

**Master of Arts**  
(1<sup>st</sup> Year) Third Semester

**ENG-301**

**Literary Theory and  
Criticism-I**



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Unit:01 – Critical Theory	
<b>Aristotle's Poetics (Chapter 1-18)</b>	

## Lesson Structure

### Learning Objectives

#### Introduction

### Main Body of the Text

#### About the Age

#### About the Poet

### Further Body of the Text

#### Different elements of a tragedy

#### Aristotle's views on imitation with Plato

### Check Your Progress

#### Summary

#### Keywords

#### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

### Answers to Your Progress

#### Suggested Readings

### Learning objectives



- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.
- To enhance their knowledge of literature.
- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in English language.

### Introduction

Aristotle was one of the greatest authors and philosophers in history. His ideas on things like God, different systems of governance, the happiness of the populace, morality, etc. are still very significant and applicable even today. Aristotle makes an effort to suppress Socrates-style conviction in the later stages of his life. However he got away from Athens, but he was not spared by death and he passed away. He had managed to get away from the judge, but not from death. .

- The most famous of his mathematical works is a conversation on monarchy in constitutions. His biggest contribution to philosophy and criticism was the expansion of Platonic thinking in Athens.
- Out of his numerous works, the most notable are his dialogues on monarchy. His greatest contribution lies in the fields of criticism and philosophy, developing platonic thought among new lines. He formulated certain basic concepts and principles of realistic philosophy which are particularly relevant in western culture.

### Main Body of the Text

*Poetics* is a fragmentary and incomplete work of literary criticism. It deals with tragedy, comedy, and the epic. It contains 26 chapters that were delivered to scholars and written either by them or by Aristotle himself. The text is probably a rough sketch of what he wanted to write in detail. It is also possible that it had a sequel, which we have not received. However, the fact remains that it is incomplete, fragmentary, and often omits the questions that he himself raised and might have discussed in the second book of '*Poetics*'.

In spite of its fragmentary nature, *Poetics* has come down to us as an authentic treasure of the art of tragedy. It is the first philosophical discussion of the lecture. It is also the foundation of all subsequent



discussions. It contains fundamental problems relating to literary and aesthetic criticism, and his conclusions on these fundamental problems have been deduced inductively and by analysis; for example, tragedy is discussed separately as plot, character, diction, etc.

Some critics are of the opinion that *Poetics* is a reply to Plato's criticism of poetry. It has been suggested by Atkins that Aristotle wrote *Poetics* as a reply to Plato's scathing denunciation of poetry as false, unreal, and harmful. The author of *Poetics* had the author of 'The Republic' in his mind, though nowhere in *Poetics* does he mention the name of Plato. He is so engrossed in the Platonic ideas that all the time he seems to be engaged in refuting them. Atkins finds Aristotle merely careful to frame a reply to Plato's indictment. *Poetics* assumes acquaintance with the other works of Aristotle and with the literary works examined, quoted, and referred to. To grasp concepts like Hamartia and Catharsis, we have to go through his *Ethics* and *Rhetoric*. The concept of imitation is illuminated by the study of his *Poetry*. Certain other concepts compel us to study his *De Anima* and *The Text on Logic*. Above all there is his *Metaphysics* which offers a greater framework. *Poetics* therefore, demands a cheerful study. Even then, some of the difficulties are likely to remain because Aristotle examined some of the problems agitating his contemporaries. These include the relative merits of tragedy and epic, poetry in terms of plot, character, and the like.

### About the Age

Ancient Greek philosophy which significantly contributed to logic, criticism, rhetoric, physics, biology, psychology, mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, and politics, is best known for the works of Aristotle. Despite spending twenty years as Plato's pupil, he is renowned for opposing his master's ideas of forms. He was more interested in empirical research than *Socrates* and *Plato*.

Aristotle gave regular lectures on a wide variety of subjects to his students and associates. His lectures were often repeated. Generally, he prepared written versions which were read on special occasions to his audience. These written lectures were circulated in the schools and used for individual study. What we now possess as a supposed single topic is rather a collection of many different written lectures on that topic, often covering a considerable period. These versions were placed together into a single work by later editors. From the standpoint of subject matter, the writing falls into four major groups: -



- First, there are logical treasures now commonly referred to as the ‘*Organon*’. These include the categories, interpretations, the prior analytics, and the topics.
- Second, there are writings on natural philosophy and science. The most important of these are the treatises ‘*On Coming into Being*’ and ‘*Passing away*’. Aristotle himself wrote no treatise on plants, but such a work was undertaken by his students.
- Third, there is a collection known as ‘*Metaphysics*’. Aristotle did not use this title but referred to the field as the first philosophy of thoughts. ‘*Metaphysics*’ is the set of lectures written by him during the leadership development of his thought as Aristotle and during the final period of Athens.

Fourth, there are the works on Ethics and Politics, to which ‘*Poetics*’ and ‘*Rhetoric*’ are subordinated. The most important of these is ‘*Eudemian*’. Ethics composed during the last Athenian period consists of different lectures written over a long period of time.

## Further Body of the Text

### Chapter -1

Imitation is the common principle of all arts. According to Aristotle imitation is the spirit of all arts. Epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, music and other arts are based on imitations. Though it is true that their method of imitation is different from one another, yet it is also true that every art remains alive only by imitation. That imitation is a common principle of the Fine arts; the various arts differ from each other in three ways. They differ in their medium of imitation, in their objective of imitation, and the manner of their imitation.

### Chapter- 2

The objects of imitation (Tragedy and Comedy)

The Fine Arts are distinguished from one another first by their medium of imitation and second by the objects they imitate. The objects of poetic imitation are the man in action. It means that poetic imitation is now not merely mimicry or servile copy. It is an act of creating images that may represent man as heroic or exaggerate their follies and weaknesses. A poet must idealize or he may caricature and this is that difference between comedy and tragedy. Tragedy idealizes, imitates man as better or higher and



comedy caricatures i.e. show man as worse lower than they actually are. Poetry concerns with possibilities with what ought to be and not with photographic realism.

### **Chapter 3 - The manner of imitation: Epic and Tragedy**

The arts are further distinguished from each other by their manner of imitation. There may be three modes of imitation.

- 1 The poet may use the narrative method throughout.
2. He may use the dramatic method that describes things through assumed character and show thing being done.
3. He may combine these two methods. He may narrate a part of his story and represent part of it through a dialogue between assumed characters based on the manner of imitation. Poetry is classified as an epic or narrative and dramatic. In dramatic poetry, the dramatic personas act the story in epic poetry a poet like Homer narrates the story, as well as tell it through a dialogue between assumed characters. He uses both the narrative and dramatic method.

### **Chapter- 4 Origin and Development of Poetry**

Poetry has its Origin in four human instincts.

- 1 The natural human instinct to imitate things as we observe in that case of monkeys and children.
- 2 The natural pleasure we get from a good work of imitation. It is for this reason that accurate imitation of even ugly objects gives pleasure.
- 3 Learning or knowing something new is always a pleasure. It is for this reason that we derive pleasure from an imitation of an object we have never seen before.
- 4 Our instinctive give pleasure in harmony and rhythm.

Poetry grew out of these natural causes. Quite early in its development, poetry diverted into the two directions. Poets, who were more serious, imitated noble acts of noble personages and in this way were composed great hymns to the gods. Out of these grows heroic and epic poetry like Odyssey of Homer. Similarly there were poets of previous nature who imitated the action of trivial persons and in this way they produced inventories of personal satire and comedy derives from these 'lumps' or personal satires. Aristotle notes the particular position of Homer who excel both in the serious and the frivolous just as



he is the greatest poet in the serious style, so, he is the greatest poet in the field of the comedy and the like his elder and odyssey are the serious epic while his 'Margites' is a comic epic in which he is the first to give us the picture of the ridiculous which is essential of comedy.

### **Chapter- 5 Definition of the Ridiculous: Epic and Tragedy**

Comedy is the representation of the character of a lower type worse than the average. By lower or the worse Aristotle does not mean bad but only ridiculous. He then defines the ridiculous as a 'spices of the ugly'. It is these spices of the ugly which does not cause any pain or the harm to other rather it is productive of laughter.

Epic and tragedy are similar in so much as both of them represent serious actions in serious characters or characters better than the average. They do so in a grand and the elevated style but there is a difference between tragedy and the Epic.

1. Epic is narrative while tragedy is dramatic in form.
2. Epic uses only one meter, the heroic, while the tragedy uses different meters in different parts.
3. Epic is much longer because its action is not limited by time and place while the action of the tragedy is confined to a single circuit of the sun. It is this statement from which were derived the unity of time and place by the later critics.
4. Tragedy superior to epic because all the element of an epic is found in tragedy whereas all the element of tragedy is not found in the epic. Spectacles and melody the part of tragedy but they are not the part of epic therefore epic has an advantage of representing larger span of life.

### **Chapter 6- Definition of Tragedy: Its Formative Parts**

Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of its certain magnitude in language, establish with all kinds of artistic ornaments, each kind brought in separately in a separate part of the work in the form of actions, and not in the narrative form with incidents arising pity and fear wherewith to accomplish catharsis of such emotions. Here by language embellished is meant language with rhythm and melody or songs super added and by 'the kinds separately' is meant some portion is worked out with words only and another in to tune with song. The six formative part of tragedy are plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and melody of these parts, is the soul of tragedy. Merely psychological



ingenuity in drawing character merely poetic is the theoretical brilliance does not make the tragedy.

### **Chapter -7 Plot-Construction**

The plot is of great importance in tragedy. The plot must be a whole. It must have a beginning middle and an end. The beginning must be self-explanatory. It must not provoke us to ask why and how. No knowledge of antecedent circumstances should be necessary for its understanding. The middle must follow naturally and inevitably upon the beginning and must logically lead to the end or gain catastrophe. Thus the artist wholeness means that there is a link up of various incidents each following the other naturally and inevitably. The plot must not be so long that the beginning is forgotten before the end is reached. If the whole is very beautiful but the miles are long we should not be able to appreciate beauty consist in a proper relation between the whole and its parts.

### **Chapter- 8 Unity of the Plot**

Formal unity cannot be imparted to the plot merely the story of a single hero life. The unity of the plot must be an organic one. Just as in the living organism, every part is essential for the life of organism and cannot be removed without injuring to it, in the same way; there should be nothing superficial in the tragic action. There should be no action which can be transposed or the removed without damaging the whole Aristotle has not much to say about the unity these unities time place and action were drive later by the critics.

### **Chapter- 9 The Nature of Poetic Truth: Poetry and History**

Poetry does not deal with photographic realism. It does not speak of the thing going by. A poet tells about the probable things and events. Poetry is an imitation of the poet's idea of life and 'from this ensures its universality.' Poetry is merely philosophical than history because by giving an idealized and ordered imitations of life. The poet is in a better position to generalize the laws of the things and make us understand them. A historian encounters events chronologically without showing the chain of the cause and effect. Thus poetry is the greater permanence than History. Its appeal is of universal character. But the range and appeal of history is limited.

### **Chapter -10 Kinds of Plots: Simple and Complex**



According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of plots simple and complex. In a simple plot, the action moves forward continuously and uniformly without any change of direction towards in catastrophe. In a complex plot there is an abrupt change of direction. The hero's fortunes rise to a certain point the climax and then fall rapidly downwards. There is reversal and recognitions or discoveries. Peripety and megnorisis are incidents are connected with the plot and having nothing to do with characters.

### **Chapter- 11 Peripety, Anagnorisis and Suffering**

The plot of the tragedy has three formative elements- Peripety, Anagnorisis (discovery or recognition) and suffering in a complex plot. There is a climax or the turning point at which some sort of discovery leads directly to the change of fortune, and this change of fortune Aristotle calls the 'peripety' a sudden reversal of fortunes wheel. The most effective form of peripety is one that is exactly co-incident with diagnoses. The discovery of some fact can also be interpreted to mean the reversal of the agent's intention, a situation in which the consequence of the hero action is the opposite of what he intended. This boomerang device is certainly effective and full of tragic irony. It is presented in the peripety of Oedipus. Duncan's murder in Macbeth is also another example since the result were not worked Macbeth intended. In this sense peripety become a kind of tragic irony forming very basis of the plot.

Discovery and perimeters are thus explained, are constituent element of the most effective kind of tragedy.

The third element of tragedy is suffering i.e. the depiction of the tragic incident or calamity as murder, torture, mimicry, wounding etc.

### **Chapter- 12 The Quantitative parts of tragedy: Petrologic, Episode, Choric**

Songs are an integral part of a tragedy. The prologue is that entire part which precedes the Parode of the chorus. The Parode is that entrance song of the chorus. The epistle is that entire part of a tragedy which is between complete chorus songs. Episode is eloquent of action in the drama. Some critics think that this chapter was a later interpolation and that Aristotle did not write it.

### **Chapter -13 The Structure of a Perfect Tragedy and Ideal Tragic Hero**

According to Aristotle, an ideal tragic hero and the plot of the tragedy have corresponding relation with each other. Aristotle has pointed out these forms of plot for an ideal tragic hero should be avoided



1. A Good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery.
2. A bad man from misery to happiness in the first condition petty and the fear would not be aroused in the second condition.
3. The elementary bad man feeling from happiness into misery is equally unfit. His fate is well deserved and the pity and fear are aroused by the undeserved suffering of one like us and extremely bad man is not like us, for human nature is a mingle year of good and bad.

Thus according to Aristotle, an ideal tragic hero should be a man of an intermediate kind neither an utter villain nor a man perfectly good and just he should be a man. Therefore with all human weaknesses and follies if a tragic hero is of this standard then only our feeling of pity and fear can be aroused in this gesture.

Gesture he has used has been interpreted by scholars as an error of judgment or miscalculation rather than any moral weakness.

Secondly the ideal hero must be a person who enjoys prosperity name and fame. He must be a person highly placed in a society, for the fall of such a person is more likely to excite the tragic emotions rather than the fall of the man not so eminently placed. He must belong to some great family as was the conviction of Greek tragedy. An ideal plot must have a single issue. It must depict the misfortune of the hero. Aristotle points the second rank a tragedy. With the double issue happiness for the good and misery for the bad, the pleasure in such a case is not a pleasure proper to tragedy. Rather it is proper to comedy. Aristotle thus rules out tragic comedy drama which has double plot- a tragic or serious main plot and a comic subplot.

#### **Chapter-14 Comparative Study of Spectacles and Plot as a Source of Tragic Emotions**

It is through the tragic spectacle that human pity and fear must be aroused but for arousing the tragic feeling, the plot should be constructed in such a way in the feeling of pity and fear may be in proper proportion. Various tragic situations are to be created by the poet to arise the feeling of pity and fear. Whenever the tragic deed, however, is done within the family. When murder or the like is done or meditated by brother on brother by son on father by mother on a son or son on the mother. These are the situations; the poet should not often seek after apart from this. There is also a third possibility and that is meditating some deadly injury to another in ignorance of his relationship. The world situation,



according to Aristotle is when a person is with full knowledge on the part of doing the deed and leaves it undone.

### **Chapter- 15 Character and its Essentials**

This chapter deals with characterization in the tragedy. Aristotle lists four essentials of successful characterization

1. Characters must be good. A character is good if his words and actions reveal that his purpose is good. In ancient Greece, women were considered inferior being like slaves but Aristotle says that when introduced in the tragedy every woman and slave must be shown to have some good in them. Entirely wicked characters even when assigned minor roles are unfit for tragedy weakness and depravity is to be introduced only when absoluteness necessary for the plot.
2. The character must be appropriate that is to say they must be true to type or status, for example, women must be shown as womanly and not manly. They must be given a character that is appropriate to their status. Manliness would not be appropriate in women and the dignity and nobility in a slave if the characters are taken from some non-myths and story see the story of a king or dukes then they must be true to tradition they must behave as or differ is traditionally supposed to have behaved.
3. Third essential of successful characterization is that character must be true to life that is they must have a virtues and weaknesses, joy and sorrow, love and hatred of average human beings. Such likeness is essential for weakened feel pity only for one who is like ourselves and only his misfortunes can make us fear for ourselves. His action must be probably too.
4. The character must be consistent they must be true to their own nature and their action must be in character. Such impulsive person should act rashly and impulsively throughout. If the dramatist has to represent an inconsistent person then he must be consistently inconsistent. The action of the character should not only be probable. It should also be interlinked with his earlier action and must not contradiction impression produce earlier.

### **Chapter- 16 Anagnorisis (recognition) and its kind**

In chapter 16, Aristotle has already defined an explained Anagnorisis 'Discovery' or recognition as change from ignorance to knowledge, bringing about a reversal in the fortune of the tragic hero since he



regards discovery as an important element of the successful plot. In this chapter he further discusses the points and lists six kinds of recognition and discovery.

1. The least artistic is the recognition brought about by signs or marks.
2. The next come the discoveries introduced by the poet at will.
3. The third kind of discovery depends upon memory. The fourth kind of discovery made through a process of reasoning. Through the process of reasoning. One event is linked up with another until the truth is recognized
4. The fifth is the discovery arising from false reasoning, that is to say discovery by bluff or the device of laying false clues. The best and the most artistic kind of discovery is the one which grows out of the action itself such a discovery is natural and credible and it surprises and starts the readers.

### **Chapter 17 and 18- Some Practical Rules for would- be Dramatist- kind of tragedy**

Chapter 17 and 18 is concerned with the process of constructing plays, and Aristotle laid down certain guidelines for this purpose while constructing his plots. The poet should do three things.

1. First work out the emotions with the very 'gestures' of his dramatic personage.
2. Second he should begin with the universal form of the plot adding the name and the episodes later.
3. Thirdly the poet should be foreseer.
4. The giving of proper name to the characters is also an important aspect of the process of dramatic construction. The assignment of the names determines whether the drama will be fiction, myth or history and provides guidance in characterization.

### **Different Elements of a Tragedy**

Aristotle listed the four constituent elements of a tragedy:

1. Complete tragedy with reversal and recognition.
2. The tragedy of suffering. This kind of tragedy depicts painful events such as wars, deaths, and the like. It derives its effects from incidents of a pitiable and fearful nature.



3. Another kind of tragedy is the tragedy of character in which the speeches reveal characters.
4. Then there is tragedy of spectacle. It is the tragedy that depends upon sensational effects produced by the actors, the costume designers, and other mechanical and artificial devices. The adventures are fantastic, the figure gigantic, and the scene of action frequently leads towards the end. Aristotle advises the dramatist to make chorus an integral part of his action. It should participate in the action like the other characters.

Critics examine Aristotle's concept of poetic imitation. Aristotle's views that all art is imitation conflict with the view that it is creation. The objects of imitation are the main focus of action.

### Check Your Progress

- Write a note on Aristotle's theory and concept of tragedy?
- Explain Aristotle's definition of tragedy and what did he mean by catharsis?
- Discuss briefly Aristotle's view on the relative importance of plot, character, spectacle in a tragedy.

### Summary - *Poetics* and its Chapters

The opening three chapters form a brief introduction to poetic forms. Poetry is mimetic art, and mimesis includes matter, manner, and medium. The fourth chapter presents the origin and development of poetry, and the fifth gives a brief history of comedy. The epic is compared to tragedy. The main text begins in the sixth chapter. Tragedy is defined and analyzed, and there is an explanation of the concept of myth. The ninth chapter distinguishes poetry from history and form the standpoint of the principle of unity. A classification of the fable appears in tenth chapter followed by an account of the peripety, recognition, and constitution of the fable in light of the effect. This is followed by an examination of the tragic emotions and an analysis of the tragic character, and various forms of discovery are taken up in the sixteenth. The next two chapters offer a few practical rules. The nineteenth examines thoughts and diction. The alleged interpolated twentieth chapter has linguistic definitions. Poetic diction and style are covered in the next two. The nature of the epic is taken up in 23rd and 24th. He focuses on some of the critical problems, mostly concerning Horner, and it is there that mimesis appeals as a differentiating



principle. Epic and tragedy are compared in the last chapters. *Poetics* is a comprehensive treatment to various elements of tragedy.

### Keywords

- Comprehensive
- Medium
- Imitation

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

**Qus.-1 Write Aristotle's concept of Tragedy in *Poetics*.**

**Qus.-2 Examine critically 'Aristotle's theory of *catharsis* gives a brief modern criticism of this theory'.**

### Answers to Your Progress

**Qus.-1 Write Aristotle's concept of Tragedy in *Poetics*.**

Ans. - Tragedy which is regarded as the highest poetic form is the main focus of *Poetics*. However the theory of tragedy is developed with such intelligence and awareness that it takes on the form of literary theory. Aristotle describes tragedy as having six components in *Poetics*. Following this concept, he discusses the various parts of relative importance.

**Definition of tragedy** - In a tragedy we have the object imitated namely 'action'. The medium of imitation is language by different means. The manner of imitation is direct presentation. The purpose of imitation is to bring about the purgation of emotions like pity and fear. The definition is comprehensive enough. It indicates stage representation which refers to costumes and setting. It does not leave out music and diction which form the medium for these presentations of action. The manner it indicated by the spectacle; and the object of imitation are the other three i.e. moral, thought and plot.

It shows that 'Action' is the copied object in a tragedy, according to the definition. Language that has been elegantly created through various techniques serves as the imitation medium. Direct presentation is the method of imitation. Imitation is meant to cause negative emotions like pity and fear to be expelled. The definition of tragedy is sufficiently detailed. It denotes theatrical representation, which includes the



scenery and clothing. It does not exclude the use of music and language which serve the medium for these action displays. The spectacle provided the direction while the other three moral inclinations, ideas, and plots served as the subject of imitation.

Examining the definition, nature, and purpose of tragedy, Aristotle concentrates on the component and formative aspects of tragedy. He lists six crucial components of a tragedy:

Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Song

Plot, character, and idea all have an interest in the presentation's subject. The means of representation are addressed by poetry, music, and spectacle, while the style of representation is addressed by spectacle. Some of them demand more focus than others.

**Plot:** According to Aristotle, the storyline of a tragedy is more significant than the revealing of a character's inner nature or thought process. Characterization is secondary since it serves only what is best seen in action. The series of remarks, notwithstanding how they eventually clicked together, do not have the same sad impact as a well-developed storyline. But we should not write to interpret this relative importance in absolute terms, for this would be disastrous. Aristotle was merely stating the preferential order of six parts. All the parts are essential to the perfect whole.

According to Aristotle, the fundamental principle of tragedy is the plot. The organization of tragic events, which is not a reflection of man but rather human activity, existence, happiness, and pain, is the most crucial of these components. The storyline is how the incidents are organized. Tragic events can happen without morality, but not without action. Aristotle defined action as a process rather than an activity. In this sense, a drama without action would be one in which nothing happened and had no beginning or end. Tragic outcomes cannot be achieved by those who do not take action. If the speeches aren't connected to the storyline, a series of monologues demonstrating character isn't a drama itself. No matter how engaging they may be, they are still set pieces. For instance, a selection of six of Shakespeare's finest soliloquies might be enjoyable reading, but no one would consider them to be a drama. Because they are play elements rather than characterizations. Reversal and recognition are the most effective ways to measure the tragic effect. They reaffirm the notion that the story takes precedence over the characters.

**Characterization:** In terms of generic characterization, Aristotle outlined four key characteristics.



- Good character is required.
- They must be suitable.
- They must be consistent and have a lightness of spirit.

The tragic hero should neither be completely good nor completely bad. He should stand in opposition to an eminence and fall from this eminence into ruin, not out of wickedness but rather due to a mistake of judgment on his own. Therefore, the character must be realistic. They must be genuine in their class, type, and professional level. They can't possibly be true to human nature. They must resemble the legendary figures after whom they are modeled and whose names they carry. They must have steady growth.

**Diction:** On poetic action, Aristotle has a lot to say. To make that difference clear, he explains the fundamental distinction between the language of words and regular prostatic speaking. Take a passage from an epic poem and see how it sounds in a common language. He lists the commonplace and foreign terms used throughout the poetic discourse.

However the key point is that poetry's expression should be natural and authentic, not forced or overdone. According to Aristotle, diction is an active idea that is strongly related to the poet's mastery over meter. It is the process of creating a material composition, not a metrical composition.

**Thought:** Thought must be given when a statement is made or when a statement is supported or refuted, irrespective of what can be stated or what is acceptable for the situation. The intellectual component of a tragedy is thought, which is communicated through a character's words. This suggests that only those speeches that convey a character's thoughts and emotions are suitable for tragedy.

**Spectacle-** Aristotle is of the opinion that the playwright must rely on his effects on his power rather than on spectacle since spectacle or the cynic effect has more to do with stagecraft than with creating poetry. According to him, it is better to provoke terror and sympathy through playwriting than through spectacle. The theatre manager is the worst adversary of the dramatist's craft, according to Aristotle and his insistence on the theatrical has ruined many a good play.

**Song or Melody-** Song or melody separates the epic from the tragic. This component is what makes tragedy enjoyable. The lyrical or musical component of a tragedy can be found there.



**Dramatic Unities-** Only one of the three unities—the unity of action—is highlighted by Aristotle. He opposes a variety of actions because they lessen the sad effect. There may be multiple occurrences, but they must be incidentally related to one another and all contribute to the dramatist's intended impact in terms of the continuity of time. Only once does Aristotle compare dramatic action in the epic with the tragedy. While the epic has no set time restriction for action, he constructs tragedy to fit as closely as possible within one solar revolution or just barely beyond it. The idea of place unity is never brought up by him.

**The superiority of tragedy to Epic Poetry-** Epic and tragedy address weighty issues in a magnificent style of poetry; however, tragedy employs a separate style of verse for its choral odes and its conversation, whereas epic imitates only one style. The tragedy has considerably more focused more effective and more complete, and more diversified than the epic. Additionally, there are some features of tragedy that the epic lacks, while the tragedy contains all of the qualities that the epic possesses.

The epic lacks melody and spectacle, two elements that make up tragedy and alter its impact. It also has the unity of action and the reality of presentation, both of which the epic lacks.

**Tragic Pleasure:** The ultimate aim of tragedy is to give aesthetic pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure is possible only when the requirements of morality are satisfied. Aristotle recognizes the value of the emotional effect of poetry.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle believed in the emotional triumph of tragedy; the source of tragedy is pointed out by him.

1. The pleasure is derived partly from our natural sense of harmony and rhythm; verse and rhythm are not necessary, but they mainly enhance the pleasure of poetry.
2. It is also derived partly from the instant of imitation. It is pleasure arising from seeing a thing or action well imitated. A successful tragedy gives pleasure because it satisfies the basic impulse of imitation. Poetry imitates because imitating something with which we are unfamiliar broadens our knowledge, and learning is enjoyable.
3. However, all poetry shares these two kinds of enjoyment. The catharsis of the dread and pity emotions is what gives tragedy its joy.



4. When tragedy imitates movement and life including its suffering and misery, it is engrossing and captivating. The audience emotionally and completely identifies themselves with the performer who is struggling on stage. The focus of our senses, emotions, and minds on the terrible deed produces pure pleasure. We shed tears in this situation.
5. Tragic events are enjoyable.

**To conclude-** We view Aristotle as the father of system theme theory, a pioneer in the field of logical literary analysis, and an early proponent of the historical and psychological approaches. It gives us a theory of tragedy that acts as the most reliable foundation for all debates of literary aesthetics that follow. Aristotle's history still survives, despite the controversy surrounding his philosophy.

**Qus.-2 Examine critically Aristotle's theory of catharsis gives a brief modern criticism of this theory.**

**Or**

**Discuss Aristotle's conception of catharsis and exploit how it restores emotional balance.**

**Or**

**Aristotle's statement about the end of tragedy catharsis has been so endlessly misunderstood so uncritically assumes to be true. Discuss.**

Ans.- The phrases *catharsis* is of Greek origin. Its three meanings are purgation, purification, and clarification. Aristotle only used this word once while addressing the aim of tragedy in *Poetics*. Aristotle says that pity and dread hinder an appropriate catharsis, or purification, of these emotions. However, he fails to explain the meaning of catharsis. The term has been interpreted in numerous manners by contemporary critics.

#### **A few important catharsis theories**

Critics like Twinning and Barney assert that the pathological or purgatory notion of catharsis is a metaphor for medicine. In a similar way to how medicine has a bad effect on the body, it has a pathological effect on the soul. The body of the debris and comparable tragedy cleanses the mind of pity



and dread by initially stimulating and then offering an outlet for these unpleasant emotions. There is a gratifying release as a result. Milton also explained this catharsis theory in "**Samson Agenesis**."

Based on the notion that two opposites attracts, catharsis was seen as an allopathic treatment throughout in neo-classical era. It was designed to evoke emotions of terror and pity, leading to the omission and equalization of other emotions like anger and empathy. The sight of human misery stimulates feelings of empathy and disgust, and we become consumed by emotions that bring about happiness. We are cleansed of these emotions because we are aware of their detrimental effects, even if the suffering is caused by unfavorable sentiments like fury, hatred, or compassion for the Gods. The awful reality of wicked men teaches us to avoid the sounds they make.

**Psychological Interpretation:** F. L Lucas contends that a theatre is not a hospital. He rejects Aristotle's use of the term "catharsis" as a metaphor for healing. Herbert and Lucas concur that it serves as a safety valve. Since we are unable to communicate our feelings of pity and dread in real life, we allow them to run in imagination. Real-world emotional relief follows this safe and healthy emotional release. While we are repressed, the suffering of the hero is conserved and comforts frazzled spirits at the theatre. These emotions may be experienced without restraint. I A Richards approach this word from a psychological angle. Fear makes one want to run away but pity makes one want to accept.

**The Ethical Interpretation-** According to the ethical perspective, the tragic process is similar to the final phase of the soul. A more balanced view of life results from this realization and tragedy reveals how the universe's divine rule-makers always act in our best interests.

Humphrey House disagrees with the idea of purgation in a medical sense.. He is the staunchest advocate of the purification theory, which includes the ideas of moral learning and moral education. One kind of moral education that the spectators receive is catharsis, which, according to Humphrey House, represents cleansing. A quantitative evocation or a quantitative change in the body that is cleansing may follow the restoration of proper equilibrium. If this balance of tragedy continues, it will arouse pity and fear.

**Inadequacy of the above theories-** The clarification theory, however, provides a more thorough explanation of everything than either the purgation theory or the purification theory. The underlying issue with these viewpoints is that they overlook the fact that Aristotle was actually writing a book on



the art of poetry rather than psychology, focusing instead excessively on the psychology of the audience and the effects of tragedy on theatergoers. He is more concerned with the process, nature, and potential creation of a perfect tragedy than with the psychological effects. For these reasons, eminent modern critics support the clarifying idea.

According to O. B. Hardison, Aristotle wanted catharsis to be delightful since, in his opinion, tragic events are credible and terrible. They make their viewers happy. Catharsis is a sad form of pleasure that produces terrible pleasure. A tragic poet might begin by selecting some important historical or mythical moments that are instantly pitiful and terrible. He is permitted to borrow facts and occurrences that are connected to them. He then displays them in a way that draws attention to the likely and crucial ideas that link them into a single action and indicate their connection to his activity. Through catharsis, which is the explanation of the underlying law that governs human life and destiny, one gains a better understanding of the global norm that regulates humans. By understanding the catharsis phrase as a reference to the tragedy's method rather than the psychology of the audience, it acknowledges the poetry's true character as a technique gem. It appropriately interprets Aristotle's point of view. It establishes a link between catharsis and the concepts of intimation and probability analysis. It blends flawlessly with the trendy cuisines of today. Recent conceptions of aesthetics are completely coherent with the debate on probability.

**Conclusion:** Purgation and purification are accidental ideas in theory. Since pity and horror are the two primary sorrowful emotions, they don't last very long. If the tragedy is to create the joy that comes from learning, the pity and fear—or at least unpleasant portions of them—must be removed, even though there may be purgation in the experience of sympathy and horror. It is only incidental and secondary. Aristotle therefore saw catharsis as largely an intellectual activity. It is neither a moral philosophy that relies on that sad incident to show how bad men eventually become awful, nor is it a theological consolation stemming from the knowledge that God's law subtly works to make everything good.

**Qus. - 3 Examine critically Aristotle's view on the plot of tragedy.**

**Or**

**Write a note on Hamartia, Anagnarisis, magnitude and organic unity and complex plots**

**Or**



**Show that Hamartia, peripeteia and Anagnarisis all hang together in an ideal tragic plot. Elucidate.**

Ans. -According to Aristotle, tragedy is a representation of activity, and activity is made up of episodes and incidents. These occurrences and events are plotted together. It is better for the poet to choose a well-known story and then adapt it into his own narrative. The finest stories are ones that have roots in history, myth, or folklore since they are well-known, relatable, and offer guidelines for characterization regardless of whether the story was chosen or made up. It has to go through a creative organizing and selecting process on the part of the artist. Only relevant events and situations should be used, and they should be organized such that they appear to follow one another naturally and inescapably.

**Description of a strong plot in its whole or entirety-** The sad plot must be comprehensive and complete. It should have a beginning, middle, and end. The antecedents, which are earlier elements of the story that must exist, may eventually be communicated by the writer. The introduction must be clear and concise. Even without them Readers shouldn't be left wondering why and how the tragedy that follows in the middle is a result of an earlier situation. The halfway point is anything that occurs between the first and last occurrences. The end, which emerges from a certain condition but is not followed by another occurrence or circumstance, comes after the middle.

#### **Structure of the plot -**

The plot needs to be serious. The plot must have a specific length or scale size. It shouldn't be too large or too small. According to O.B. Hardison, the graphic must have structural, consistency, logic, and symmetry in the plot must be considered magnitude. The plot shouldn't be too drawn out so that the memory has to deal with it all at once, but it should be lengthy enough to let the beginning of happiness moves to agony. If it were too long, the introduction would be forgotten before the end. If it is too little, the components won't be as simple to distinguish from one another as they would be with a live object.

But unity is not defined by the hero's oneness. It is in the actions constancy. It should function as an organic whole, which means that if one of its parts is moved or removed, the entire system should be disrupted.



Only a story with elements of surprise and accident may produce the strongest dramatic effect of pity and terror. When the rules of probability or necessity are broken, a story becomes defective. The events should, however, contain some limitations.

The oneness of the hero does not define unity. It is the consistency of the action. If one of its components is relocated or deleted, the entire system should be affected since it should operate as an organic whole. The biggest dramatic effect of pity and dread can only be produced by a narrative containing elements of surprise and accident. A tale is flawed if the laws of probability or necessity are violated. However, there ought to be certain restrictions placed on the events. The discussion above makes it evident that Aristotle places a strong emphasis on the unity of action but does not speak much about the unity of time and location. He only asserts that tragedy should not be the exclusive cause of pain.

When comparing an epic to a tragedy, Aristotle famously observed that although a drama may represent continuous live action in several locations on stage, an epic can only depict a number of simultaneous activities in a single area.

**Plots are of two types: simple and complex.** A convoluted story implies recognition as well as a change in intent or situation. Situation reversal is the concept that a course of action will seem to reverse itself and accomplish the opposite. Recognition is the step that leads from ignorance to knowledge. Both of these plot aspects rely on surprise. The third part of the tale is the awful incident, like a death.

According to Aristotle, the ideal tragic tale combines Hamartia, peripeteia, and Anagnorisis.

- The Hamartia, or deadly error, has to do with the character of the hero. But in a gripping plot, it is so completely woven into the narrative that it is impossible to separate from it. Aggression and peripeteia are both instances and elements of the tragic narrative, which is brought on by the hero.
- The peripeteia is a lethal plot device that results in the opposite of what is intended. For instance, the hero's goals and dreams may not always materialize. They go forward against his intended direction.
- Anagnorisis is the awareness of reality.



Even if it is occasionally impossible to distinguish between them, the move from ignorance to distinct occurrences might result in recognition and reversal.

Along with the simple and intricate storylines, there are also fantastic plots. These kinds of narratives are built on upsetting incidents. It received an extremely low grade from Aristotle. The plot includes descriptions of torture, murder, violence, death, etc.

According to Aristotle, the tragic impact must emerge naturally rather than through theoretical or artificial means. Such a compelling story raises issues with the art of the argument. Rather than using irrational strategies like random supernatural interventions or other similar gimmicks, the plot should be disclosed naturally and logically. God should only intervene when it is necessary to shed light on the past. Aristotle did not think that tragedy required poetic justice. Aristotle forbade dual endings, or tales in which some characters enjoy happiness while others suffer in a similar spirit.

**Qus.-4 Critically examines Aristotle's view on the relative importance of plot and character in tragedy.**

**Or**

**'Without action there cannot be a tragedy, there may be without character' Aristotle, in the light of this statement discuss the importance of plot and character in the tragedy in *Poetics*. Explain.**

**Ans.** According to Aristotle, characterization is less important in a tragedy than the plot or the action. He asserts that the sole foundation or essential corner stone for the amplifying of a tragedy is the storyline. He contends that a tragedy cannot have a character without a plot. His idea is generally correct if we understand what he means by action or plot. The story's action is made up of both internal and external circumstances, as well as the expression of a person's inner feelings and ideas.

According to this view, a stage is how a narrative is presented. Feelings and emotions are further variables that go towards the growth of a character. A person's character is demonstrated by his actions. According to him, action is more important than everything else in a play since it is a story delivered on stage. It can be tricky for the author to get rid of sympathy and dread without a plot.



The plot illustrates the character's change from contentment to misery. Even the character's shortcomings are stories of past actions; hence, these are traits that the character demonstrates in real life.

According to Aristotle, the ideal drama is one with a storyline but by characters, in which the fate of the hero is not determined by his deeds.

The plot of a tragedy supplies the elements of emotional interest. The plot includes reversals of circumstance and intent as well as instances where sorrowful feelings are sparked and intensified action is a hallmark of drama and must always remain its core and dominating aspect. Remember that while Aristotle does favour the narrative, he does not entirely neglect people or claim that a tragedy cannot have characters since there cannot be action without an agent. Therefore, an actor and a tale are correlated.

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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 301	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit -02 Critical Theory	
<b>Wordsworth's 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads'</b>	

## Lesson Structure

### Learning Objectives

### Introduction

### Main Body of the Text

### About the Age

### About the Poet

### Further Body of the Text

### Original Text

### Check Your Progress

### Summary

### Keywords

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

### Answers to Your Progress

### Suggested Readings

## Learning objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.
- To enhance their knowledge of literature.



- Analysis the critical theory of poetry.
- To make them good at English language.

### **Introduction**

A key intellectual behind English Romanticism was William Wordsworth who is also one of its founders. He is recognized as a poet who explored philosophical and spiritual issues and more interested in how people interacted with nature. He was a fervent supporter of utilizing everyday words and speech patterns in poetry. ‘*Lyrical Ballads*’, which Wordsworth co-wrote with S. T. Coleridge, and ‘*The Prelude*’, a romantic epic poem traces the growth of a poet's mind, is among his best-known works.

Wordsworth had a strong adoration for the "beautiful forms" of nature. , " In Wordsworth's opinion poetry should be written in "the real language of men". Poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of feelings. It takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility. Over the subsequent years, Wordsworth continued to produce poems with vigor and emotion. Wordsworth is regarded as the founder of the incredibly well-known romantic era.

### **Main Body of the Text**

#### **About the age**

##### **The Romantic Era**

While literary Romanticism was prevalent from around 1790 to 1850, not all authors of this time period wrote in this manner. A work of literature is considered Romantic Movement-era when it possesses a certain set of traits.

##### **1. Exalting nature**

Romantic literature places a great deal of emphasis on nature in its entire untamed splendor. In works from this age, nature, which is occasionally viewed as the antithesis of the logical, is a potent emblem. Romantic poets and authors provide intimate, in-depth depictions of nature and its untamed and imposing aspects.

##### **2. Emotional awareness and acceptance**

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Nearly all Romantic-era work is characterized by a strong emphasis on emotion. There are descriptions of all kinds of emotions, such as fear, grief, and loneliness, and love—romantic and filial love, among others.

### **3. Celebration of Fantasy and Innovation in the Arts**

Romantic Movement writers investigated the value of imagination and the creative drive, in contrast to earlier generations' emphasis on reason. Romantic poets and prose writers praised the creative process, the capacity for imagination, and the aesthetic perspective. They held the view that authors and artists had diverse perspectives on the world, and they honored this perspective in their writing and art.

### **4. A focus on aesthetically pleasing beauty**

Aesthetic beauty is a concept that is explored in romantic literature on both a human and a natural level. This was particularly true when speaking about feminine attractiveness. Rather than praising anything writers of the romantic era lauded women for their inherent beauty.

### **5. Solitude-related topics**

Poets of this period appreciated solitude and it's kind of topics for artistic creations.

### **6. Emphasis on History and Exoticism**

Romantic-era literature frequently places a strong emphasis on far-flung locales, historical incidents, or art facts. Poems and prose discuss facts and presents from ancient cultures all over the world, and some of literary works of this period are situated in remote regions. The darker aspects of emotion and the mysteries of the paranormal were not avoided by romantic poets. The difference between life and death was studied. Personification is a technique that is frequently used in love poetry. In their poetry, the poets employed personification.

### **7. Put the self and autobiography at the centre.**

Romantic literature has a lot of personal pieces that frequently examine the poet's identity. The poetry and prose of the time were influenced by autobiography. One aspect of this movement was the emphasis on emotion and creativity. Writers real-life experiences and backgrounds served as inspiration for their emotional and creative work. Confessional poetry emerged in the middle of the 1900s. While literary



Romanticism was prevalent from around 1790 to 1850 not all authors of this time period wrote in this manner. A work of literature is considered Romantic Movement when it possesses a certain set of traits. Every quality appears almost in every poet.

Romantic literature places a great deal of emphasis on nature in its entire untamed splendor. In works from this age, nature, which is occasionally viewed as the antithesis of the logical, is a potent emblem. Romantic poets and authors provide intimate depictions of nature and its untamed aspects. Nearly all Romantic work is characterized by a strong emphasis on emotion. There are descriptions of all kinds of emotions, such as fear, grief, loneliness and romantic, filial love. This emphasis on emotion provided a balance to reason which makes Romantic poetry and prose more approachable and sympathetic.

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Romantic writers held the view that solo exploration was the source of original creativity. Whether being alone meant being lonely or simply having some peaceful time to ponder and create, they welcomed the experience.

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served as inspiration for their emotional and creative work. In romantic poetry the deep impact of self-focus is seen which came before the confessional poetry of the mid-1900s.

### About the Poet

Wordsworth is considered the high priest of nature. The literary world of England took off in 1798 with the publication of 'Lyrical Ballad, co-authored with St. Coleridge. This anthology marked the formal launch of the Romantic Movement whose rambling had till then been felt in the form of the sporadic poetic output of the Pre-Romantics. It was nothing less than a call to dissociate, definitely and finally, poetry and all literature from the strange hood of the so-called 'classical rules'.

Wordsworth gets the credit for initiating the full, fresh Romantic Moment, which added a glorious chapter to English literature. For a proper appraisal of his works, one must be aware of the various formative influences on his life. He was blessed with a reasonably long life of 80 years. His life can be divided into four parts.

- His childhood and his youth (1770–1777)
- As a student at the university and his travel abroad (1787–1797)
- An important phase of self-discovery and poetic creation (1797–1799)
- The remaining period of his life was when he retired to the Lake District and devoted himself entirely to poetry until his death.

His mother died, and the responsibility of raising him fell on the shoulders of relatives. They sent him to the school in the Lake District. The beauty of this place would forever cast its shadow on him. The school routine, however, failed to impress his mind; instead, unrevised nature forced itself on his heart. His autobiographical poem 'The Prelude' records all this beautifully. Watching things from across the gulf could not have been quite satisfying for his poetic soul. So he travelled to France in 1780 and then again in 1791 to see things for himself. The influence of French Revolution, the visit of various places affected on his thinking and many other incidents and happenings developed his youth which affected his poetry too.

Wordsworth was undoubtedly a great lover of nature. He often went on walks through scenic regions. The crucial third period of Wordsworth's life begins in 1797, when Wordsworth and Dorothy move to



Summerset with Coleridge. The true struggle points of life were meeting with his lifelong friend, and this led to the foundation of their future joint work being laid at this time. One year after it, *'Lyrical Ballads'* was published, which contains 23 poems. Surprisingly, the anthology did not receive an enthusiastic reception. It was much later that its worth was recognized, and it was regarded as a 'Bible of the Romantic Movement' in 1799. Wordsworth took up lodging at Dale Lake, which was to be his home. Next, it was indeed a defining phase of his life.

The fourth and last phase of his life began in 1800 when the second edition of *'Lyrical Ballads'* was published. A special feature of this addition was the substitution of the Edward Gibson of the earlier edition by a length preference in which Wordsworth outlined his poetic reading in a well-articulated manner. His critics and dictators did not find it brilliant, but his idea did appeal many, and as a result, the third edition of *'Lyrical Ballad'* appeared in 1802. This work underwent minor modifications, but the basic concept was the same.

This was also the year when Wordsworth married Henry Hutchinson, his childhood friend. His wife and his sister kept him consistent company and were a source of encouragement for him. Wordsworth published *'The Exclusion'* in 1814. It was his longest poem and was written after he had visited Scotland. Wordsworth is now a reputed poet. He enjoyed writing poetry and wandering in the lap of nature. This fashion continued to haunt him throughout his life. This great worshipper of nature breathes his last at the age of 80.

So far as his poetry is concerned, Wordsworth has left behind a large number of poems that he composed during his political career. This large body of work does not necessarily contain only praiseworthy poems. In fact, the decade starting in 1798 saw the composition of some of his most beautiful poems, like *'Tintern Abbey'* and *'The Immortality of Immortality'*. As does his joint work called *'Lyrical Ballads'*, the idea that impressed in the preface of this work underwent only minor modifications. Later he continued to stand by his views and put them into practice when he wrote poetry.

Some critics believe that the reason for the lack of inspiration in his later poem was his absence of contact with the outside world. He did not care what others said about his work. But still, his position as a chief Romantic poet is uncontested. When we study his poetry in the context of English poetry, he



marks a revolutionary flavor with which he breaks away from the classical tradition. This break is reflected in the choice of blank verse as well as the subject matter.

The new classical poets like Dryden and Pope have confined the scope of poetry by relating it to human nature only. They were as good as blind to the great beauty of nature as seen in the flowers and stars, rivers and rainbows, forests and mountains, etc. Wordsworth brought nature to centre stage.

Again, the neo-classic was locked only to the aristocratic Society of London. Fired by the revolutionary idea of liberty and equality, Wordsworth assigned a dignified place even to the highland lass, cutting grass, or the old rustic gathering leeches; the young uncultivated girl like Lucy Grey held such a charm for his poem. In all this, he was a revolutionary throughout his life.

Even though he favored conservative politics after the post-revolution French state, he was blessed with an analytical as well as articulate mind, and as such, he was able to formulate his poetic creed and make it known to the literary world through 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads'. This work had been treated as the Magna Charta of the Romantic Movement. He takes up in detail concepts such as the process of poetic creation, the function of poetry, the place of poetry, history, and philosophy. His views of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquility' started many debates. But when one reads Wordsworth poems, one enjoys this sincerity of purpose.

The choice of his poetic career was a deliberate one. For him, he also set himself the goal of writing poetry. From the way he preached to others, we find Wordsworth to be a true poet of man and nature. Not only did he find man involved with the divine spark, but even the object of nature, the flowers in the leaf, represented life to him. That is why he advises Sister Dorothy to touch them delicately. A pantheist to the core, Wordsworth has attained a saint-like disposition in the company of nature, as can be gathered from poems like 'Tintern Abbey'. Matthew Arnold paid him glowing tribute when he said that Wordsworth's poetry has wisdom to communicate.

### **About the Poem**

William Wordsworth is the eloquent literary voice who announced a new wave in artistic creation, particularly in poetry. The globe entered a new phase of English literature as well as global literature with the release of '*Lyrical Ballads*,' which Wordsworth and Coleridge jointly published. Wordsworth outlined several facets of this novel literary approach in The Preface to Lyrical Ballads. He described



romanticism's linguistic and thematic themes. Indeed, romanticism began as a personal protest against prevailing conventional standards. It was more intriguing, though, how this movement's ever-appealing proclamation of individual freedom led to its becoming a mainstream viewpoint. Wordsworth liberated poetry from the restriction that it was written for and about wealthy people in earlier literature and poetry. Wordsworth said that he would accept "incidents and situations from common life" as the basis of poetry and a "selection of language used by men as the language of poetry" in place of kings, queens, dukes, historical, and legendary figures. Coleridge and Wordsworth are widely recognized as co-combatants, while Blake is known as the founder of the Romantic Movement. They are all recognized as the founding members of the movement and the first generation of Romantic poets. However, for continuing the movement, Shelley, Keats, and Byron are regarded as the second generation of romantic poets, even if romanticism took on a new form under Byron's direction.

Wordsworth's literary theories in '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' is evident in the majority of his works. Examples of romantic poetry by Wordsworth include "*The Prelude*," "*Tintern Abbey*," "*Ode: Intimations of Immortality*," and other works.

### **Main Body of the Text**

*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1798) was no less than an upheaval in the literary life of England. The judgments of neo-classicism have been ruling for too long and cracks have started appearing in its body with the publication of '*Seasons*' in 1730 by Thomson. Non-classical themes had been attracting poets since the pre-romantics. The poets had further prepared the ground for what was needed at this genre wall or decisive push, and it was given by '*Lyrical Ballads*' which quite definitely presented to the world the 'Magna Charta of Romanticism'.

What made '*Lyrical Ballad*' more important was the setting forth of the romantic doctrine by Wordsworth, first in the form of the '*Advertisement*' appeared in the first edition, then in the elaborated form in '*The Preface*' to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800. The previous continuity to be amended in the various editions of *The Preface to Lyrical Ballads* was published in the following years in the 1850 edition; an essay supplementary to *The Preface* was added which was called a worthy companion. But for all these practical purposes, *The Preface* of 1800, collating the additions by the



1802 edition, is taken as an authentic one that signifies Wordsworth's principle ideas on various subjects. In *The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* he talks about the nature, the scope, the details, the themes, the style appropriate to romantic poetry, etc. For the first time, Wordsworth deals with an in-depth analysis of the poetic process, something that was not noticed by earlier critics, besides taking a clue from his predecessors like Sydney. Wordsworth showed in his own way the supremacy of poetry over that of history, philosophy, and science. The choice of subjects for poems was also a matter of poetic diction. It is the most important aspect that depicts Wordsworth's views. 'The Advertisement' that appeared in the first edition of 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads' cleared his purpose which he started in the very first line.

**'It is the honorable characteristic of poetry that its material is to be found in every subject that can interest the human mind. This means no subject was taboo for the poet'.**

The poems written by Wordsworth and Coleridge and included in this work were considered an experiment to answer how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society can be adapted to the purpose of poetic pleasure. The poetic diction as employed by Wordsworth was meant to give a shock to the readers accustomed to godliness, as in the works of many poets.

#### **2.4.2 Further Body of the Text**

William Wordsworth's *The Preface to Lyrical Ballads* is a significant work in the development of English literature. It is regarded as a manifesto for the Romantics on poetry and society. 'The prelude' is a piece of literature that is essential to our comprehension of the development of romantic literacy thinking organization in 18th-century Europe. The second edition of the poetry collection 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads', which was later supplemented in the third edition, was initially published in 1798.

It is important to be familiar with the historical context of the neo-classical works' adherence to the definition of romantic poetry. Neo-classical poets spoke about exceptional themes in a vocabulary that was far different from what was used in everyday talks. Romanticism comes after neoclassicism. It was a movement that aimed to revolutionarily rise above conventional beliefs. The French Revolution goal up to end the basis of outdated hierarchical institutions that were distressed by the emergence of the suffocating urban lifestyle influenced how people in the 18th century in Europe felt about society.



Wordsworth disproved preconceived beliefs about poetry. ‘*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*’ depicts Wordsworthian thoughts. Wordsworth is celebrated as the nature poet because of his beautiful descriptions of nature and rural countryside areas.

But to reduce his works to just the imitation of trees and flowers would be an immature act. Wordsworth admires nature not only because it looks beautiful but also because of the simplicity and beauty that it provides. His poetry touches the souls of readers and they experience the true beauty of life in his poetry.

Wordsworth thinks that people in cities are often boring and uninteresting. They are now overworked. They are incapable of appreciating the natural beauty of existence. He described this mental sluggishness as devastated torpor because he was also sick of the extremely elevated subject of neo-classical poets and their convoluted vocabulary. Wordsworth sought to elevate the commonplace. Wordsworth drew inspiration from commonplace objects in everyday life, such as the well-known lonely table or flowers. Wordsworth's poetry expresses admiration for the straightforward beauty that surrounds writers in everyday life.

Wordsworth famously defined poetry.

**‘As a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings that are recollected in tranquility,**

Being a highly sensitive poet, he is able to appreciate the beauty of everyday life, record his own feelings as they occur, and then finds a quiet place to employ his imagination. He believes that a poet is just a man who speaks to other men, to put it simply. Follow others as they make an effort to communicate his views and experiences of truth and beauty, just as we do. Due to his keen awareness of what is going on around him and his greater connection to his own sentiments, moods, and emotions as they shift in response to these outside occurrences that are relevant to the poem. A poet differs from the normal person. A poet recall these feelings, then write in their language about them.

It is reasonable to conclude that contemporary poets who value self-expression and sensitivity have a genuine affinity for Wordsworthian principles that have been reinforced in ways that are both straightforward and ground-breaking.



### Check Your Progress

- Why the preface is generally acknowledged as the manifesto of romantic theory of poetry?
- How can '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' be called a romantic manifesto?
- Wordsworth's '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' was the foremost manifesto of romantic revival. Discuss.
- How does Wordsworth defend his poetic agenda in '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*'?

### Summary

'*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' in English Literature was a trumpet that heralded a new era and should not be factored into the narrow bounds of artificial conventions. Time has really proved Wordsworth right.

### Keywords

- Pantheism
- Optimism
- Technique
- Verification
- Simplification
- Philosophy
- Idealism

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

- Critically discuss Wordsworth's views on 'poetic diction' and meter.
- What is romantic in Wordsworth's assertion that 'poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling' and that the poetry is 'emotions recollected in tranquility'?
- Write an essay on the process of poetic creation as described by Wordsworth in his '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*'.



- Write a critical note on the role of the poet as enshrined in Wordsworth's '*The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*'.
- What, according to Wordsworth, is the function of poetry? What is the nature of poetic truth as illuminated by Wordsworth?
- Discuss Wordsworth as a literary critic with reference to '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*'.

### Answers to Your Progress

**Qus. 1: In what sense is the preface to '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' revolutionary?**

**Or**

**The publication of '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' in 1798 was no less than an upheaval in the literary life of England.**

**Or**

**'The judgments of neo-classical have been ruling for too long, and cracks have started appearing in its body, starting with the publication of *Seasons* in 1930 by Johnson'. How has the Neo- classical theme been attracting poets?**

**Ans.-**

**Introduction:** Wordsworth has many things to his credit. The first is his opinion about the function of poetry. He goes against the classical view that poetry should both instruct and delight, providing pleasure of a notable and exerted kind. The true function of a good poetry according to him is pleasure that result from increased knowledge and understanding. Poetry is a kind of communication, and the poet communicates his own pleasure to the readers.

Wordsworth considers poetry superior to history as well as philosophy. Poetry is the most philosophical of all writings. It is impassioned experience and expression that are in the countenance of all science, whereas science appeals only to interact. Poetry complements science by adding feeling to its truth. Wordsworth could see the important role that science was going to play in the future. That is why he believed that the scientific matters that could not be brought into the poetry at that stage because they were not generally understood.



1. Before taking up the subject of poetic creation, Wordsworth, in a long passage, takes up for discussion the personality of the poet. To him, a poet is a man speaking to men. He does not differ from other men in nature, but in the degree of the gifts bestowed upon him by nature. He is a man with greater sublimity and imagination, too. He has a better power of communication because of this quality. Because of this quality, the poet can access to the truth generally denied to the common people.
2. Wordsworth's views about the process of poetic creation are unique, even since he made his famous statement about poetry being a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion'. No literary critic could afford to overlook these words. But it would be a misconception to think that spontaneity is all that is involved in the process of writing a poem. These feelings have to be recollected in tranquility. That is, in a state of calm after sufficient time has passed since the overflow was first experienced. But the gap is required so that the insistent first part of the experience is lost and that which is pertinent becomes subtle.
3. The recollection of the past experience results in a resurgence of excitement, leading to a kind of relief from the original experience. The feelings that were generated are kindred to the original ones, and in this mood, according to Wordsworth, successful composition generally becomes about how the recollections lead to a loss of tranquility and the real emergence of the candle feeling.
4. So far as the theme of the poetry is concerned, Wordsworth, even in '*The Advertisement*' in the first edition, hints at its indefinite scope. The rustic and simple lives are suitable subjects for poetry because the fundamental passion of the human heart is most obvious in such conditions. The poet can drive certain universal principles of human conduct through a process of contemplation of individuals and situations. That is how he is able to find some worthy message in the lives of such simple characters as the Leech Gatherer, Simon Lee, or the Solitary Reaper; the objects of nature like the Daffodils become a permanent source of joy for him.

Any discussion of Wordsworth will not be complete without reference to his notion of poetic diction. Wordsworth stood for using the language of the common man in poetry. He was very critical of the guidance and the insane phrases in some of his contemporary poets. His purpose as he clearly states in



'*The Preface*' is to relate incidents and describe situations in a selection of language really used by men. This was a revolutionary standpoint, and he himself abides by it. Although in doing so, he has to face the criticism of a large number of critics, even his close friend Coleridge.

It is a fact that compared to the large number of poems written by Wordsworth in his long life, his critical output is not much. His views on the poetic process and theme diction prevailed ultimately, and most of critics had to change their opinions.

**Qus-2 Write an essay on the process of poetic creation as described by Wordsworth in his *The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*.**

**Ans. Introduction-** It will not be an exaggeration to say that Wordsworth truly has a very high conception of poetry. As a poet, he uses quite a few superlatives to define the attributes of poetry.

**'It is the breath and finest spirit of all knowledge, the most philosophical of all writing, and the defence of human nature.'**

According to him, it is the first and last of all knowledge, whose object is truth. Poet critics and their criticism are also as inspiring as poetry. He reflects passion and earnestness, then goes into the psychology of poetic inspiration and describes the process of writing poetry in a unique way. Wordsworth had inherited the legendary legacy of neo-classicism, which put forward a theory of the intimation of nature. It goes to his credit that he gave it a certain twist whereby the attention of the reader was drawn to the external nature of the tree, streams, flowers, rainbows, moon, and stars, and yet he did not totally divorce himself from the study of human nature. Also, the protagonist changed to the fashionable upper-class Society of London. He brought to focus poor but innocent villagers and children, for they represented human nature at its simplest and best for him. Instead of the negative approach of satirizing human follies, he went with the positive method to highlight simple ways.

Poetry has been defined as the spontaneous arising of powerful emotions in the heart of the poet, filling it beyond its capacity so that it overflows the emotion. It may be arisen by an external object, such as a group of daffodil flowers, the hazelnut grove, or a solitary highland reaper. On the other hand, there may not be any extra external stimulant present at the time of writing poetry, and emotions may rise voluntarily and on the basis of the memory of past events.



### The creative process

1. According to Wordsworth, the creative process begins with the recollection of the stimuli in the first scene sometime ago. That time period has not been specified by him. It could be as short as a week or as long as five years. This time period is required for the sensation to sink into the poet's heart and find its level.
2. The second stage is contemplation. This goes on for as long as necessary to bring about a kind of reaction leading to the loss of tranquility, i.e., peace of mind. This stage is followed by the rise of emotions similar to the ones that were before the subject of contemplation. That was felt with similar intensity when the stimulant was first observed. This taste may be called recreation of the senses or re-experience the advantage of starving before.
3. That leads to the occurrence of emotion is that it is a pad of the superficial and the incongruous of mud and sediments in the meantime.
4. Finally, in the stage of reduced experience, the successful art of composition takes place. This is the force trace of the creative process in his practical experiences.

Wordsworth is a poet critic, and as such, he does practice what he preaches to Dorothy, his sister. Wordsworth confines such views to a small and beautiful poem, '*Daffodils*', and to his long autobiographical poem, '*The Prelude*'. We have a number of poems in which Wordsworthian theory can be applied seriously in the case of a critic who also happened to be a poet. He is mostly justifying his poetry in Wordsworth's case.

So what he writes about poetry must be considered in relation to it. He himself is writing or plans to write. Whereas the daffodils he saw by the lakeside continue to be a source of joy for him, providing him the opportunity to recollect the scene for writing poems.

In '*The Prelude*' he is recollecting in tranquility his childhood memories. Wordsworth's life was a series of impressions. He believed that it was a poet's duty to capture these impressions, isolate them, and brood over them. Gradually, as a result of his contemplation, emotion starts again, and new emotions are born. This new emotion is akin to the sensation or thrill that excited him for the first time.



The period of maturation of the initial impression also leads to stifling in the essential parts. These stifling are of course subjective phenomena, as is the time taken. Wordsworth remarks that the mind is in a state of enjoyment all through the process of composing poetry. He believed that even when we sympathize with pain, it will be found that sympathy is produced and carried on by a subtle combination with pleasure. Wordsworth is perhaps the only poet who can see the time period between the first observations and the final composition. Necessary spontaneity has always been considered integral to writing poetry.

In the case of Lyrical Poetry, the maturation of sensation could be typical of Wordsworthian poetry, but it may not be applicable to the bulk of poetry written by Wordsworth. It has also been accused of not taking his theory very seriously. He had tried to apply this theory to every poem and to every line, obviously. We would find much wanting on the basis of this yardstick.

Pleasure, for him, is the main object of poetry. Moreover, this pleasure must address his moral concern as such. Wordsworth is least satisfied with sensuous poetry for the simple reason that it divides people. Critics have severely criticized Wordsworth for his emphasis on emotion.

According to Elliot, poetry is neither emotions nor recollection nor without distortion of meaning tranquility. Poetry is not a turning point for emotion but an escape from emotion. Eliot thinks that poetry should not be an expression of personality but rather an escape from it. The starting point may be the subjective feelings of the poet, but it should have to turn such feelings into artistic emotions. Only then will it have universal significance.

It would be appropriate to conclude that the stress on contemplation and tranquility is reminiscent of classicism. The Romantic Movement stood out on account of its emotions and imaginative basis, but for Wordsworth, 'sublimity' alone does not seem to be sufficient for a creative process. It requires a calm mind, which suggests moderation, and that is an outright classic term.

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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 301	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit :03	
<b>Elaine Showalter: ‘Feminist Criticism in Wilderness’</b> <b>Bellhooks: ‘Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre’</b>	

**Lesson Structure****Learning Objectives****Introduction****Main Body of the Text****About the age****About the author****Further Body of the Text****Analysis****Check Your Progress****Summary****Keywords****Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)****Answers to Your Progress****Suggested Readings**



## Learning Objectives

- To foster in pupils a critical reading of literature.
- To enhance their literary taste.
- To allow students to enjoy books from many literary genres.
- To improve their English language skills.

## Introduction

Elaine Showalter, a feminist critic of America, was born in 1941 and worked as a professor of English at Rutgers and Princeton. She was drawn to the feminist movement in the late 1960s. Her critique, titled 'A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing, published in 1977, established her reputation as a feminist critique of substance. Her book was prescribed as a standard textbook under women's studies. Apart from her 1985 book 'Speaking of Gender', she has also edited a collection entitled 'The New Feminist Criticism'.

## Main Body of the Text

In the late 1970s, she realized that feminist critical writing had reached a dead end. In a lecture in 1978, she laid the blame at the door of the essentially male nature of the concept of theory. Such theories were developed and sustained in academic institutions. Showalter has identified three major phases in the growth of women's writing.

The first 'feminist' phase spans the period from 1840 to 1880, during which women writers tried to copy the style of male writers. It was the continuation of the patriarchal system in literature. They hardly dare challenge the male domain. This is evident from the fact that the 19th-century female novelists had to use masculine names to conceal their true identities otherwise the publisher would not have accepted their manuscripts for publication. George Eliot is the most famous example of this trend.

The second phase, known as the feminist phase, began in the 1980s and continued to hold its fort. The female authors came out of the shadow of the male authors. Voices of protest against the Victorian stereotype were heard. There were other aspects of female personality to be explored. It was indeed a fruitful revolt against male hegemony.



The third phase is called the female phase, and it starts after the previous phase petered out. The female writers travelled inward and tried to discover their own identity as opposed to the one imposed upon them by the era. The period during which Showalter worked herself, i.e., the second half of the 20th century, has been termed the highlighted female phase by Showalter. It was marked by hatred of oneself and withdrawal. But at the same time, there is a positive offshoot of this propensity. Sexuality is considered a possible source of creativity.

Walter is on record as having turned around on her pre-1989 premises. She even argued against a gynocritical approach, as she felt that the changed scenario demanded a sharper focus on sexual differences in texts written by men as well. This essay, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wideness (1981), was first published in 'Critical Enquiry'. David Lodge finds this essay to be a 'lucid and informative survey of contemporary feminist criticism'. Showalter takes up the leading personalities in the field of feminism and subjects their views to minute and inclusive analysis. The essay has been hailed for its brilliant and in-depth treatment of the subject. Her concept of 'gynocriticism', in which women as authors have been the object of focus, has rightly been appreciated. This stands in contrast to the interests of French feminist critics, who mainly concern themselves with their theory of the role of gender in writing.

### **Further Body of the Text**

Showalter is one of the most significant exponents of the feminist school of criticism. She brings an absolutely fresh perspective to the critical scene, giving a thoroughly systematic and well-illustrated appraisal of this distinctive approach to literary studies, duly supported by cogent arguments. Born in 1941, Elaine Showalter had a distinguished professional career in academics and rose to the position of professor of English at Princeton University in America. Her study, 'A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing is an erudite account of British fiction from a feminist perspective. Showalter presents a step-by-step account of the manner in which the feminist movement gathers consciousness and picks up its strengths. She refers to earlier contributors to the cause, like Mary Ellman. While the beginning of feminism was marked by righteous anger, later writers sought the graces of imagination in their writings. But the critical scenes, according to their wideness, have been marked by wilderness. Black feminists focus on racial and sexual politics, while Marxists focus on class and gender. The feminist movement has also been split wide by proponents of different theoretical



persuasions—post-colonialism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, etc. There is also an inherently anti-theoretical bias among quite a few feminists. There is thus no organised thrust in the feminist movement,

Showalter, in this essay, talks about two aspects of feminist criticism. The first is ideological, and it takes up the feminist as a reader offering a feminist reading of text that has stereotyped women as characters. The other mode is a more innovative and positive contribution to the discipline of literary criticism. Sandra Gilbert has been referred to in this context as ‘an active feminist seeking to decode and demystify literature. Showalter reveals how Sandra Gilbert's male critical theory is not universally applicable. The critic calls for a feminist view of literature and criticism that is women-centered.

Perhaps the most significant part of the essay is Showalter's coining of the term ‘gynocritics’ and her enunciation of what it stands for. Showalter focuses on the shift in writing by women. The focus has turned from an endocentric (male-oriented) thrust to a geocentric (women-oriented) thrust. Showalter here bemoans the fact that feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millett lack interest in women as writers. Showalter calls for a feminist brand of criticism that is genuinely woman-centered. She also talks of the different directions taken by gynocriticism in different countries under their specific cultural compulsions. English feminist criticism exposes oppression; French feminists target repression; American feminists seek expression.

In that part of the essay, Showalter reveals herself to be the most insightful. Showalter maintains that there is a multifaceted aspect to women’s relationships in literary culture. The facets concerned, as discussed by her, are

- Biological
- Linguistic
- Psychoanalytic
- Cultural

In the first instance, a woman’s creativity is conditioned by her anatomy. The authorship of the text is supposed to be a male prerogative, for the pen is seen as a phallus-analogue. But the stress and pain associated with creation can be seen as akin to pregnancy. Women writers are different from their male



counterparts in their use of body image—essentially nakedness. Women can present in a unique manner the experience of motherhood, but Showalter warns against too much body-centric writing, for it reinforces the myths of women as the other.

Coming to the linguistics factor, Showalter talks of the inadequacy of language to express a woman's experience, for it is a male creation. Some feminists talk of the need for intellectual language to be closer to women's emotional needs. Women can either work out a new linguistic code or rework male discourse for their own ends.

After referring to the anatomical and linguistic factors, Showalter refers to the other two factors that affect and mould a woman's creativity:

- Psychoanalytic
- Cultural factors

Patriarchal society presents as normal a mindset in which the woman is accorded a subordinate rule—a rule in which she is seen as a passive receptacle, a means of furthering male lineage as well as concerns. Even women come to internalize such social 'values' and see themselves accordingly. Consequently, in so far as the roles assigned to male and female characters are concerned, there may not seem to be much difference in essence in a work by a male writer or by a female writer, especially in times or in societies where gender consciousness is not highlighted. In such contexts, gynocritics, according to Showalter, have to decode male discourses dispassionately. They also have to read between the lines in women's writings with increased sensitivity and highlight the unwitting distortions along with the factors precipitating them. Gynecologists have thus had their work cut out for them in a heated manner. What is indeed most important is an awareness of the issues and a commitment to the cause.

In a nutshell, Elaine Showalter's 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness' is a scholarly survey of the feminist critical scene. It brings to the force of the wilderness that characterizes the critical scene, with special reference to feminist perspectives. But it is not merely a diagnosis of the scene but also a well-thought-out perception, aimed at giving the whole critical exercise a sense of direction and purpose. Showalter, through this essay, starts a debate that ropes in a number of feminists and provokes a number of reactions and rejoinders.



### Check Your Progress

- How does Showalter sum up the state of feminist criticism in her time and describe in detail the two modes of this criticism as enunciated by her?
- What is the present focus of linguistic theories of women's writing? What shortcomings does Showalter find in these theories, and what is her advice to the critics of this school?

### Summary

Elaine Showalter is one of the most eminent exponents of feminism in recent times. Showalter talks about the gradual evaluation of feminist consciousness in the literary circle. The critic talks about two distinct moods of feminist criticism.

- Women as readers
- Women as writers

The two modes involve the surfacing of different strategies and essences. Showalter coined and offered herself an explanation of the term 'gynocriticism. In another significant part of the essay, Showalter takes up for analysis the multifaceted relations of women to literary culture. The critic examines women's creativity in relation to biology, language, psychoanalysis, and culture. Showalter thus takes a holistic view of women's writing, both from the creative and the critical perspectives. She not only diagnoses but also prescribes a way out to help focus on the real issues involved. Two modes of feminist criticism have been pointed out by Caroline Halliburton and Catherine Stimson and compared to the old and new testaments of the Bible, respectively. Feminist criticism has not had a theoretical base until recently. It has depended on several strategies. Critics have been looking for different grounds to suit their ideology and other inclinations, for example, Marxist deconstruction. Many famous critics have also resisted codification and the setting of standards on the pretext of enjoying unhindered freedom. Later, the position changed, and feminist critics realized the need for a theoretical basis. They even regretted the lack of communication with the male theorists. Showalter names the two modes of feminist reading: feminist criticism and gynocriticism. The first studies women as readers, while the second takes up women as authors. All feminist critics are revisionists in some sense. But women must remember that the male critic theory is based on male experience only and



cannot be universal. The basic question while talking about formulating a theory is what constitutes the difference in women's writing. Despite the external differences in approach, common features are found among critics of different countries.

The linguistic model of women's writing examines whether men and women use language in different ways and whether these differences can be explained on the basis of any theory. A feminist believes that speech is male-dominated. The idea of a separate language for women has also existed since ancient times, when women were not allowed to speak freely. So they are said to have invented such a language. There is a parallel between the issue of women's languages and the issue of the official language of a newly decolonized state. This issue of women's language is a political issue and is linked to the power struggle. The main problem with regard to the concept of women's language is that there is no separate mother tongue spoken only by women. Women are also psychologically not inclined to use language differently. Showalter wants easy access for women to language. She should not be expected to use the resources of language in a selective manner until this is done; language cannot be the basis of any theory of difference.

### **Cultural model of feminist theory**

Showalter finds the cultural model of women's writing to be more satisfying than other models. This model includes ideas from other models but also interprets the female body, language, and psyche in relation to society. This model recognizes differences between women writers on the basis of their class, race, nationality, and history. It mainly depends on the journalist's accepted notion of women's culture as reflected in their different behaviors and areas of activity. The model prepared by 'Ardeners' shows that women form a muted sphere, but its boundaries are not wholly contained within the male fear. Many American feminists believe women are closer to nature than human beings. The literary periods have been named by men. These do not carry any meaning for women. Women authors have been neglected for a long time. With this model, we can discover meaning where previously empty space was believed to exist. The cultural model is not a substitute for other models. No theory can substitute for extensive knowledge of women's texts.

### **Keywords**

- Gynocriticism



- Identity
- Unrealistic
- Influence
- Construction
- Forgiveness
- Theory
- Evolutionary

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

- Discuss Showalter's views on the cultural model of women's writing.
- Discuss the biological model of differences in women's writing.

### Answers to Your Progress

#### **Qus-1 How does Showalter sum up the state of feminist criticism in her time and describe in detail the two modes of this criticism as enunciated by her?**

Ans.: Elaine Showalter is an American feminist critic who is praised for having sincere opinions on the subject. She provides a thorough overview of current feminist critique in her essay "Feminist Criticism in the Wideness," which was published for the first time in the journal *Critical Enquiry* in 1981.

Showalter mentions two critics—Carolyn Heilburn and Catherine Stimpson—who claim that feminist critique has so far been split into two poles in the opening portion of the article.

1. The first is concerned with previous wrongdoing.

The second seeks what she refers to as "the grace of imagination."

In any event, this objection lacks a theoretical foundation. This is due to the fact that they have used a variety of approaches.

Showalter reflects that, when she was of the opinion that no ideological statement could adequately describe the various ideologies hiding underneath well-known literature and reading. The tactics used



by the well-known critics were fluid. These may never be switched out. These criticisms' goals remained illogical and contradictory.

Black critics disapprove of the feminist critics' purported silence on the works of black and third-world women authors. They desire that black feminist theorists address both sexual and racial politics. Marxist feminists want to concentrate on class as much as gender while writing literature. Some vanishing customs disturbed literary historians. Opponents of deconstruction emphasize feminism and sexuality.

Anxiety over the separation of feminist critique from theory-based masculine criticism resulted from this circumstance. Showalter described even this stage as evolutionary. There was a discussion over how feminist critique should define itself in connection to the new critical theories in both Europe and the United States that followed. Some critics blamed feminist critics for the lack of contact between the two and laid the blame directly at their feet, but Showalter does not agree with these critics. She believes that feminist critique has advanced and articulated its position through critical publications like *Tel Quel*, *Critical Enquiry*, *Diacritics*, and *PMLA*, among others.

She refers to the two approaches as "feminist critiques" and "gynocriticism" when discussing the current status of literary criticism.

Feminist reading is another name for the first feminist critique. Here, the reader is proposed as a feminist. This is essentially a method of textual interpretation. The feminist has the right to select the sources of interpretation she wants, but she must also provide other readings because the field of interpretation draws on a broad variety of sources. It examines how women are portrayed and stereotyped in literature. Additionally, it focuses on the numerous exclusions and false beliefs about women that are present in critique as a critical practice. The success of feminist reading has been enormous. However, it is quite challenging in the area of interpretation and evolving free play. Showalter references "kolodny," the most knowledgeable female thinker, who lauds this "playful pluralism." She believes that a feminist has the freedom to release fresh and distinct meaning from the text. The feminist has the right to pick only those aspects of the text that she feels are important to her cause. In her writing strategy, she is not concerned with certainty or structural correctness. She can only see one point: how important it is to acknowledge the accomplishments of female writers.



However, Kolodny does not feel the need to establish any basic conceptual model. But here Showalter disagrees because freedom of interpretation is her only limited objective. A theoretical agreement is critically needed in order to define women and comprehend the process and environment of writing. According to Showalter, women have become too fixated on male critical thought. The auto assault has been modified, humanized, and revised by feminist critics. There is no denying that all feminist critique involves revisionism in some form or another, and Sandra Gilbert has presented a compelling argument for the "revisionary imperative" of feminist criticism. But all of this has impeded the advancement of feminist critics, who contend that women shouldn't yearn for the approval of white male dads but still disapprove of extreme feminism. She wants feminist critics to have their own subject theory and voice. They should be open to women's studies and international feminist theories.

In honour of the French phrase "la gyno-critique," Showalter has given the second mood of feminist criticism the name "Gynocritics. The study of women as authors and creators of literary meaning is the focus of this. Their research focuses on the history, genres, styles, themes, and organizational principles of female authors' works. It incorporates the literary tradition's norms, the career trajectory of women, and the psychodynamics of female creativity. In Showalter's words, gynocriticism 'offers many theoretical opportunities.

The question arises about the difference between women's writing and the way women's creative expression is shaped. Analyzing various feminist critics, Showalter comments that English feminist critics, most of whom are Marxists, emphasize oppression, whereas French feminist critics lay stress on psychological repression. American feminist critics stress on expression. All of them have a common desire to do away with the terminology that shows inferiority and therefore can be called geocentric.

The radical American thinkers and the new French feminists have many similarities. The idea of "écriture feminine" emphasizes the female body and the distinctions between language and text; however, it must be concluded that everyone is having trouble coming up with artistic vocabulary that may counteract its stereotyped relationship with infinity. This distinction might be attributed to genre, style, or experience. Elaine Showalter's word, "gynocriticism," is an attempt to analyze the issue objectively and in its most basic form.



**Qus. 2: What is the present focus of linguistic theories of women's writing? What shortcomings does Showalter find in these theories? And what is her advice to the critics belonging to this school?**

Ans. Linguistic and textual theories of women's writing study whether men and women use language in different ways. A follower of this school wants to find out whether sex differences in the use of language can be explained on the basis of any biology, social, or cultural theory. Apart from this, they want to explore the possibilities of a separate language for women. Still another question hunting the followers of this school is whether speaking, reading, and writing bear the imprint of sex.

That debate regarding language is about the exciting features of gynocriticism. Poets and writers have been drawn into an all-out war against the so-called oppressor's language, or male-dominated language. This language has been termed sexist at times. It has been criticized as abstract.

Nelly Furman points out that through the medium of language, we define and categorize areas of difference and similarity for others." It allows us to understand the world in which we exist. Many French feminists feel that language, particularly speech or oral language is patriarchal. It is taken by men and leaves women speechless. It has been dubbed Phallogocentric in structure as well as over-intellectualized. Keeping these problems in mind, quite a few feminists have fiddled with the idea of a separate language for women.

### **The linguistic model of Showalter in feminist criticism**

The concept of the language of female writers is not new. There are references in myths and folktales. Many critics have found that modern women are linguists. They secured easy mastery of the language of their male adversaries, but males could never learn the female language. There are also accounts left behind by travelers and missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries that tell us about women's languages among American Indians, Africans, and Asians. These languages did have structural differences as compared to the male language, but such differences were mostly superficial. In certain cultures, women are believed to have a language of their own because they are not allowed to speak openly in society. It is a common observation, women outnumber men in talking in possessed tongue. It happens because, in normal circumstances, they are not allowed to take part in formal religious discourses. American, French, and British feminist critics have all pointed to philosophical, linguistic, and practical



problems with women's use of language. Showalter finds a parallel between the famous problem of women's language and the language issue of a decolonized state. This is observed when we take a political view of the problem. When a country goes through a revolution to break the shackles of colonized states, it is faced with the problem of choosing an official language. The language issue of feminist criticism also cropped up after the feminist revolution. So, the timing of the emergence of the problem has an identical linkage.

She goes deep into the whole question and discusses the considerations influencing the choice of language. These are the psychological qualities of language and its inheritance quality to be used with the force of one's mother tongue. Besides, it should provide an opportunity for the speaker to have a relationship with modern culture, just as a foreign language does.

Showalter finds every aspect of the language used by women. The struggle between those who remain out of academic institutions and institutions of critique and those who enter and even conquer these institutions has been going on ever since the feminist movement. The proponents of women's language who want it to be intellectual and theoretical as well as acceptable to the academic world face a conundrum as well.

Both men and women have made an attempt to analyze language in writing. In that view, Marie Hiatt has conducted a computerized analysis of current literature, although she considers words independently of their meanings and functions. Even the pursuit of 'feminine style' in the repute of stylistic techniques, imagined patterns, and syntax in women's writing is aimed at incorrectly interpreting intrinsic forms for the sake of prejudiced judgment.

The main problem affecting the concept of women's language is that there is no separate mother tongue or gender tongue spoken by only women in society, which may be significantly different from the language spoken by men. Then there is no evidence in linguistics to suggest that nature gives different aptitudes to males and females in the matter of language. Apart from all this, these various differences in the use of speech and language cannot be explained in terms of sex-specific language. Showalter thinks that feminist criticism should focus on women's contributions to language. They have to choose words from among those available to them. A woman writer goes by her ideology and cultural inclination when she chooses the word.



The problem is not that the language is insufficient for the expression of women's consciousness. It is that they are simply not allowed to use the full resources of language. She has limited choices before her. She can either remain silent or express herself in a known offending word or, at the very least, in a roundabout manner. Showalter gives the example of Virginia Woolf in this connection. Woolf prepared a speech whose draft was either not used or discarded by her. In this, she protested against the ban on women's free use of language. She observed that the words used by men and women are supposed to be different. She felt assured that if women also used language the way James Joyce's voices did; most men would express their shock because the kind of freedom enjoyed by men is just not allowed to women. Showalter seems inspired by Virginia Woolf's call for this freedom and repeats her words. The mind and body should convey everything we have. Instead of restricting the use of linguistics by women, she wants it to be expanded and opened up. 'Repressed' language is currently a ghost that stalks women's writings. According to Showalter, there does not appear to be any room for the theory of difference to be based on this linguistic model until these ghosts are exorcised.

### Essay-2

#### **Bell Hooks' *'Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre'***

**Introduction:** Bell Hooks attended Stanford University while standing in an integrated classroom. After growing up in a segregated rural Kentucky town, her experiences starting in the various educational systems, living in underprivileged communities, and dealing with prejudice from affluent white women in the second wave feminist group have all influenced her feminist beliefs. One reason why Hook uses multiple personal experiences in her work is that her talk of class and race closely mirrors her own problems with racism and prejudice. In order to contextualize Hook's brand of feminism, she pairs bland quotes from other families with personal anecdotes. Hooks provides a distinct viewpoint on the family's movement and its failure to adequately analyze all types of operations and systems of dominance due to her singular dueling experiences on the edges and in the centre of society. Her experiences instruct feminist concepts at various levels. Segregated neighborhoods in Kentucky strongly influenced her criticism of classicism. Being a self-directed queer black woman, Hooks writes about the themes of solidity and identity with regard to race, class, and gender. Her work aims to combine her individual sense of identity with a solid directory and group action instead of efforts to make women equal to men.



According to Bell Hooks, feminism should be viewed ‘as a struggle to end sexist operations, as the language of the later term indicates that it is always men who oppress women. For instance, John Stuart Mills said that historically, males have traditionally held authority over the ‘subject class of female’ and that power was common to the whole male sex. He primarily concentrated on the dominance of women by men. Mill omitted to note that black women are frequently tortured by society as well as male members of the same society.

Bell Hooks discusses issues related to racism, gender, class, and cultural politics. Many people hold her in high regard, particularly in the US. Her opinion on feminism is that it still requires a lot of internal growth before it can actually accomplish triumphs outside. She believes that all women must first and foremost recognize the reality of sexism and understand the need to work together regardless of educational attainment, religion, or race. Feminism is a massive movement that requires everyone to come together and acknowledge and embrace the issue of the status quo in order to effect change.

### **About the Essay**

In an article in 1984, ‘Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre’, Bell Hooks explores the idea of radical feminists. She advocates for the inclusion of black women, who are perceived as being on the margins of American society, invisible and unheard by the white women who developed feminist theory and are in turn seen as being at the centre of the feminist movement.

Bell Hooks thinks that American feminism has lost ground with the general population. She said that the inconsistent rhetoric held by this moment rather than the prevalent sexism may be used to explain why it is so weak. Feminism carries the demand for equality for those who are privileged. According to race, class, and social norms, Bell Hooks recognises a sexist language that is both ethno centric and class-based. While being critical of ‘sexist language, rehabilitating the viewpoint of radicalized women and minority groups is the only method to get through these perspective distortions. Black women must also move from the ‘margin to the centre’ of feminist theory and practice.

Known as ‘Moving from the Margin to the Centre, Bell Hooks says in the forward of the 2000 revision of the book that she developed it to fill a need for a philosophy that considers not just gender but also race and class. While Bell Hooks contains the idea that men should be involved in this moment, American feminism is typically thought of as a moment that only concerns women. In fact, this author



claims that men are also victims of sexism, which forces them to adhere to rigid norms and forces them to mutilate a portion of themselves. People of both sexes should fight against gender-based oppression together. Additionally, Hooks remembers that women from popularly coloured backgrounds compete with men on racism and poverty and, as a result, they are more vulnerable to these issues.

The idea of sorority obscures the social disparities that exist between certain groups of women; sorority also obscures the racism that occasionally distinguishes between white and coloured women. Bell Hooks suggests that a political alliance between groups of women should take the place of the sorority, which she views as fictitious.

Bell Hooks, who was influenced by Paolo Freire's book 'Pédagogie des opprimés' (1969), calls for both a greater effort to improve black women's literacy and a decolonization of information, particularly that created by the American feminist movement. Bell Hooks, like Paolo Freire, views education as a "practice of freedom," yet she notes certain black activists' "anti-intellectualism," which she attributes to their lack of access to school. Bell Hooks "demonstrates that privileged feminists reduced black women to objects of study or to alibis of feminist and gender studies by objectifying the experiences of black women."

Because of her thesis that establishing equality in such a system is neither possible nor desirable, Hooks can be recognized in this book as a radical feminist, which differs from more conventional feminism, which seeks to change social status without affecting individual behaviour and its method of operation. Bell Hooks advocates for a non-violent revolution that involves not only the inclusion of black women who have historically been marginalized in society but also of men affected by the efforts of the capitalistic system, racist imperialists and colonialists, and the institutionalization of the patriarchal system.

The goal of this book was to demonstrate to the world the history and philosophy of feminism in the United States from the perspective of a black woman who comes from the margins or the lower class. She provides all with a unique opportunity to get inside the social, political, and economic climate of 1960s and 1970s America. She frequently contrasts the view of the group on feminism, 'the centre, that governs and adores the norm of American society, with that of the margin, or those who resigned physically and politically on the periphery of these rules.



The main argument of 'feminist theory from the margin to the centre' is that the ultimate objective of feminism is to remove sexist operations and male dominance, not just to achieve gender equality. She discusses the investigation and the growth of feminist theory as well as how it might be used in modern society's daily life. She emphasizes the necessity of

- Re-defining power for women expanding feminist education for both women.
- The women ending violence against individuals based on gender.
- Re-evaluating parenting ideas and practices.
- Defining and redefining sexuality and its freedom for everyone.

She presents a lengthy list of feminist conflicts while presenting several questions, and she also includes the views of a number of other scholars, some of whom have strong disagreements with her on this subject.

### **Chapter-1**

The author's viewpoint on modern feminism is described in the first chapter. Feminism was not only defined by the model of white middle-class women, despite the fact that the feminist movement claimed that women were oppressed. According to Hooks on experiences, despite the fact that the women fighting for their equality were the minority compared to males, they frequently oppressed non-white, non-middle-class women. This basically indicates that even as feminism grows, racial discrimination persists despite the fact that women fighting for their rights. They ought to understand that being a woman is not the only reason for discrimination.

### **Chapter-2**

The second chapter explores how difficult it is to define the term feminism. Despite several attempts at doing so, it is not simple to discuss feminism from every angle without a clear definition. Feminism is perceived as aggressive and man-hitting, which has led many individuals, both men and women, to be scared to use the term to represent themselves.

The objective of feminism, the abolition of sexist operations, is difficult to realize if it is not depicted properly.



### Chapter-3

In the third chapter, Hooks discusses instances where the feminist ideology emphasizes the idea that all men are enemies of all women, and this other group had abundant the main idea of feminism in favour of emphasizing managing quality rather than women's advancement.

Family should be the first place brings a change in way of thinking since it is the first unit where members learned to accept sexist operations as natural rather than serving as the foundation of all other forms of operation. She asserts that sexism is of primary importance because it is the practice of dominance most people experience.

### Chapter-4

In this chapter, the author introduces the concept of sisterhood, a group of women who worked together to beat injustice. There are various obstacles to this unity that is needed to advance feminism. We must first educate women about racism and sexism so that they can recognize how they and other women are oppressed. As she states, feminism is fundamentally a feminist issue because it is so interconnected with sexist operations.

These two issues have very similar theoretical foundations. Feminists support anti-racism. But others feel that as racism is more pervasive and powerful, it ought to be addressed first. Racism gives white women greater credit because they are indoctrinated to believe that they are superior leaders in the index creation of feminism. There are various obstacles to this unity. To advance feminism, we must first educate women about racism and sexism so they can recognize how they and other women are oppressed, and she states racism is fundamentally a feminist issue because it is so interconnected with the sexist operation. Racism gives white women more credit because they believe they are better leaders in developing feminist theory because it takes whiteness to give even blackness validity. According to this ideology of white supremacy, it works to cabinet.

### Chapter-5

According to Bell Hooks, no solution can be discussed if women are enemies or allies of feminists. She believes that men should be involved in the feminist movement. She criticizes the second wave of feminist's anti-male effect as doggies. White women's feminism was mainly emphasizing male hatred



and not being equal. The implication is that the empowerment of women would necessarily be at the expense of men. That is why most of the black women did not really want to join the moment, but rather felt that they were bonding with black men by accepting each other and being against women's operations together. She says those white women's radical feminist ideas need to end white male supremacy to be replaced by white female supremacy.

### Chapter-6

She claims that although men oppress women, not all men generally benefit from sexism. A man here is usually emotionally damaged and scattered because he does not have the privilege or the power society has taught him a real man should possess. She says she is continuing her focus on the working class. Just as they are taught to internalize sex's notions as well, and while they are also harmed by them, they use their masculine power to oppose women in their surroundings. Male experience with sexism should serve as a strong incentive to support feminism. Men must participate because they are the oppressors if they do not understand.

### Chapter -7

In Chapter 7, the question whether having a job is a useful "feminist" tool for women or not is discussed. When compared to most lower-class women and women of colour, employment was not seen as an "escape from leisure" by white bourgeois women. They already held employment, most of which included exploitation and dehumanization. They were essentially removed from activism because, in accordance with that philosophy, holding a job automatically "liberated" them.

Additionally, black women and men were aware that, as long as racism is still openly practiced in the workforce, white women will be selected for positions and black people will lose their employment. According to Hooks, one of the most crucial goals of feminist activists is to put an end to the economic exploitation of women since doing so would enable all women to participate—and, more crucially, to do so equally—in the battle against sexism and oppression. Women must also re-evaluate the nature of work; they must learn to value it for themselves rather than through the lens of men.

### Chapter-8



The over-intellectualism and anti-intellectualism feminist movements are discussed by Hooks in this chapter of her book. White people who focus too much on their theories, papers, and research tend to exhibit excessive intellectualism since they tend to ignore practical activity and the state of the world today. It is difficult to propagate feminism among people of all ages, genders, and educational levels because academics worry that if their work isn't intellectually rigorous enough, it won't be seen as "proper" academic writing or presentation.

According to Hooks, "feminist educators need to develop the ability to "translate" ideas to an audience that has a variety of age, sex, ethnicity, and literacy levels". (p. 111)

No one should be excluded from feminist movements. Some individuals become irritated when she remarks that having a college degree is necessary for understanding and participating in the feminist movement, and they go on to declare that all theories and concepts are meaningless unless they are properly understood. Anti-intellectualism is the opposite stream, and it is equally as horrible as the previous one.

According to Hooks, support for anti-intellectualism in the feminist movement is a good example of ideology that undermines and hinders progress. Ignoring academic research just confines that higher education is a privilege only for white women and that women of colour are incapable of comprehending and participating in academic feminism. Hook encourages everyone by saying that education is a means for achieving and defending freedom.

### **Chapter-9**

In this chapter, Hook says one of the feminist objectives is to eradicate domestic violence, which is the manifestation of male control. Men are mentally harmed by sexist preconceptions, just as she explained in the chapter before, and economic exploitation makes them feel helpless. She explains the "cycle of violence" in which males get angry from workplace and home and this harassment leads them harm their women to feel better. Hook criticizes "the sexist notion of masculinity and examine the impact of capitalism on their lives" (p. 122).

Hooks demonstrates how aggressiveness and violence are tied to love in modern culture and how parents teach their children and teens to use violence to get what they want. This encourages them to continue being good to their own children and later partners. Violence has a good connotation for males



from an early age because, in films, aggressive male characters are shown as cool and heroes. Ending violence also involves addressing the problem of conflicts, where it is very difficult for women's voices to be genuinely heard because they are all viewed as the "natural enemies of war" because they are the ones who give birth. Men perceive this as evidence that women are biased as a result of having children and cannot assess the "real" justification for conflicts. Men and women need to understand that using violence or oppress others is not acceptable behaviour.

### Chapter -10

Hooks discusses feminist perspectives on parenting. Early (white) feminists believed that motherhood was a trap that forced women to take on the bulk of household responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, and child care, and that it was a way for men to assert their control and power. However, motherhood was seen differently by black women. When women became moms, they saw it as an opportunity to leave their menial and dehumanizing occupations behind so they could stay at home and care for their children.

According to Hooks, parenting should be recognized and treasured since it is a gift only given to women, and feminism has not given it enough credit. The two main perspectives on motherhood are that either women are meant to have children and that raising and caring for them is their primary responsibility, or that mothers should pursue careers and that their biological makeup should not influence their life choices. Most career-driven women desire to exercise their right to parenthood only to later see its beauty.

The issue is that parental responsibility is not recognized and assigned equally. Men often play a considerably smaller part in parenting. Both parents are equally involved in their child's upbringing. Men need to be educated that parenting is not a small part of parenting and they cannot remove it from their responsibilities and the task of raising a kid and managing a house in order to modify women's unfavorable perceptions of motherhood as it is the responsibility of both parents. They must indulge in household duties and child care so that they may parent as effectively and independently as their partners. Until men are taught how to parent using the same model of effective parenting that has been taught to women, they will not participate equally in child care. So society should stop pressuring both men and women with stereotypical gender roles at home.



## Chapter-11

In the eleventh chapter, female sexuality and exercising sexual independence are discussed in detail. Feminism gave all women the chance to be sexual, to enjoy sex, and to have the power to manage it. But those who represented unrestricted sexuality was stigmatized many believe that sexual people abstract feminism effort to eradicate sex well injustice because they are straight. However, sexual orientation is a personal discussion, and in reality, women exercise their sexual freedom by selecting it. Feminist activists need to remember that the political choices we make are not determined by who we choose to have general sexual contact with, and that fighting to end sexual operation is also an inevitable component that needs to be accomplished in order to transform society and create a new social order. Hooks explores the need for reform as well as the challenges and hardships involved in implementing it in order to achieve the ultimate aim of feminism, which is to stop the operation of women. Many sub goals are required. Feminism has not yet provided enough instructions for women. Though it has been a successful rebellion, it has not yet reached the point where it can alter social structure. We must frame feminist concepts in a way that is relatable and understandable to everyone in order to collaborate effectively if we are to develop a robust, politically sound, and powerful movement.

Bell Hooks favours family life against the single. In the feminist movement of the 1980s, women from privileged backgrounds with advanced degrees made up the majority of feminist leaders. They promoted the idea that women might overcome sexism by working and gaining financial independence from the men in their lives by lowering the quality of empowerment assessable to marginalize men and women who respond, and this unintentionally increases tension in the economy and the job market and ignores the economic and social realities of women who have always had to work to support their families.

Family is a complex locus of power. Bell Hooks criticizes western families' dynamics, particularly those in the United States, by claiming that sexist operations prevent and distort the positive function of family. Families no longer have love and support because of their intimate patriarchal system of control. However, Hook notes that many black women find the family the least oppressive institution precisely because black families place an emphasis on community self-worth and support. A more inclusive society can be created if the feminist movement is successful in changing the stereotype of families as



being patriarchal and dependent on a power structure where a husband has complete control over his wife and parents have complete control over their children.

### Expected Questions-

1. When authoring '*Feminist Theory: From Margins to Centre*' how did Bell Hooks differ from the feminist movement? Pick three facets of the feminist movement that Hooks wants to change, and then describe the modifications she calls
2. Describe Hooks' concept of solidarity. How may the feminist movement alter as a result? How does Hooks suggest fostering this unity within the movement?
3. Examines the book '*Feminist theory: from margin to centre*' by Bell hooks, an author, social activist, and feminist from the United States of America.

### Reference

- <http://www.rjelal.com/index.html>



Subject M.A	
Course Code: 301	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit -:04	
<b>Jean Francois Lyotard: ‘Answering the Question: what is Postmodernism’</b> <b>Jean Baudrillard: ‘The Spirit of Terrorism’</b>	

## Lesson Structure

### Learning Objectives

### Introduction

### Main Body of the Text

#### About the age

### Further Body of the Text

### Check Your Progress

### Summary

### Keywords

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

### Answers to Your Progress

### Suggested Readings

## Learning Objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.
- To enhance their knowledge of literature.



- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in English language.

### **Introduction**

Jean-François Lyotard continues to be one of the best-known philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Contemporary society as it relates to modernity was of interest to this critic. Jean-François Lyotard observes that a lot has changed around the globe, and modern civilization now includes elements that did not exist in the past. He is concentrated on postmodernism in his research.

### **Main Body of the Text**

Postmodernism, in Lyotard's view, is a component of contemporary society. He thinks that modernism is still alive and well in postmodernism. Modernity cannot be put an end to in this age since it is not new. Postmodernism, according to him, is a compliment to modernism. As a stage of modernism, he defines it as complex. Diverse life and thinking styles were produced as a result of modernism and postmodernism and diverse perspectives on social life. Modernism has opposition in every aspect of life as a result of the enlightenment that followed the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The next stage of modernism is referred to as postmodernism. All sphere of life has been benefited from these thought patterns. The key component of postmodernism is that education and current culture have been blended and are being incorporated into educational initiatives. In this article, the link between modernism and postmodernism is analyzed from the past to the present, as well as its impact on education.

### **About the Age**

'*The Postmodernism Condition*' a book on French post-structuralism philosophy, is most recognized for its ground-breaking definition of postmodernism. Despite its fame, this book is really one of his lesser-known creations. In addition to experimenting with a wide range of techniques, Lyotard's writing addresses a broad spectrum of philosophical, political, and aesthetic issues.

His publications may be broadly categorized into three groups:

- His early works were on phonology, politics, and the criticism of structuralism.



- His middle works were on libidinal philosophy.
- His later works were on postmodernism and the different theories.

However, a persistent belief that reality consists of solitary experiences, which cannot be fully described by rational theory, unifies the majority of his works. This truth has significant political implications for Lyotard since politics is proposed to be grounded in a realistic description of reality.

### **Further Body of the Text**

Many of the key ideas found in post-structuralism and post-modernist thought are presented in Lyotard philosophy. He challenges the validity of reason to emphasize the significance of non-rational forces like sensation and emotions, rejects humanism and the conventional philosophical view that human beings are the primary object of knowledge, and advocates for diversity and contents. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century changes in social science, technology, politics, and culture have rendered the concept of society as progress absolute.

In terms of depth and inventiveness, Lyotard's works exceed many conventional perceptions of postmodernism and address these common topics in a very unique way. His ideas continue to be crucial in discussions today about politics, social theory, cultural science, arts, aesthetics and postmodernism in the later part of the 1970s.

Lyotard gave up his libidinal philosophy and started a pagan philosophy which by the 1980s had evolved into his own distinctive brand of postmodernism. A preoccupation with events and the boundaries of representations persisted with the shift from the libidinal to paganism and postmodernism. All though there were significant change, the focus from evaluating libidinal forces to analyzing language with a new emphasis on justice.

In contrast to his libidinal philosophy, Lyotard's later philosophy is primarily concerned with the question of justice that arises between different interpretations of events. The philosophy of language and justice by Lyotard is the most influential in French.

Entitled 'The Postmodern Condition' on behalf of postmodernism, Lyotard quickly renounced such paganism. The Postmodern Condition, a study on knowledge commissioned by the Quebec government and released in 1979, contains his earliest and most important description of post-modernism. Lyotard



described the postmodern as being skeptical of meta-narratives. Meta-narratives are totalizing accounts of human history and aspirations that serve as the foundation for and justification of knowledge and cultural practices. It is commonly recognized that a postmodern trait is the inability to believe in meta-narrative, as articulated by Lyotard. Lyotard believes in meta-narratives, which sum together narratives about history and ambition. He sees history as moving towards social enlightenment and emancipation, and knowledge as advancing towards wholeness. Meta-narrative legitimating the whole mark of modernity, while meta-narrative weakness is a whole mark of post-modernity. Through this theory of the end of meta-narrative, Lyotard creates his own talk on the idea that 'post-modernity is an era of fragmentation and plurality' which is generally accepted among post-modern thinkers. The human race serves as the foundation and justification of knowledge and cultural practices.

According to Lyotard, certain scientific and technical developments that have occurred since the Second World War (historical date for the birth of post-modernity) and continue to have a profound impact on the status of knowledge in most developed nations in the world. Lyotard selects computerization as the distinguishing characteristic to describe these scientific and technical developments. According to Lyotard, the problem he is having is legitimating due to the diversity in the status of knowledge.

Power and knowledge, in Lyotard's view, are only two viewpoints on the same problem. In the age of computers, government is more important than it has ever been, according to Lyotard. Who determines? What knowledge is worth saving? Who gets access to these databases? When there are massive volumes of knowledge saved digitally? Lyotard excuses international flight forms for being suspect. He offers a scenario in which, using IBM as an example, the company controls a certain belt in the earth's orbit field with satellites for communication and data storage. Who will have assisted them? Lyotard argues that who will decide which data or channels are prohibited? Will the state merely be another user?

Language games are the major approach that Lyotard employs in his studies. He begins by outlining phonology and linguistic theory, problems of communication and cybernetics, contemporary theories of algebra and information actives, computers and their languages, issues with translation and the search for areas of compatibility among computer languages, problems with information storage and databanks, telemetric and the development of intelligent terminals, parading, and other developments. He is experimenting with using Wittgenstein's writing in language games. Each of the many utterance kinds may be taken into consideration in terms of the rules that determine attack characteristics and



their applications, in accordance with the theory behind language games. Or will the state merely be another user?

The primary political rationale behind Lyotard's language game selection is reciprocal relations. The following are some of Lyotard's sociological observations about language games:

- The rules of language games are controlled by the participants, not by their own internal justifications.
- A game cannot exist without rules, and even a little change to the rules can change how the game is played.
- Each word needs to be viewed as a move in a game.

Lyotard provides us with a few samples of his many different claims. Both the political and the logical correspondents of knowledge are examined by Lyotard. In his discussion of the role of knowledge in the postmodern era, he identifies language game movements as a basic social relationship that society needs to survive.

Lyotard needs a methodological representation that he may apply to society in order to analyze the deposition of knowledge in postmodern societies. He presents contrasting views about society that have been popular in recent years: the theory of society as a single, binary whole. Lyotard rejects these proposals. Rather than the current or newly popular image of society, Lyotard needs a methodological representation that he may apply to society in order to analyze the deposition of knowledge in postmodern societies.

Postmodern methodological analysis holds that society is made up of games using broken-down language and numbers. The actions that can be taken in these games are rigorously regulated by references to justifications that are judged proper by the institutions that are in power.

In his examination of the postmodern condition of knowing in the 1990s, Lyotard makes a distinction between narrative knowledge and scientific knowledge. This information is most common in primitive or traditional civilizations in the form of narrative knowledge, which is centered on storytelling and occasionally takes the form of ritual music or dance. Knowledge does not require legitimating since it is immediately justified by the tale itself and by the narrative's timelessness as a long-standing tradition. It



is transmitted from those who first hear it to those who will one day want to tell it themselves. It cannot be questioned. In fact, Lyotard argues that the legitimacy of narrative knowledge.

### Check your progress

1. When discussing postmodern art, why does Lyotard add the conceptions of Kant?
2. Is there really rupture between the modern and the postmodern?

### Summary

- Post-modern art is executed not unpreventable.
- Terms are a form of perspective and are connected to test series nihilism.
- It is also comparable to sublime aestheticism. The sublime evokes all contradictory feelings. It is described as astronomy and equitable emotions. It carries both pleasure and pain, and in it, pleasure drives pain.
- Based on a never-ending criticism of representation, Lyotard's postmodern sublime is an art of negation, a constant negation that should contribute to the preservation of some fundamental ideas in Lyotard's postmodernism.
- The totality phrase for getting is used by Lyotard to support his theory on the split between modernism and postmodernism.

### Post-modernism as defined by Lyotard

According to Lyotard, postmodernism is a part of modernity, and there is a reciprocal relationship between the two.

- First Post-modernism is modernism in its nostalgic state, and this state is constant. It is not modernism at its end.
- Lyotard makes distinction between modern post-modern and modern aesthetics in terms of unpreventable.



- Modern aesthetics is a wonderful aesthetic, although one that is melancholy continues to provide relief and viewers with material for comfort and enjoyment because of its recognizable consistency, even when it only permits the unpreventable to be shown as the missing elements.

### Keywords

- Aesthetic
- Post-modernism
- Sublime
- Conception

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

- Critically comment on Lyotard's concept of modernism and postmodernism.
- Lyotard touched on the new concept of post-modernism. Discuss.

### Answers to Your Progress

The philosopher Jean-François Lyotard wrote a book in 1979 titled "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge," in which he analyses the concept of knowledge in postmodern culture as the demise of "grand narratives" or meta-narratives, which he views as a fundamental aspect of modernity. With the following comment, Lyotard popularized the word 'post-modernism' which was previously solely used by art critics, in philosophy and the social sciences: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as skepticism towards meta-narratives. The book was important and was first created as a report for the Conseil des universités du Québec on the impact of technology on precise sciences.

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## Jean Baudrillard: *'The Spirit of Terrorism'*

### Introduction

Jean Baudrillard was a French sociologist, philosopher, cultural theorist, political commentator, and photographer. His works have an association with post-modernism and post-structuralism. Jean Baudrillard taught philosophy at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, where his speciality was 'Culture and Media Criticism'. The twin ideas of "hyper-reality" and "simulation" are at the heart of Jean Baudrillard's philosophy. These phrases describe how modern culture is virtual or unreal in an era of mass communication and consumerism.

During his research career, Jean Baudrillard developed various topics that became something of an obsession with him and that he addressed extensively at different places. He is mainly concerned with terrorism, which features widely throughout the French and which he developed over a span of three decades or so. He had the opportunity to witness all the changes that the various evolutionary phases of terrorism underwent in the West, and from these he brought out several key components. He was mainly concerned with the relationship between terrorists' incidents and the media and the knowledge that terrorism cannot do without the media, as they provide the essential space for terrorism to achieve social visibility. Baudrillard, however, also broadened the scope of his investigations to include other key aspects of terrorism.



According to Jean Baudrillard, we have lost the ability to see reality as it truly is because we live in a world that is dominated by synthetic sensations and sentiments. We only encounter prepared realities, such as altered war films, pointless terrorist attacks, the erasure of cultural norms, and the replacement of such norms with "referendums."

According to Baudrillard, terrorism's strength lies in the symbolism of slaughter—not just the fact that death occurs but also in a sacrifice that ends the entire system. The new terrorist mounts a potent symbolic challenge that, when combined with high-tech resources, constitutes an unprecedented assault on an overly sophisticated and vulnerable West, whereas the old revolutionary sought to conduct a struggle between real forces in the context of ideology and politics. 'Hypotheses on Terrorism' and 'Violence of the Global' are updated pieces in this new version. A concept running through the reflection on terrorism developed by Baudrillard over the decade is 'symbolic exchange'. The concept was explained in his book 'Symbolic Exchange and Death', published in France in 1976.

It is worth noting that Baudrillard's concept of 'symbolic exchange' was strongly influenced by the innovative ideas of Emile Durkheim (1999), one of the leading masters of French sociology. No doubt Baudrillard was influenced by Durkheim, yet it was essentially he who sparked his idea of the devastating power of the symbolic. Thus, in Baudrillard's view, rather than uniting and integrating society, the symbolic poses a challenge to society and seeks to seriously undermine it.

This explains why, to Baudrillard, the terrorists' gift of sacrificing their own lives is impossible to reciprocate with a counter-gift and is significantly different from an economic form of exchange. Indeed, during the last phase of his investigations, Baudrillard looked up the concept of 'symbolic exchange' once again and sought to stress its importance.

This was a necessary step after the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, which seems to be reintroducing the symbolic exchange. Baudrillard's culmination of exchange is the irreversibility of sacrifice and death.

### **The masses and terrorism**

The central theme developed by Baudrillard in his books 'In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities' and 'The End of the Social' (1983) gained wild popularity. At the time of its publication, the French



sociologist aroused considerable reaction with his idea that society is disappearing and that responsibility for this lies with the masses, which refuse to do what society tries to impose on them. He argued that the population is no longer a system of organized social groups but a single, anonymous, and undifferentiated group whose power derives from its very restructuration. In other words, it is composed of individuals who refuse to do their duties as citizens and consumers and thus do not enable society to function effectively. The masses therefore represent a sort of 'black hole, which has a tendency to refuse every representative institution, to neutralize everything it receives, to cancel every possible meaning, and thus to go down the path of silence and inertia. In this respect, according to Baudrillard, the masses have an affinity with terrorism, for just like the masses; terrorism lacks any form of social and class representativeness and thus looks meaningless. Baudrillard wrote that 'present- day terrorism, initiated by the taking of hostages and the game of postponed death, no longer has any objectives.

Baudrillard was fully aware of the fact that there is a particularly close relationship between the masses, terrorism, and the media. He argued that the masses no longer developed resistant strategies to deal with media messages based on reinterpretation and re-appropriation, as posited by previous sociological theories with respect to the reception of media messages. The masses do not try to attribute their own meaning to the masses. They receive them but oppose them through their indifference. They passively accept everything that is delivered to them and let it slide into a space categorized by determinateness. Consequently, as Baudrillard pointed out, 'the masses are a stronger medium than all the media.

That resulting effect is volatilization of the real, an effect that Baudrillard ascribes above all to the modes of communication that categorized the way in which modern-day media work and which leads to a progressive disappearance of reality. As reality becomes shouted in a vast web of science and symbols, these make it impossible for individuals to distinguish between the real and the reproduction of it, between reality and artificiality, between truth and falsehood.

According to Baudrillard, just as in the case of media in terrorism, too, there is a process of intensification, of redoubling, of taking to a higher level at work, which produces a kind of ecstasy. Terrorism thus appears to us as an ecstatic form of violence.

### **The spirit of terrorism**



Over the centuries, Western societies have built their success by constantly offering people promises of well-being and happiness. This has led them to attempt to get rid of every form of negativity, particularly the most powerful negativity of all, namely death. Baudrillard describes this phenomenon in detail in 'Symbolic Exchange' and Death (1993), probably his most important work, in which he also argues, however, that death and, with it, negativity and evil cannot be totally erased from society. It resurfaces periodically, flowing into the interstices and the free spaces that are left to it because it is a dimension of human existence that cannot be illuminated, just like evil, which is necessarily driven to counter balance the presence of good.

For this very reason, terrorists can use it as a means to launch a powerful symbolic challenge against the social system.

Shifting death to the symbolic level entails moving it into a sphere ruled by challenges and counter-challenges. In other words, only a response to the death can be a death of the same, or of a higher, order. This is what Baudrillard meant when he wrote:

The symbolic death is the death to its extreme—a death even of just a few individuals—to which it is only possible to respond with an equally intense death. But for the western system, this inevitable detail of death cannot be pursued—a death that involves its own disappearance and final collapse.

In short, terrorism tries to get the system to commit suicide in response to the challenge it poses through its own suicide. This is why Baudrillard wrote that when the Twin Towers of New York collapsed as a result of the attack carried out by Al Qaeda, they seemed to be committing suicide in response to the suicides of the terrorists themselves and of their planes.

Due to their profound symbolism, the "Twin Towers" are the target of terrorists. They were a representation of economics and financial capitalism as well as the most cutting-edge Western culture, the culture of gene cloning and the binary cable from computers. Some 25 years before the attack that demolished the Twin Towers, Baudrillard made specific mention of this particular characteristic of the buildings in his 1993 book "Symbolic Exchange" and Death. He interpreted their duplication and twinned character as illustrative of a social system's inability to represent and communicate. Towers that were mirror images of one another only depicted one another as pure simulacra without any allusion to the original. But, in this respect, the attack on the Twin Towers represented a qualitative shift since it



clearly showed that it is less and less possible to make a precise distinction between the media and reality. The television images of two Boeings penetrating into the towers, as many commentators have noticed, had such intensity that they seemed to have come directly out of a Hollywood movie and to employ the same sophisticated language of fiction. Featuring media images over and over again, the twotowers seem to keep belonging to those images. Thus, the spectator cannot work out whether he is looking at the real event or a representation of it. Many thought that this meant that the real was still alive and that it undermined Baudrillard's thesis, which viewed reality as stimulation and simulacra.

Baudrillard claimed, however, that today the objectives of a terrorist strategy, whatever their nature, can easily be achieved, partly due to the fact that it is a value that spreads in all directions and knows no boundaries, reaching every possible sphere of society. Any possibility of exchange therefore disappears, and consequently, it becomes difficult even to talk about the presence of some kind of value since it is no longer possible to assist or measure it.

### Conclusion

According to Baudrillard, in the West today, the symbolic takes the form of terrorism. As we have seen, however, even a shocking and 'unimaginable' event such as the collapse of the Twin Towers cannot transform itself into something real because it remains in that ambiguous condition whereby reality and fiction are intermingled and in which everything seems to be placed today. This contributes to making symbolic meaning even harder to grasp for us as individuals who have grown up within a western culture.

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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 301	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit :05 Critical Theory	
<b>Preparation of Examination</b>	

## Lesson Structure

### Learning Objectives

### Introduction

### Main Body of the Text

### About the Poet

#### About the Poem

#### Critical study of poem

### Further Body of the Text

#### Check Your Progress

### Summary

### Keywords

### Self Assessment Questions (SAQs)

### Answers to Your Progress

### Suggested Readings

## Learning Objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.



- To enhance their knowledge of literature.
- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in English language.

### Unit-1

**Qus. 1 Discuss Aristotle's concept of an ideal tragic hero.**

**Or**

**Aristotle has enumerated the qualities of an ideal tragic hero. He has excluded certain types of characters. Discuss.**

The downfall of a completely virtuous man is rejected as unsuitable for tragedy because it arose from neither pity nor fear but is shocking. Doctor Johnson comments that he could not read the last scenes of 'King Lear' because he was so shocked by Cordillera's death. The fear of a disastrous end can barely be awakened by the collapse of this perfect character. According to Aristotle, tragedy reveals how mortal people participate in an unfair fight against fate, whether that fate is represented by forces within or beyond the mind. When individual parishes are at stake, the fight reaches its devastating conclusion, yet thanks to this unsettled world order, moral forces are able to regain control.

Secondly, Aristotle does not frame the idea that the misery of a saint inspires the field. He says that fear is aroused by the fortune of a person like others since an audience is the collection of average men, not saints. They will not fear the fortunes of saints. The representation of misfortune comes from the grief of fear over mortal sense. A hero who was raised amid hardship cannot turn into a tragic villain. The spirit of tragedy, in Aristotle's view, is alien to fortune. Everything is incompatible with redefining passions. The affluence of the idle thus feeds and deepens vices rather than correcting them, since no one would care to give up their vices if they made them happy. Fourthly, the overthrow of a single villain is not suitable for tragedy. In other words, the downfall of the villain does not appear to make moral sense when the suffering is observed. We do not feel pity. It is certainly ugly, so everybody has abhorrence for it, but crime may be presented in another light.

#### **1. Characteristics of the ideal protagonist of a tragedy**



The ideal tragedy's protagonist, according to Aristotle, is a moral man who met with catastrophe due to some Hamartia rather than his vices. This instance is not morally objectionable because the catastrophe is a result of Hamartia, unlike the tragedy of the fully virtuous. He is made up of several components. He is not, in any way, the best there is. However, men enjoy other people.

We conclude that the tragic hero is of noble character who shares our fundamental emotions and sensations. Although he is idealized, his likeness to the average person is so great that it attracts other people's eager attention and compassion. He loses his lofty elevation, which may not be the cause of the catastrophe that calms his life.

## **2. The conflict**

The ideal hero always presents a conflict. This proposal needs no defense. In Greek tragedy, the conflict was different. The hero was pitted against two forces.

- First, there was the superior strength of the rival party.
- Secondly, there was the implacable storm of destiny.

So in the Greek tragedy, there is a clash, or conflict of groups, of passion, interest, and ideals, along with the hero's frantic struggle against ruthless fate. He is portrayed as a virtuous and valorous person; he has a singleness of purpose.

The individuality of the hero may express itself in activity or in reflection. Simplifying the matter, we may see that all tragic heroes are men of action and contemplation. No hero completely lacks the power to act or the ability to reflect, but almost everyone is headlong or reflective to an extreme. There are various types of individualists. The tragic individualist is precipitated, headstrong, hot-blooded, and headless. The other characteristics of the tragic hero are that he is greatly superior to the average man and is representative of mankind. The hero must not be too far beyond us. Aristotle defends this assertion.

## **3. Tragic situations of heroes' catastrophe**

There are four typical situations that are responsible for the catastrophe of the ideal tragic hero. It is easier for us to assign responsibility for the hero's fate to his poor acts because,

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- First of all, the hero's situation is one in which he or she is not completely at fault.
- Second, while being superior to the average man, the hero is not always morally upright and virtuous. His collapse was caused by a tragic flaw, sometimes known as a default or mistake. This clearly follows the Aristotelian definition of tragedy and is based on Sophocles play.
- Thirdly, the hero is destroyed not because of his own fault but through fate and external evil. Here, Oedipus is the obvious example. This character does not produce his fate. His character is in part a function of his current situation.
- Finally, the tragic conduct of the hero is both guilty and innocent from different perspectives. In this form of tragedy, the hero's defect is almost indistinguishable from the upheaval on all sides. He exposes the cosmos to his weakness. Like in Aristotle's play, it is in the nature of things and could not have been prevented. Despite his innocence and guilt, the hero must follow his path because of who he is and what it would be like to be someone else. This makes his tragedy all the more impulsive. The tragedy will then come to an end when the hero realizes the value of his own actions.

**Conclusion:** The ideal tragedy is one who arise pity and fear in no ordinary combination, but these two emotions are highlighted to their utmost capacity under the condition of the most perfect art. But these emotions are evoked by the ideal tragic hero. No faultless hero or consummate villain can inspire sympathy and fear, but the tragic 'Hamartia' of the hero has enlarged and deepened the boundaries of the tragedy. In modern tragedies, heroes and heroines are victims of the terrible buffeting of circumstances and alternately succumb to them. Aristotle stipulates that a hero must be good but not perfect. He must be appropriate and true to type. He must be consistent.

**Qus. 2: What is Aristotle's view on the function and effects of tragedy?**

**Or**

**What is Aristotle's conception of tragic catharsis?**

Catharsis is a Greek word. Its meaning is purgation, purification, and classification. It has been used only once by Aristotle in his poetry, in the fourth chapter.

According to Aristotle, tragedy's purpose is to elicit the feelings of pity and terror and to influence how these feelings are catalyzed or purified. Pity and dread are used to achieve this goal. Aristotle



emphasizes the catharsis of sorrow and anxieties while emphasizing the right catharsis or purgation of these emotions by activity.

According to Aristotle, a protagonist who possesses a blend of good and evil traits experiences suffering and fails to overcome prosperity and hardship. Catharsis is a representation of emotions since it results in the catharsis of pity and dread. Catharsis is rightly synonymous with the idea of blowing off steam; the term catharsis occurs in Aristotle's definition of tragedy.

Fear is described as a type of discomfort or disruption caused by a mental image of any damaging or painful evil in the future, together with the sensations of worry and uncertainty. According to Aristotle, unjustified tragedies and everything that instills dread are the sources of pity. If it occurs to us we feel sorry for us; if it happens to someone else we feel sorry for them. Pity is a form of anguish at an obvious evil of a painful or destructive nature in the case of someone who does not deserve it. When the emotion is closely tied to us, the pain appears to be our own, and we feel sorry for people in those situations. Fear is related to emotions on the object. He claims that pity and dread are the essential tragic elements and emotions, as do many others. The vitality of the tragedy effect hinges on preserving the close bond between pity and dread. According to Aristotle, pity and fear must co-exist.

Catharsis is used as a medical word in common use. It has been suggested that catharsis is a medical metaphor, with purgation having a pathological impact on the soul similar to what medication has on the body. In terms of medicine, purgation refers to the partial removal of a sense of humour. The optimal age for a perfect hormonal balance determines the body's health. Purgation of the fear and pity feelings does not imply.

Some critics who use the term "catharsis" in a medical sense describe this process of purging in the context of homoeopathy, which heals the body of an axis of the same thing that causes pity and terror in real life with a small amount of the same thing from the play. It is a similar situation when there is no passage. According to Aristotle, feelings shouldn't be repressed. They must be given a way out in order to keep the metal in balance. Aristotle discusses the treatment of religious imagination in *'The Poetics'*.

The phrase acquired an allopathic therapeutic meaning in the context of medicine. Instead of healing, the rise of pity and dread caused a purging or evacuation of opposing emotions, such as rage and pride, when people saw the episodes. The audience heightened these feelings, which resulted in the tragedy's



event of pain. In other words, if the play's offering is motivated by rage or pride, the audience will be relieved of these feelings. In the introduction to *Tourettes and Cressida*, Dryden observes that such aggressive and bad emotions as pride and rage are not the root of the problem but rather the soft-hearted feelings.

### **Psychological explanation**

Other critics have attempted to explain the term "catharsis" in terms of psychology. In light of the fact that wolves strike objects, Herbert Red believes that the tragedy provides a free expression for feelings of sympathy and terror. This leads to a sense of emotional relaxation.

The Engineer's hypothesis is advanced by A. Richards. According to the Engineer's view, when a catastrophe occurs, the emotions of sympathy and terror both trigger on impulses to retreat. Both of these impulses are combined and harmonized to create well-balanced emotions. Thus, a balance is achieved. The notion, however, is only true for the tragic emotions of pity and terror, which limits their extent.

### **Ethical interpretation**

According to the ethical interpretation of catalysis, the tragic event serves as an example of the soul igniting, leading to a more meditative perspective on life and suffering. The viewer realizes that his feelings are insignia when they witness the scale of the calamity as it is being displayed on stage. He has a balanced perspective on things as a result of such catharsis. In relation to the final design of the cosmos, man appears to be himself. According to John Guess, only enlightenment may lead to a condition of mental serenity and equilibrium as well as total aesthetic fulfillment. Enlightenment includes a clear awareness of what was involved in the battle as well as an explanation of causes and effects and a judgment on what we have observed.

### **The purification theory**

Purification is one of the meanings of catharsis. The phrase has been construed by certain commentators in the context of this meaning. These critiques analyze how catalysis is interpreted in light of medical jargon. According to Hampshire House, Aristotle did not view catharsis as a medical phrase. The term refers to a form of moral training that observers go through.



Purgation, he says, is the act of cleansing. This purging might result in a qualitative shift in equilibrium or a quantitative evocation. According to him, a tragedy awakens sympathy and dread from potentiality to activity by providing deserving and sufficient stimuli to regulate them and by guiding them to the proper goal in the proper manner and exercising them within the parameters of the play.

Butchers, who concur with the cleansing hypothesis, noted that catharsis included the added concept of cleansing the feeling to be alleviated in addition to the idea of emotional release. He goes on to add that the poet discovers how human dread and pity may be converted to pleasure, and anguish can flee in the purifying flood of human compassion under the excitement of art. The tragedy on stage cleanses sympathy and horror of its morbid substance.

### Clarification Theory

Some critics contend that since *'The Poetics'* already contains the implications of catharsis, no further discussion of politics or ethics is necessary. According to contemporary critics like O. B. Hardison, prior ideas focused on the psychology of the audience and made assumptions about how tragedies would affect theater goers. They contend that Aristotle did not write his priceless poetry with the psychology of the reader in mind. Aristotle was interested in the nature and style of a perfect tragedy.

These critics stress that catharsis is tied to the tragic occurrence, not the audience's feelings of sorrow and terror. It is up to us to seek out the pleasure that tragedy offers, according to Aristotle. Such delight is involved in this process. According to this notion, the purpose of tragedy is to give the audience a pleasure that is unique to it. This pleasure entails the depiction of situations that elicit sympathy and terror. Tragic events now serve the purpose of catharsis rather than the audience's emotional response. The incidence of the tragedy is tied to catharsis, not the audience's feelings of sorrow and terror.

According to O. B. Hardison, Aristotle meant catharsis to be pleasurable. This question interprets the viewpoint presented in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Tragic pleasure develops from catharsis into a learning process because imitation art yields the same kind of pleasure those results from learning. This understanding results from our identification of a connection between the specific events shown in the imitation and some universal aspects incorporated within. For this reason, the poet chose and arranged his material in accordance with the laws of necessity and probability. He makes a point that is more philosophical than historical since he depicts what may be more than what is.



### Merits and demerits of these theories

There are clear limitations to both the purgation theory and the purifying theory of catharsis. They are unable to fully describe the cathartic process. A major flaw in the theories is that they focus on the psychology of the audience rather than the impact of tragedy on the audience. Both perspectives focus on what tragedy could do to us rather than what tragedy says.

Instead of referring to genuine elements in the play, they portray sympathy and dread as references to the audience. Aristotle was more focused on the craft of creating poetry when he was writing a book on this subject. The ideas are not necessarily flawed in and of themselves when audience psychology is used as the psychological theory.

**Conclusion:** While the opposite is still a matter of debate, we can state that catharsis has a different connotation in every language. Aristotle could not define this term, which would have made things simpler. The catharsis of pity and dread was important to Aristotle. Catharsis is described by critics as a process of emotional release, purgation, purification, and homoeopathic therapy. Regarding the meaning of this term, every line has its own interpretation. Although neither instructional nor medical, Aristotle's definition of catharsis centers primarily on contact. It could include a theological component. Aristotle's catharsis is not a moral concept that demands a tragic moment to demonstrate that a terrible man has come to bed, nor is it a type of theological solace arising from the realization that God's rules apply.

### Unit-2

**Qus. 1: Wordsworth speaks of the importance of poetic diction in 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads'. Discuss.**

Or

**Critically discuss Wordsworth's views on pointing diction and merit.**

**Ans. Introduction-**

The most critical aspect of 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads' is his view about poetic diction, or the language recommended for the poets. He advocates using the language really used by men. This is a challenge to the literary critics who saw the classical tenants. Wordsworth dislikes what he terms 'insane phraseology'. In fact he needed a simpler language to write a new kind of poetry. The use of



figures of speech and metaphors is required occasionally. Only words were geniuses. He felt that there was an essential difference between the prose and the metrical composition. The poetic language used by Augustus's poets was highly artificial. According to Wordsworth, they use various figures of speech and such and various ornaments rather mechanically. Of course, many use metaphorical language when he is in a state of emotional agitation. The ancient poets recognized the stridency and used such metaphors and images as a result of the powerful emotions, but poets after that started using realistic language for its own sake. Only it was not fired by any passionate state; it was pure and simple imitation, which made the language look artificial. What we find in the neo-classics is stereotype phraseology.

1. Wordsworth felt that the poet must avoid such depictions while laying down the principle of the real language of man for poetry. Wordsworth also talks of a certain methodology. There is to be a selection of language really used by man. In other words, the common day-to-day language as used by the shepherds and the farmer cannot immediately be used for writing poetry. This language has to be purified of all that is painful and distinguishing. Only the chosen words used by the common people are fit to be used in poetry.
2. Secondly, it has to be the language of man in the state of vivid sensation, which means that such a language must express the living emotions of a real man. Wordsworth felt that there was no difference between the words used in the prose and those used in the metrical composition.
3. Wordsworth feels that the language of the common people is the natural language of passion as compared to the arbitrary and the corporation's habit of expression. At some points, the simple and deliberate language of the common man is far more philosophical and permanent. According to him, people are in constant communication with nature. When they are charged with emotions like excitement. The language expresses without any reservation the inhabitation of deeper feelings of the human heart since it comes from the heart. It goes straight to the heart of the reader, and in that manner, the poet is able to fulfill his duty as a communicator.
4. Wordsworth supports the use of rustic language in poetry. It is doubtful if he held to his views throughout his year apart from the selection clause used in the first preference. In his conception in 1802 and subsequent editions, he shifted the focus to bring this language nearer to the



language of man. The great literary critic, T.S. Eliot faulted Wordsworth for trying to achieve approximation in place of total identification. He criticized Wordsworth for his overemphasis on the language part of poetry because a poet expressing his winning through a refined stated character cannot be expected to use rustic language. Otherwise, he will be breaching the dramatic canon. Wordsworth focuses his attention on words, but he does not state his consideration view on syntax and sentence construction, which are as necessary as words. The use of involved sentences in the lines in the poetry goes against the spirit of simple language. It is the fact that he used such a construction not only in his *'The Preface'* but also in his other poems, like *'Intimation of Immortality'*. Even a minor poem like *'Nutting'* shows his propensity to use such language. Besides using meter for writing poetry, which has been considered desirable by Wordsworth, he considered word form and diction more important to the value of poetry. Immediate cannot be considered an integral part of common speech, and here Wordsworth's practice does not meet his preaching.

5. Wordsworth's lifelong friend and famous English poet critic Coleridge has been rather harsh on him on the matter of language. Coleridge's opinion is that the language of the rustic people selected and purified as per Wordsworth's formula would not be any different from the language of any other man with reasonable common sense. Also, the language of farmers and shepherds would not be different from that of ordinary people in other walks of life. Coleridge also makes exceptions to Wordsworth's insistence that the language of poetry is an oscillation of the real language of man. According to Coleridge, every man's language varies according to the extent of his knowledge, the ability of his faculties, and the depth and quickness of his feelings.
  - The word and phrase common to them all under the circumstances.
  - The search for the real language of words with dreams is nothing but irrelevant thoughts.

Coleridge further criticizes Wordsworth for his views that communication leads to reflection on an object and here richness of vocabulary helps. This reflection shows that in the case of the restricted people, the vocabulary is not rich. They cannot express the universal law in the essence of good language.



To conclude, considering the magnitude of criticism that Wordsworth had to face, one is led to believe that no part of *'The Preface to the Lyrical Ballad'* has been more generally criticized than others. But we must remember that Wordsworth's greatest contribution to critical literature was that he played a pairing role in formulating the romantic doctrine at a time when classicism held sway.

**Qus. - 2 What is the nature and function of poetry, according to Wordsworth?**

Wordsworth is profoundly different from the theory that was prevailing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He reached against the poetry of reason and good sense because it has resulted in dullness of feeling and matter-of-fact expressions. It stressed spontaneity less. He states that all good poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. In Wordsworth's view, poetry proclaims its conception and function. He felt the poet had a purpose at first sight. It seems that his idea is not different from the moral end of poetry as propounded by the neo-classicists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

But while studying Wordsworth's ideas deeply, it has been depicted that his purpose for poetry is quite different from classical theory. He considered poetry to be the expression of the counting of all signs and breath and the finest spirit of all knowledge. Poetry, to Wordsworth, is the image of man and nature. A poet should aim to provide the scheme of man's existence. He is the rock of human nature. He upholds and preserves the essence of man, carries with him the message of relationship and love, and approves the aesthetic pleasure provided by poetry. It is far above the form. The first concern of the poet is to impart or communicate his own joy to his readers. This is the end of the poem, which is communicating pleasure, but the concept of pleasure in poetry is higher than the pleasure imparted by it.

Poetry should have some moral purpose; however, Wordsworth does not advocate didacticism in poetry. He shifts the emphasis from the open didacticism of neo-classicism to the psychological. Moral teaching in his poetry, according to Wordsworth, would and should purify the very emotions and feelings and the very soul of the readers. Thus, this concept of poetry is far removed from the theory of art for its own sake.

Poetic pleasure is produced by the rhyme rhythm, and such external aids are secondary to poetry. It should arise out of the realization of truth. It involves the inner enlightenment, the purification, and the



strengthening of emotions. Thus, poetry ought to rectify man's feelings to give them a new composition of feelings.

Poetry also explores the mystery of life and discovers universal truth. The poet is a man living who is fascinated and moved by the joys and sorrows that affect mankind. He is meditative about the passions, hopes, fears, actions, etc. of humanity. His nature is to be curious about things. He hacks after fresh knowledge and desires to understand life. Poetry is the explanation of the entire universe.

The poet is endowed with a long and deep mind. He discovers the universal and general laws of human existence. The poet has sympathy for other men, animals, and other imminent objects. One of the functions of poetry is to widen the sphere of human sanctity; it makes people realize the nature and mystery of the world. It must serve as a stimulant against savagery. It provides the reader with the right kind of awareness. According to Wordsworth, poetry should have a humanizing effect on the reader. It would remove the false feeling from the hearts of the readers, increase our knowledge of human nature, and thus make us wiser and better human beings. Hence, the poetic truth is that there is a general and universal government for all human beings.

The poet meditates deeply on the mysteries of life. He looks before and after to arrive at universal truths. He discovers a universal law that governs human nature and life. He becomes an upholder and the preserver of humanity. He speaks of the man in the universal language of passion and emotion, which is intelligible to all humanity. Everywhere the knowledge of the poet communicates; there is no barrier of language, manner, law, or customs. This is the poet who binds together that vast amber of the human side.

**To conclude-** The poet communicates a special pleasure through poetry. It is a pleasure that evolves knowledge and moral truths and goes a long way in enlightening the reader's feelings. It is through pleasure that the poet imparts enlightenment. Wordsworth believes that every poet is a teacher. Poetry should endeavour to make men better, wiser, and happier. The function of poetry is to spread the message of relationship and love; poetry should appear to the heart rather than interact.

**Qus-3 Discuss Wordsworth as a literary critic with reference to 'The Lyrical Ballads' and how 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads' establishes Wordsworth as a critic of substance.**



Ans.: William Wordsworth was not only the greatest romantic poet of England but was also a great critic of his own time. As a poet, he is regarded as the highest priest of nature who discovers the supernatural presence behind man, behind the flowers and trees, the stars and rainbows, and the brooks and lakes. The credit goes to him for taking commonplace things and investing them with a sense of wonder, mystery, and beauty. His entire approach is philosophical. This approach has stood him in good stead when dealing with the question of the creative process and other aspects of the theory of poetry. For the first time, the Romantic Movement reached its heights with the publication of 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads'.

The preface sheds light on the romantic concept of poetry. One of the critical outputs of Wordsworth is not much; in fact, it composes the preface of 'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads, eighteen appendixes to The Preface (1802) easily supply main supplementary to 'The Preface'

Wordsworth is very sincere in his approach to the issue concerning poetry and poets. Not only that, his utterance shows a major sense of feel and passion. When Wordsworth started penning his poetry, the literary scene was still dominated by the new classicists. The 18th-century literature is known for its bias towards the principles supposedly set forth by the ancient masters of Rome and Greece, though they approach them via France. Their chief concern was to be correct in expression. It also means modernization, moderation in feeling, and rejection of fancy and crazy for polished works. They aimed to portray nature in their works, but they felt shy about dealing with the physical nature of hills and valleys, of brooks, and of woods; instead, they took to human nature as expressed in the lives of upper-class people in metropolitan cities.

To be fair to the literary scene towards the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it must be stated here that pre-romantic heads started experimenting with the subjects, confirming the later romantic criteria, but they had not yet acquired a kind of legislative recognition. With the publication of Lyrical Ballads in 1798, Wordsworth started challenging the new classical doctrine. The brief introduction of the poems by his friend Coleridge and himself was given the title 'Advertisement' and in it he made his intention clear regarding the function and personality of the poet.

This advance placed him among the leading English critics like Shelley, Doctor Johnson, Dryden, and Pope. 'The Preface' and his subsequent critical writings show Wordsworth inconsistent in approaching



the subject of the creative process in a psychological manner. Besides his tendency to idealize when he deals with the personality of the poet an undercurrent of philosophy can easily be seen throughout the text of his critical writing.

Wordsworth considers the poet to be a man blessed with high sensibility, a deep-thinking mind, and a very comprehensive soul; he is different from the others not only in kind but in degree; otherwise, he is a man talking to men. He has a sympathetic disposition, because of which he is able to identify himself with others and share their feelings. He will simply not sit alone on any ivory tower. This conception of poetry is very democratic.

While dealing with the Wordsworthian concept of the poet, it would also be interesting to note his views about readers. He felt that it was one of the duties of the poet to educate the public about the right taste for poetry. In this sense, he is held up as a teacher. In fact, in one of his letters, Wordsworth is quoted as having, instead of being known as a teacher or nothing, felt impelled to talk of such education because the new classical trend of poetry has so far possessed in his republican mind, as he was going to present each new kind of poetry, he felt it necessary to educate the public. Even great poets like Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton have been neglected and underrated for wanting to enlighten public taste. Therefore, a poet has to work hard and patiently to create such a taste. On the other hand, the poet should also try to be in confidence in the reader so that if he can draw pleasure from the poems presented in '*The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*' he need not worry about the adverse opinion of the critics. He must depend on his faculty of judgment.

As against the life of upper-class city people in neoclassical poetry, Wordsworth prefers humble people and their rustic lifestyle for his subject matter. The object of the poetry is the expression of passion; Wordsworth believed passion to be linked to nature. There are people in the Middle East who live in the grandeur and dignity of nature, and they must absorb some of that beauty and grandeur. For that matter, Wordsworth also insists on using the real language of the man as distinguished from the artificial phraseology of the neo-classicists. To him, the language of the common people is the natural language of passion. They are in constant communication with nature when they are charged with emotional excitement. The language expresses the deep feelings of the human heart.



Apart from all that, Wordsworth has given us a very fine theory of poetry, which proves that he had a high conception of his calling. The objective of poetry is truth—not individual and local but general and operative. This inconsistency in realism is modified by one consideration: providing pleasure to the reader. He called poetry the breath and the finest spirit of all knowledge, as well as the most philosophical of all writing. He also says that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquility. In this matter, he seems to aim at the union of sentiment and thought, referring to the creative process.

Wordsworth outlines the four stages. Much like a psychologist, it is observation, recollection, contemplation, and composition. According to him, poetry is to give pleasure resulting from increasing understanding and sympathy. In this, he modifies the Neo-Classical idea of instructing with delight.

**Conclusion:** It is clear in *'The Preface'* that Wordsworth aimed at defending his poetry from the outrage of neoclassical critics. Under these circumstances it would be expected that he practiced what he preached. But we find some derivations in his earlier poetry. For example, sometimes he uses complex words and sentences. Apart from this, Wordsworth has earned a place in the general field of criticism because he gave the Romantic Movement its Bible in the form of *'The Preface to Lyrical Ballads'*. This is a standard for other romantic poets. They could measure their work with it. They can find faults with it, as Coleridge did, but they cannot be indifferent to it.

### Unit-3

**Qus. 1: What are Showalter's views on the cultural model of the difference in women's writing?**

Ans. In this essay, Showalter touches on a number of feminist critical topics, but she goes into great length on the connection between women's writing and women's culture. She believes that this strategy is more rewarding than others that focus on the body, language, or mind of women. She says that the body, language and psyche of women are all included in theories of culture, but they are interpreted in light of the social environment in which they occur because these elements also influence literary output. The cultural theory acknowledges inequalities among women writers based on their class, ethnicity, nationality, and history. What exactly makes up women's culture is under debate. Showalter is conscious that it is a shared experience within the context of the larger cultural system. She sees culture as a unifying factor.



Various hypotheses about women's culture have been developed over the last decade. But it is still a controversial subject. While giving shape to this concept, historians and anthropologists have gone by the socially accepted area of women's activities and behaviour as distinguished from the corresponding area.

Starting from the Victorian model, she observed that history has given a raw deal to women who are looked after by men. In Victorian times, they defined and maintained these areas. Women, according to Showalter, form a "muted" group whose cultural boundaries overlap but are not entirely confined by the dominant male group. The term "muted" refers to the idea that all language is the tongue of the dominant group and that language and power are intertwined. If women talk at all, they must do it in this language.

Many extreme American feminists claim that women are more similar to nature than men. This feminist myth is produced in Margaret Atwood's book '*Surfacing*'. In both English and American literature, utopian towns and nations created by women writers are frequently depicted as being located in the wild or on its frontiers. Showalter claims that the idea of the ladies texting in the wild zone is a humorous abstraction. The fact is that women's literature always incorporates the social, literary, and cultural histories of both the dominant and the subordinate. Any writing or critique that is wholly outside of the dominant framework is inadmissible.

Showalter now takes upon the concept of literary period which she fined based upon men's writing. According to her, the Renaissance was not a Renaissance for women, nor was Romanticism or Modernism. There are romantic and modernist movements for women. Many women fiction writers of the late 18th century have been ignored.

Even Virginia Woolf has sought to be driven out of modernism. It is important to examine current notions of literary effect on the writing of women. We must investigate why male writers have not been given as much credit as their female counterparts. Men's writing is generally viewed as a "bulge," but women's writing is sometimes rejected as a "hole. The fact that the female cultural model demonstrates how female tradition can be both a positive source of strength and a bad source of weakness is one of the major benefits, in Showalter's opinion.



The issue of how this paradigm may assist us in reading women's work emerges. Showalter explains that women's writing can be read as double-voiced discourse, containing a dominant and a muted story. In the purest form of feminist theory criticism, we are given a radically alert vision. We are called upon to find meaning where there is only empty space. Showalter concludes by cautioning against replacing the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, Lacan, and Bloom. However, no theory, according to her, can be a substitute for close and extensive knowledge of women's texts. Moreover, if we believe that all this would lead us to a land where gender would lose its meaning and in which all text would be sexless and equal.

To conclude Showalter's explanation of the cultural model of difference is certainly full of merit, though some critics argue that she has identified it with a specific form of literature, which reinforces the myth that all women have similar forms of experience. At the same time, there are other critics who hold Showalter in high esteem and consider her critical view remarkable.

**Qus. 2: What is the biological model of differences in women's writing?**

Ans.- In the essay '*Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness*' Showalter sets herself the task of defining the feminine and then finding out the nature of the problem central to feminist criticism. She explores various models of difference available to feminist criticism. Feminist criticism is posited against concepts like "a woman's writing as body".

She talks about organic and biological criticism as radical forms, and anatomy is textuality in this case. One naturally refers to certain theories based on the sexual organs of both men and women, whereas feminist critics in general reject the idea of biological inferiority in the literal sense. According to them, in western culture, the author is compared to the father. He is the creator, and he is supposed to have the authority to set aesthetic standards. In contrast, women lack the authority symbolized by the phallus the organ of re-procreation.

Showalter does not approve this comparison. She thinks that text is created in the brain. The word processor used by the author can be compared to the metaphor of the womb. Rather than the metaphor of literary paternity, it was the metaphor of literary maternity that was in vogue in the 18th and 19th centuries. But now different analyses can be thought out. Some authors use mechanical devices like word processors to write out their compositions; the word processor itself can be taken as the



metaphorical womb. Literary creation can be linked to gestation, labour, and delivery which means it is related to women.

Some feminist critics in France and the United States believe that women's writing starts with the body and those sexual differences are the source of female writing. They will not look at it as just their destiny, which has to be accepted.

The female imagery is very important to feminist critics of the biological school. They have observed that American women poets of these times use images of the female body in a more frank and intimate manner than their male counterparts. These poets do not aim at achieving the sublimity of type seen in the poems of Whitman and Dickinson. It is, however, a pitfall against which Showalter cautions us, and it is related to feminist criticism, which itself becomes biological rather than being concerned with the biological concerns of a creative writer. Showalter believes that at the centre of this search, there is no doubt about the fact that the most visible and permanent differences between men and women lie in the body. This body has been used as an excuse by men to exercise their power over women. In this process, the woman has been marginalized and treated as 'other, but when her body is put at the centre of the argument, the two concepts of otherness and the body get mixed up and create confusion. Showalter thinks that the image of female anatomy is useful only when it reminds us of other factors that play a part in women's writing. Elaborating on this point, she says the idea of the body forms the basis of our understanding of how women generalize their situation in society.

Turning to the limitations of biological theory, Showalter says that without the structure of language, society and literature, the body also fails to express itself. If we wish to locate the importance of writing by women writers, we must find it in their words rather than in their bodies.

**Qus. 3: What is the psychoanalytical model of differences in women's writing?**

**Ans.** -Although the psychoanalytical model of difference also involves biological and linguistic models, it is not found in the factory by Showalter. She finds that the Freudian approach will have to undergo a lot of amendment before it can be considered truly woman-centered. Showalter refers to Theodor Reik, who made the fraudulent comparison of writing with urination and concluded that women can write more easily because they have bigger blenders. This, of course, is not a common approach because, generally, psycho-analysis focuses on the lack of penis in women. Women's relationship to language,



fantasy, and culture has been symbolized by fraudulent concepts like penis. The psycho-analytic school of France has extended these metaphors. These metaphors stand for female literary and linguistic disadvantages.

According to Lacan, the girl child acquires knowledge at the same time that she recognizes the male as a superior sex. This is the oedipal phase. Lacan is also known for his oppression through the concepts of Gilbert and Gubar. They face the tormented relationship of women's writing to female identity from a psychoanalytical angle. The woman artist is essentially defined as one who displays disinherited and excluded characteristics. The reminder of her gender is a painful and even weakening experience. This is brought out by the texts of 19th-century women writers, who constantly talk of their painful existence. On top of it, there is conditioning at an early age to fear patriarchal authority. There is also the issue of unfair critical appreciation of women's texts based upon psychological interpretation. Millers has pointed out that they look for unsatisfied dreams and desires, which become the plot of women's fiction.

If these plots chart a different course, they are not considered credible in the 'geocentric' reading. On the other hand, it also reveals repressed ambitions in women's writing.

According to Showalter, women's works that are mostly about fantasies of romantic love fall within the genre that male authors despise. The other notable female author of best-selling novels that portray a vision of power Imagine a world where women are not restricted by the law; this utopia is, however, unachievable due to societal restrictions. Showalter does not confine her assessment to Freudian theory alone. She also takes up an alternative psychological model, referring to a certain work based on the theory of psychological theory. Underlines the importance of the pre-audible phase, the period of 6 to 8 years according to which the phenomenon of understanding core identity for male and female children is different. Whereas the male focuses on his different form, the girl's understanding of difference is positive. This understanding becomes the basic problem of identity after the audible phase is over. Consequently, this is the dominant force, and cultural hegemony transforms the significance of sex differences. This different parenting and the upbringing of the kid by both parents with the participation of a man as the major career of the children would have a significant impact on the perception of sex differences.



The significance of feminist psychoanalysis for literary criticism is eventually brought up in relation to gender identity and sexual performances. Showalter claims that, as a result, there has been an increase in interest in mother-daughter relationships. She has found that the psychology of female bonding influences not just the relationships between female characters.

Showalter concludes that the psychoanalytical-based model of feminist criticism is remarkable. But there are certain limitations in the psychoanalytical model, it cannot explain historical changes and racial differences; besides, it misses the shaping influences of the journal and the economic factors of society.

**Qus. 3: What is the biological model of the difference in women's writing?**

Ans: Biological or organic criticism is the most important part of Showalter's essay. It is also the most confusing formulation. Whereas most feminist critics reject the idea of male supremacy in a literal sense, they seem to capture the idea metaphorically. Advocates of the idea of literary paternity question the competence of women to create text when they do not possess the biological tool of procreation, or penis.

Showalter's reply to these posers is that the comparison is flawed. The idea germinates in the mind could be called a metaphorical womb, and the process is more akin to childbirth than to insemination. Adrienne Rich hopes that the sexual difference will be taken seriously as a resource rather than a destiny. Alicia finds American women poets using franker and more intimate female imagery than their male counterparts. However, feminist critics must not indulge in sentimental comments because subjectivity is considered taboo in criticism. Obsession with the physical quality can become a cruel ritual; it can confuse the concepts of otherness and body.

**Qus. 4: What is the psychological model of differences in feminist criticism?**

The Freudian concept has been applied simplistically by critics, so much so that Theodor Reik believes that women can write better because of their bigger bladders. Lacanian critics lay much stress on the concept of lack of phallus, with the phallus being assigned a logo-centric position. Critics like Gilbert stress the troubled relationship of women's writing to their identities. There has been much unfair criticism of women's writing on account of the critics' obsessions with Freudian expectations. The positive aspect of Showalter's psychoanalysis for literary criticism has been seen in the form of increased



interest in the study of mother-daughter relationships, female friendship, etc. The psychoanalytical model cannot explain things like historical changes and racial differences.

#### Unit-4

##### **Qus. -1 Explain the Essay ‘*The Spirit of Terrorism*’**

**Ans.** Over the centuries, Western societies have built their success by constantly offering people promises of well-being and happiness. This has led them to attempt to get rid of every form of negativity, particularly the most powerful negativity of all, namely death. Baudrillard describes this phenomenon in detail in ‘Symbolic Exchange’ and Death (1993), probably his most important work, in which he also argues, however, that death and, with it, negativity and evil, cannot be totally erased from society. It resurfaces periodically, flowing into the interstices and the free spaces that are left to it because it is a dimension of human existence that cannot be illuminated, just like evil, which is necessarily driven to counterbalance the presence of good.

However Western civilizations continually work to eliminate death, and when it happens, it is viewed as completely abhorrent and unfathomable. Terrorists can use it as a tool to issue a potent symbolic challenge to the social structure precisely because of this.

Indeed, according to a 2002 study, they have succeeded in converting their own deaths into an absolute weapon against our system that runs on the basis of the exclusion of death, a system whose goal is the ideal of zero fatalities. This, in Baudrillard's words, is ‘spiritual terrorism’.

It is more potent than a physical weapon in terms of symbolism and sacrifice, the execution of terrorists serves as an effective weapon. Shifting death to the symbolic level entails moving it into a sphere ruled by challenges and counter-challenges. In other words, only a response to the death can be a death of the same, or of a higher, order.

The symbolic death is the death that is taken to its extreme—a death even of just a few individuals—to which it is only possible to respond with an equally intense death. But for the western system, this inevitable detail of death cannot be pursued—a death that involves its own disappearance and final collapse. In short, terrorism tries to get organized society to collapse in response to the challenge it poses to its own suicidal



This is why Baudrillard wrote that when the Twin Towers of New York collapsed as a result of the attack carried out by Al Qaeda, they seemed to be committing suicide in response to the suicides of the terrorists themselves and of their planes.

Due to their profound symbolism, the "Twin Towers" are the target of terrorists. They represented capitalism in the financial sector and economics, as well as the most sophisticated Western civilization. Baudrillard has particularly remarked on this particular aspect of the Twin Towers twenty-five years before the attack that destroyed them in his book 'Symbolic Exchange' and Death (1993). He interpreted their replication and dual character as examples of a social system's incapacity to represent and communicate. Towers that were mirror images of one another only depicted one another as pure simulacra without any allusion to the original.

But, in this respect, the attack on the 'Twin Towers' represented a qualitative shift since it clearly showed that it is less and less possible to make a precise distinction between the media and reality. The television images of two Boeings penetrating into the towers, as many commentators have noticed, had such intensity that they seemed to have come directly out of a Hollywood movie and to employ the same sophisticated language of fiction. Featuring media images over and over again, the two towers seem to keep belonging to those images. Thus, the spectator cannot work out whether he is looking at the real event or a representation of it.

Many thought that this meant that the real was still alive and that it undermined Baudrillard's thesis, which viewed reality as stimulation and simulacra.

Baudrillard claimed, however, that today the objectives of a terrorist strategy, whatever their nature, can easily be achieved, partly due to the fact that 'terrorism, like viruses, is everywhere. There is a pervasive worldwide terrorism that follows any system of dominance as if it was its shadow and is ready to act wherever, like a double agent. It is a value that spreads in all directions and knows no boundaries, reaching every possible sphere of society. Any possibility of exchange therefore disappears, and consequently, it becomes difficult even to talk about the presence of some kind of value since it is no longer possible to assist or measure it.

### **Conclusion-**



According to Baudrillard, in the West today, the symbolic takes the form of terrorism. Only a symbolic event, like that terrorist tragedy, may be perceived as a genuine occurrence because the real has taken on the characteristics of a simulacrum. As we have seen, however, even a shocking and ‘unimaginable’ event such as the collapse of the Twin Towers cannot transform itself into something real because it remains in that ambiguous condition whereby reality and fiction are intermingled and in which everything seems to be placed today. This contributes to making symbolic meaning even harder to grasp for us as individuals who have grown up within a western culture.

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