discovered by the Cheka, Shklovsky went into hiding, traveling in Russia and the Ukraine, but was eventually pardoned in 1919 due to his connections with Maxim Gorky, and decided to abstain from political activity. His two brothers were executed by the Soviet regime (one in 1918, the other in 1937) and his sister died from hunger in St. Petersburg in 1919.

Shklovsky integrated into Soviet society and even took part in the Russian Civil War, serving in the Red Army. However, in 1922, he had to go into hiding once again, as he was threatened with arrest and possible execution for his former political activities, and he fled via Finland to Germany. In Berlin, in 1923, he published his memoirs about the period 1917–22 under the title (*Sentimental'noe puteshestvie, vospominaniia, A Sentimental Journey*), alluding to *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* by Laurence Sterne, an author he much admired and whose digressive style had a powerful influence on Shklovsky's writing. In the

same year he was allowed to return to the Soviet Union, not least because of an appeal to Soviet authorities that he included in the last pages of his epistolary novel *Zoo, or Letters Not About Love*.

The Yugoslav scholar Mihajlo Mihajlov visited Shklovsky in 1963 and wrote: "I was much impressed by Shklovsky's liveliness of spirit, his varied interests and his enormous culture. When we said goodbye to Viktor Borisovich and started for Moscow, I felt that I had met one of the most cultured, most intelligent and best-educated men of our century."

He died in Moscow in 1984.

In addition to literary criticism and biographies about such authors as Laurence Sterne, Maxim Gorky, Leo Tolstoy, and Vladimir Mayakovsky, he wrote a number of semi-autobiographical works disguised as fiction, which also served as experiments in his developing theories of literature.

Shklovsky is perhaps best known for developing the concept of *ostranenie* or defamiliarization (also translated as "estrangement") in literature. He explained the concept in the important essay "Art as Technique" (also translated as "Art as Device") which comprised the first chapter of his seminal *Theory of Prose*, first published in 1925. He argued

for the need to turn something that has become over-familiar, like a cliché in the literary canon, into something revitalized:

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.

—Shklovsky, "Art as Technique", 12

Shklovsky's work pushes Russian Formalism towards understanding literary activity as integral parts of social practice, an idea that becomes important in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Russian and Prague School scholars of semiotics.

4.0.2. Vladimir Propp:

Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp was a Soviet folklorist and scholar who analyzed the basic plot components of Russian folk tales to identify their simplest irreducible narrative elements.

Vladimir Propp was born on April 17, 1895 in St. Petersburg to a German family. He attended St. Petersburg University (1913–1918) majoring in Russian and German philology. Upon graduation he taught Russian and German at a secondary school and then became a college teacher of German.

His *Morphology of the Folktale* was published in Russian in 1928. Although it represented a breakthrough in both folkloristics and morphology and influenced Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, it was generally unnoticed in the West until it was translated in 1958. His character types are used in media education and can be applied to almost any story, be it in literature, theatre, film, television series, games, etc.

In 1932, Propp became a member of Leningrad University (formerly St. Petersburg University) faculty. After 1938, he chaired the Department of Folklore until it became part of the Department of Russian Literature. Propp remained a faculty member until his death in 1970.

4.0.2.1. Narrative Structure:

Vladimir Propp broke up fairy tales into sections. Through these sections he was able to define the tale into a series of sequences that occurred within the Russian fairytale. Usually there is an initial situation,

after which the tale usually takes the following 31 functions. Vladimir Propp used this method to decipher Russian folklore and fairy tales. First of all, there seems to be at least two distinct types of structural analysis in folklore. One is the type of which Propp's Morphology is an exemplar. In this type, the structure or formal organization of a folkloristic text is described following the chronological order of the linear sequence of elements in the text as reported from an informant. Thus if a tale consists of elements A to Z, the structure of the tale is delineated in terms of this same sequence. Following Lévi-Strauss (1964: 312), this linear sequential structural analysis we might term "syntagmatic" structural analysis, borrowing from the notion of syntax in the study of language (cf. Greimas 1966a:404). The other type of structural analysis in folklore seeks to describe the pattern (usually based upon a *priori* binary principle of opposition) which allegedly underlies the folkloristic text. This pattern is not the same as the sequential structure at all. Rather the elements are taken out of the "given" order and are regrouped in one or more analytic schemas. Patterns or organization in this second type of structural analysis might be termed "paradigmatic" (cf. Sebag 1963:75), borrowing from the notion of paradigms in the study of language.

Respectively equivalent to syntagmatic and paradigmatic are the terms "diachronic" and "synchronic." Diachronic is the analysis that gives the reader a sense of "going through" the highs and lows of a story, much like the pattern of a sine wave. The second term, synchronic, is where the story is taken in all at one time, like in the pattern of a circle. Most literary analyses are synchronic, offering a greater sense of unity among the components of a

story. Although both structural analyses convey partial information about the story, each angle of analysis delivers a different set of information.

4.0.2.2. Functions:

After the initial situation is depicted, the tale takes the following sequence of 31 functions:

ABSENTATION: A member of a family leaves the security of the home environment. This may be the hero or some other member of the family that the hero will later need to rescue. This division of the cohesive family injects initial tension into the storyline. The hero may also be introduced here, often being shown as an ordinary person.

INTERDICTION: An interdiction is addressed to the hero ('don't go there', 'don't do this'). The hero is warned against some action (given an 'interdiction').

VIOLATION of INTERDICTION. The interdiction is violated (villain enters the tale). This generally proves to be a bad move and the villain enters the story, although not necessarily confronting the hero. Perhaps they are just a lurking presence or perhaps they attack the family whilst the hero is away.

RECONNAISSANCE: The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance (either villain tries to find the children/jewels etc.; or intended victim questions the villain). The villain (often in disguise) makes an active attempt at seeking information, for example searching for something valuable or trying to actively capture someone. They may speak with a member of the family who innocently divulges information. They may also seek to meet the hero, perhaps knowing already the hero is special in some way.

DELIVERY: The villain gains information about the victim. The villain's seeking now pays off and he or she now acquires some form of information, often about the hero or victim. Other information can be gained, for example about a map or treasure location.

TRICKERY: The villain attempts to deceive the victim to take possession of victim or victim's belongings (trickery; villain disguised, tries to win confidence of victim). The villain now presses further, often using the information gained in seeking to deceive the hero or victim in some way, perhaps appearing in disguise. This may include capture of the victim, getting the hero to give the villain something or persuading them that the villain is actually a friend and thereby gaining collaboration.

COMPLICITY: Victim taken in by deception, unwittingly helping the enemy. The trickery of the villain now works and the hero or victim naively acts in a way that helps the villain. This may range from providing the villain with something (perhaps a map or magical weapon) to actively

working against good people (perhaps the villain has persuaded the hero that these other people are actually bad).

VILLAINY or LACK: Villain causes harm/injury to family member (by abduction, theft of magical agent, spoiling crops, plunders in other forms, causes a disappearance, expels someone, casts spell on someone, substitutes child etc., commits murder, imprisons/detains someone, threatens forced marriage, provides nightly torments); Alternatively, a member of family lacks something or desires something (magical potion etc.). There are two options for this function, either or both of which may appear in the story. In the first option, the villain causes some kind of harm, for example carrying away a victim or the desired magical object (which must be then be retrieved). In the second option, a sense of lack is identified, for example in the hero's family or within a community, whereby something is identified as lost or something becomes desirable for some reason, for example a magical object that will save people in some way.

MEDIATION: Misfortune or lack is made known, (hero is dispatched, hears call for help etc./ alternative is that victimized hero is sent away, freed from imprisonment). The hero now discovers the act of villainy or lack, perhaps finding their family or community devastated or caught up in a state of anguish and woe.

BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION: Seeker agrees to, or decides upon counter-action. The hero now decides to act in a way that will resolve the lack, for example finding a needed magical item, rescuing those who are captured or otherwise defeating the villain. This is a defining moment for the

hero as this is the decision that sets the course of future actions and by which a previously ordinary person takes on the mantle of heroism.

DEPARTURE: Hero leaves home;

FIRST FUNCTION OF THE DONOR: Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc., preparing the way for his/her receiving of a magical agent or helper (donor);

HERO'S REACTION: Hero reacts to actions of future donor (withstands/fails the test, frees captive, reconciles disputants, performs service, uses adversary's powers against him);

RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT: Hero acquires use of a magical agent (directly transferred, located, purchased, prepared, spontaneously appears, eaten/drunk, help offered by other characters);

GUIDANCE: Hero is transferred, delivered or led to whereabouts of an object of the search;

STRUGGLE: Hero and villain join in direct combat;

BRANDING: Hero is branded (wounded/marked, receives ring or scarf);

VICTORY: Villain is defeated (killed in combat, defeated in contest, killed while asleep, banished);

LIQUIDATION: Initial misfortune or lack is resolved (object of search distributed, spell broken, slain person revived, captive freed);

RETURN: Hero returns;

PURSUIT: Hero is pursued (pursuer tries to kill, eat, undermine the hero);

RESCUE: Hero is rescued from pursuit (obstacles delay pursuer, hero hides or is hidden, hero transforms unrecognisably, hero saved from attempt on his/her life);

UNRECOGNIZED ARRIVAL: Hero unrecognized, arrives home or in another country;

UNFOUNDED CLAIMS: False hero presents unfounded claims;

DIFFICULT TASK: Difficult task proposed to the hero (trial by ordeal, riddles, test of strength/endurance, other tasks);

SOLUTION: Task is resolved;

RECOGNITION: Hero is recognized (by mark, brand, or thing given to him/her);

EXPOSURE: False hero or villain is exposed;

TRANSFIGURATION: Hero is given a new appearance (is made whole, handsome, new garments etc.);

PUNISHMENT: Villain is punished;

WEDDING: Hero marries and ascends the throne (is rewarded/promoted).

Occasionally, some of these functions are inverted, as when the hero receives something whilst still at home, the function of a donor occurring early. More often, a function is negated twice, so that it must be repeated three times in Western cultures.

4.0.2.3. Characters:

He also concluded that all the characters could be resolved into 7 broad character functions in the 100 tales he analyzed:

- The villain — struggles against the hero.
- The dispatcher — character who makes the lack known and sends the hero off.
- The (magical) helper — helps the hero in their quest.

- The princess or prize and her father — the hero deserves her throughout the story but is unable to marry her because of an unfair evil, usually because of the villain. The hero's journey is often ended when he marries the princess, thereby beating the villain.
- The donor — prepares the hero or gives the hero some magical object.
- The hero or victim/seeker hero — reacts to the donor, weds the princess.
- The false hero — takes credit for the hero's actions or tries to marry the princess.

These roles could sometimes be distributed among various characters, as the hero kills the villain dragon, and the dragon's sisters take on the villainous role of chasing him. Conversely, one character could engage in acts as more than one role, as a father could send his son on the quest and give him a sword, acting as both dispatcher and donor.

Propp's approach has been criticized for removing all verbal considerations from the analysis, even though the folktale's form is almost always oral, and also all considerations of tone, mood, character, and anything that differentiates one fairy tale from another. One of the most

prominent critics of Propp is the French structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used Propp's monograph on the morphology of the Folktale to demonstrate the superiority of the structuralist approach, and the shortcomings of the formalist approach. Propp responded to this criticism in a sharply-worded rebuttal: he wrote that Lévi-Strauss showed no interest in empirical investigation.

4.0.3. Yury Tynyanov:

Yury Nikolaevich Tynyanov was a famous Soviet/Russian writer, literary critic, translator, scholar and screenwriter. He was an authority on Pushkin and an important member of the Russian Formalist school.

Yury Tynyanov was born in Rezhitsa, Vitebsk Governorate, Russian Empire (present-day Rēzekne, Latvia). His brother-in-law was Veniamin Kaverin, another well-known Russian author. While attending the Petrograd University, Tynyanov frequented the Pushkin seminar held by a venerable literary academic, Semyon Vengerov. His first works made their appearance in print in 1921.

In 1928, together with the linguist Roman Jakobson, he published a famous work titled *Theses on Language*, a predecessor to structuralism (but see Ferdinand de Saussure), which could be summarised in the following manner:

1. Literary science had to have a firm theoretical basis and an accurate terminology.
2. The structural laws of a specific field of literature had to be established before it was related to other fields.
3. The evolution of literature must be studied as a system. All evidence, whether literary or non-literary must be analysed functionally.
4. The distinction between synchrony and diachrony was useful for the study of literature as for language, uncovering systems at each separate stage of development. But the history of systems is also a system; each synchronic system has its own past and future as part of its structure. Therefore the distinction should not be preserved beyond its usefulness.
5. A synchronic system is not a mere agglomerate of contemporaneous phenomena catalogued. 'Systems' mean hierarchical organisation.
6. The distinction between langue and parole, taken from linguistics, deserves to be developed for literature in order to reveal the principles underlying the relationship between the individual utterance and a prevailing complex of norms.

7. The analysis of the structural laws of literature should lead to the setting up of a limited number of structural types and evolutionary laws governing those types.
8. The discovery of the 'immanent laws' of a genre allows one to describe an evolutionary step, but not to explain why this step has been taken by literature and not another. Here the literary must be related to the relevant non-literary facts to find further laws, a 'system of systems'. But still the immanent laws of the individual work had to be enunciated first.

Tynyanov also wrote historical novels in which he applied his theories. His other works included popular biographies of Alexander Pushkin and Wilhelm Küchelbecker and notable translations of Heinrich Heine and other authors.

He died of multiple sclerosis in Moscow.

4.0.4. Roman Jakobson:

Roman Osipovich Jakobson was a Russian–American linguist and literary theorist.

As a pioneer of the structural analysis of language, which became the dominant trend in linguistics during the first half of the 20th century, Jakobson was among the most influential linguists of the century. Influenced by the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Jakobson developed, with Nikolai Trubetzkoy, techniques for the analysis of sound systems in languages, inaugurating the discipline of phonology. He went on to apply the same techniques of analysis to syntax and morphology, and controversially proposed that they be extended to semantics (the study of meaning in language). He made numerous contributions to Slavic linguistics, most notably two studies of Russian case and an analysis of the categories of the Russian verb. Drawing on insights from Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, as well as from communication theory and cybernetics, he proposed methods for the investigation of poetry, music, the visual arts, and cinema.

Through his decisive influence on Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, among others, Jakobson became a pivotal figure in the adaptation of structural analysis to disciplines beyond linguistics, including anthropology and literary theory; this generalization of Saussurean methods, known as "structuralism", became a major post-war intellectual movement in Europe and the United States. Meanwhile, though the influence of structuralism declined during the 1970s, Jakobson's work has continued to receive attention in linguistic anthropology, especially through the ethnography of communication developed by Dell Hymes and the semiotics of culture developed by Jakobson's former student Michael Silverstein.

Jakobson was born in Russia on 11 October 1896 to a well-to-do family of Jewish descent, the industrialist Osip Jakobson and chemist Anna Volpert Jakobson, and he developed a fascination with language at a very young age. He studied at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages and then at the Historical-Philological Faculty of Moscow University. As a student he was a leading figure of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and took part in Moscow's active world of avant-garde art and poetry. The linguistics of the time was overwhelmingly neogrammarian and insisted that the only scientific study of language was to study the history and development of words across time (the diachronic approach, in Saussure's terms). Jakobson, on the other hand, had come into contact with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, and developed an approach focused on the way in which language's structure served its basic function (synchronic approach) – to communicate information between speakers. Jakobson was also well known for his critique of the emergence of sound in film. Jakobson received a master's degree from Moscow University in 1918.

1920 was a year of political conflict in Russia, and Jakobson relocated to Prague as a member of the Soviet diplomatic mission to continue his doctoral studies. He immersed himself both into the academic and cultural life of pre-World War II Czechoslovakia and established close relationships with a number of Czech poets and literary figures. Jakobson received his Ph.D. from Charles University in 1930. He became a professor at Masaryk University in Brno in 1933. He also made an impression on Czech academics with his studies of Czech verse. In 1926, together with Vilém Mathesius and others he became one of the founders of the "Prague school"

of linguistic theory (other members included Nikolai Trubetzkoi, René Wellek, Jan Mukařovský). There his numerous works on phonetics helped continue to develop his concerns with the structure and function of language. Jakobson's universalizing structural-functional theory of phonology, based on a markedness hierarchy of distinctive features, was the first successful solution of a plane of linguistic analysis according to the Saussurean hypotheses. (This theory achieved its most canonical exposition in a book co-authored with Morris Halle.) This mode of analysis has been since applied to the plane of Saussurean sense by his protégé Michael Silverstein in a series of foundational articles in functionalist linguistic typology.

Jakobson escaped from Prague in early March 1939 via Berlin for Denmark, where he was associated with the Copenhagen linguistic circle, and such intellectuals as Louis Hjelmslev. He fled to Norway on 1 September 1939. In 1940 fled to Sweden by walking across the border, where he continued his work at the Karolinska Hospital (with works on aphasia and language competence). When Swedish colleagues feared a possible German occupation, he managed to leave on a cargo ship, together with Ernst Cassirer (the former rector of Hamburg University) to New York City in 1941 to become part of the wider community of intellectual émigrés who fled there.

In New York, he began teaching at The New School, still closely associated with the Czech émigré community during that period. At the École libre des hautes études, a sort of Francophone university-in-exile, he

met and collaborated with Claude Lévi-Strauss, who would also become a key exponent of structuralism. He also made the acquaintance of many American linguists and anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, Benjamin Whorf, and Leonard Bloomfield. When the American authorities considered "repatriating" him to Europe, it was Franz Boas who actually saved his life. After the war, he became a consultant to the International Auxiliary Language Association, which would present Interlingua in 1951.

In 1949 Jakobson moved to Harvard University, where he remained until his retirement in 1967. In his last decade he maintained an office at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was an honorary Professor Emeritus. In the early 1960s Jakobson shifted his emphasis to a more comprehensive view of language and began writing about communication sciences as a whole. He converted to Orthodox Christianity in 1975.

Jakobson died in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 18 July 1982. Jakobson's three principal ideas in linguistics play a major role in the field to this day: linguistic typology, markedness, and linguistic universals. The three concepts are tightly intertwined: typology is the classification of languages in terms of shared grammatical features (as opposed to shared origin), markedness is (very roughly) a study of how certain forms of grammatical organization are more "natural" than others, and linguistic universals is the study of the general features of languages in the world. He also influenced Nicolas Ruwet's paradigmatic analysis.

Jakobson has also influenced Friedemann Schulz von Thun's four sides model, as well as Michael Silverstein's metapragmatics, Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication and ethnopoeitics, the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, and philosophy of Giorgio Agamben.

His widow died in 1986. His first wife who was born in 1908 died in 2000.

4.0.4. Boris Eichenbaum:

Boris Mikhailovich Eikhenbaum, or Eichenbaum was a Russian and Soviet literary scholar, and historian of Russian literature. He is a representative of Russian formalism.

The childhood and adolescence of Boris Eikhenbaum were spent in Voronezh. After finishing elementary school in 1905, Eikhenbaum went to Petersburg and enrolled in the Kirov Military Medical Academy, soon thereafter in 1906, he enrolled in the biological faculty of the Free High School of P. F. Lesgaft. In parallel he studied music (violin, piano, voice). In 1907 Eikhenbaum left this school and enrolled in the Musical school of E. P. Raprof and the historical-philological faculty of Saint Petersburg State University. In 1909, Eikhenbaum abandoned professional aspirations in music, choosing in favor of philology. In this same year after two years of

study in the Slavic-Russian department, Eikhenbaum transferred to the Romance-Germanic department, however in 1911, he returned to the Slavic-Russian department. In 1912, Eikhenbaum finished his university studies. From 1913–1914, Eikhenbaum published in a number of periodicals, and conducted reviews of foreign literature in the newspaper «Русская молва». In 1914, Eikhenbaum began his pedagogical activities, and became a teacher in the school of Y. G. Gurevich.

A key moment in the biography of Eikhenbaum was his involvement with other members of the Society for the Study of Poetic Language (OPOJAZ) which was formed in 1916. In 1918, Eikhenbaum joined OPOJAZ and participated in their research until the middle of the 1920s. Eikhenbaum provided definition and interpretation for the group, with essays such as *Theory of the "Formal Method"* he helped outline their approach to literature. From 1947-1949, Eikhenbaum was victimized by the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitanism," along with Viktor Zhirmunskii, Grigorii Gukovskii, and Mark Azadovskii, but was able to continue his science. Eikhenbaum died at the age of 73 in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg.

List of Eichenbaum's Literary works:

- *Pushkin as Poet and the 1825 Revolt (An Attempt at Psychological Investigation)* 1907.
- *How Gogol's Overcoat Was Made*, 1919.

- *Melody of Russian Lyric Poetry*, 1922.
- *Young Tolstoy*, 1922.
- *Anna Akhmatova: An Attempt at Analysis*, 1923.
- *Lermontov. A Study in Historical-Literary Evaluation*, 1924.
- *Leskov and Contemporary Prose*, 1925.
- *O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story*, 1925.
- *Literature and Cinema*, 1926
- *Theory of the "Formal Method"*, 1925 .
- *Literary Mores*, 1927.
- *Leo Tolstoy: The Fifties*, 1928
- *Leo Tolstoy: The Sixties*, 1931.
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5.0. Formalism as Political Offense:

In the Soviet period under Joseph Stalin, the authorities further developed the term's pejorative associations to cover any art which used complex techniques and forms accessible only to the elite, rather than being simplified for "the people" (as in socialist realism).

One of the most sophisticated critiques of the Formalist project was Leon Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* (1924). Trotsky does not wholly dismiss the Formalist approach, but insists that "the methods of formal analysis are necessary, but insufficient" because they neglect the social world with which the human beings who write and read literature are bound up: "The form of art is, to a certain and very large degree, independent, but the artist who creates this form, and the spectator who is enjoying it, are not empty machines, one for creating form and the other for appreciating it. They are living people, with a crystallized psychology representing a certain unity, even if not entirely harmonious. This psychology is the result of social conditions" (180, 171). The Formalists were thus accused of being politically reactionary because of such unpatriotic remarks as Shklovsky's (quoted by Trotsky) that "Art was always free of life, and its color never reflected the color of the flag which waved over the fortress of the City" (164). The leaders of the movement suffered political persecution beginning in the 1920s, when Stalin came to power, which largely put an end to their inquiries.

6.0. Legacy:

Russian formalism was not a uniform movement, it comprised diverse theoreticians whose views were shaped through methodological debate that proceeded from the distinction between poetic and practical language to the overarching problem of the historical-literary study. It is mainly with this theoretical focus that the Formalist School is credited even by its adversaries such as Yefimov:

The contribution of our literary scholarship lies in the fact that it has focused sharply on the basic problems of literary criticism and literary study, first of all on the specificity of its object, that it modified our conception of the literary work and broke it down into its component parts, that it opened up new areas of inquiry, vastly enriched our knowledge of literary technology, raised the standards of our literary research and of our theorizing about literature effected, in a sense, a Europeanization of our literary scholarship.... Poetics, once a sphere of unbridled impressionism, became an object of scientific analysis, a concrete problem of literary scholarship ("Formalism V Russkom Literaturovedenii, quoted in Erlich, "Russian Formalism: In Perspective" 225).

The diverging and converging forces of Russian formalism gave rise to the Prague school of structuralism in the mid-1920s and provided a model for the literary wing of French structuralism in the 1960s and 1970s. "And, insofar as the literary-theoretical paradigms which Russian Formalism

inaugurated are still with us, it stands not as a historical curiosity but a vital presence in the theoretical discourse of our day" (Steiner, "Russian Formalism" 29).

There is no direct historical relationship between New Criticism and Russian Formalism, each having developed at around the same time (RF 1910-20s & NC 1940s-50s) but independently of the other. However, despite this, there are several similarities: for example, both movements showed an interest in considering literature on its own terms, instead of focusing on its relationship to political, cultural or historical externalities, a focus on the literary devices and the craft of the author, and a critical focus on poetry.

Sources/Suggested Reading:

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