Comprehensive Notes

for

BA & MA Courses, UGC-NET / JRF, SET, SLET,

MPhil & PhD Entrance Tests, and PSC and UPSC Exams

in English Literature

SAMPLE BOOKLET

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Vallaths TES
Total English Solutions

Foreword

This Sample Booklet offers a glimpse into Vallaths TES notes on English Literature that helps students excel in a variety of examinations-- BA & MA, UGC-NET / JRF, SET, SLET, MPhil & PhD Entrance Tests, and PSC and UPSC Examinations.

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UGC-NET Notes Set One

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Surefire Study Tips for UGC-NET exam: Prepared from careful research and years of experience in coaching for the exam.

UGC-NET Guidelines: The structure of UGC-NET; question paper format etc.

English Literature: An Introduction: A systematic and exhaustive history of English literature from Old English period to the twentieth century; very useful for reference

Literary Theory: An Introduction: Introduction to major literary theories and theoreticians

Glossary of Literary & Theoretical Terms: Important literary and theoretical terms explained.

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Objective Questions: A brief guide to UGC-NET Paper II, with worked out examples from past question papers

Question Bank: An exhaustive question bank of 330 descriptive-type questions prepared from past question papers.

EXTRACTS FROM UGC-NET Notes Set One

From English Literature: An Introduction (Pages 98-99)

THE ROMANTIC NOVEL: AUSTEN, SCOTT, AND OTHERS

At the turn of the century the Gothic mode, with its alternations between evocation of terror and appeal to sensibility, reached a peak of popularity with novels such as Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) and Matthew Gregory Lewis' sensational *The Monk* (1796). These writers dealt with the supernatural and with human psychology far less adequately than did the poets, however, and appear to modern readers all the more shallow when compared with the great novelist Jane Austen. Her *Northanger Abbey* (begun in 1797; published posthumously, 1817) satirizes the Gothic novel, among other things, with complex irony; *Sense and Sensibility* (begun 1797; published 1811) mocks the contemporary cult of sensibility, while also displaying sympathetic understanding of the genuine sensitivities to which it appealed; *Pride and Prejudice* (begun 1796; published 1813) shows how sanity and intelligence can break through the opacities of social custom. The limitation suggested by her narrow range of settings and characters is illusory; working within these chosen limits, she observed and described very closely the subtleties of personal relationships, while also appealing to a sense of principle which, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, she believed to be threatened in a fragmenting and increasingly cosmopolitan society. These qualities come to full fruition in *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Persuasion* (1817). A master of dialogue, she wrote with economy, hardly wasting a word.

The underlying debate concerning the nature of society is reflected also in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. After his earlier success as a poet in such narrative historical romances as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), he turned to prose and wrote more than 20 novels, several of which concerned heroes who were growing up, as he and his contemporaries had done, in a time of revolutionary turmoil. In the best, such as *Waverley* (1814), *Old Mortality* (1816), and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), he reconstructs the

recent past of his country, Scotland, from still surviving elements. His stress on the values of gallantry, fortitude, and human kindness, along with his picture of an older society in which all human beings have a recognized standing and dignity, appealed to an England in which class divisions were exacerbated by the new industrialism. His historical romances were to inspire many followers in the emerging new nations of Europe. Thomas Love Peacock's seven novels, by contrast, are conversation pieces in which many of the pretensions of the day are laid bare in the course of witty, animated, and genial talk. *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) explores the extravagances of contemporary intellectualism and poetry; the more serious side of his satire is shown in such passages as Mr. Cranium's lecture on phrenology in *Headlong Hall* (1816). The Gothic mode was developed interestingly by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (the daughter of William Godwin), whose *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) explores the horrific possibilities of new scientific discoveries, and Charles Robert Maturin, whose *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) has, with all its absurdity, a striking intensity. Among lesser novelists may be mentioned Maria Edgeworth, whose realistic didactic novels of the Irish scene inspired Scott; Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, a Scot with her own vein of racy humour; John Galt, whose *Annals of the Parish* (1821) is a minor classic; and James Hogg, remembered for his remarkable *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), a powerful story of Calvinism and the supernatural.

From Literary Theory: An Introduction (Page 144)

DIFFÉRANCE

Against the metaphysics of presence, deconstruction brings a (non)concept called *différance*. This French neologism is, on the deconstructive argument, properly neither a word nor a concept; it names the non-coincidence of meaning both synchronically (one French homonym means "differing") and diachronically (another French homonym means "deferring"). Because the resonance and conflict between these two French meanings is difficult to convey tersely in English, the word *différance* is usually left untranslated.

In simple terms, this means that rather than privileging commonality and simplicity and seeking unifying principles (or grand teleological narratives, or overarching concepts, etc.) deconstruction emphasizes difference, complexity, and non-self-identity. A deconstructive reading of a text, or a deconstructive interpretation of philosophy (for deconstruction tends to elide any difference between the two), often seeks to demonstrate how a seemingly unitary idea or concept contains different or opposing meanings within itself. The elision of difference in philosophical concepts is even referred to in deconstruction as a kind of *violence*, the idea being that theory's willful misdescription or simplification of reality always does violence to the true richness and complexity of the world. This criticism can be taken as a rejection of the philosophical law of the excluded middle, arguing that the simple oppositions of Aristotelian logic force a false appearance of simplicity onto a recalcitrant world.

Thus the perception of différance has two sides, both a *deferment* of final, unifying meaning in a unit of text (of whatever size, word or book), and a *difference* of meaning of the text upon every act of re-reading a work. Repetition, and the impossibility of final access to a text, of ever being at the text's "ground zero" so to speak, are emphasized, indefinitely leaving a text outside of the realm of the knowable in typical senses of "mastery". A text can, obviously, be experienced, be read, be "understood" -- but that understanding, for all its deep feeling or lack of it, is marked by a quintessential provisionality that never denys the possibility of *rereading*. Indeed it requires this. If the text is traditionally thought to be some perdurable sequence of symbols (letters) that go through time unchanged in the formal sense, différance moves the concept toward the realization that for all the perdurability of the text, experience of this structure is impossible and inconceivable outside of the realm of the unique instance, outside of the realm of perception.

A text cannot read itself, therein lies the provisionality of différance.

MIRACLE, MYSTERY AND MORALITY PLAYS

Like the great drama of the Greeks, English drama owed its origin to religious ritual. It began in a simple attempt to render clearly the central doctrine of the Church. These plays were usually performed in the church by clergymen during Easter time. Gradually these included stories from the Old and New Testaments and the lives of saints; as they became more elaborate and dramatic, the plays moved from the interior of the church to the porch, to the churchyard, and later to meadows, streets and other public places. Plays, by then, had of course become secular, and the clergy began to view them with suspicion. But the revival of the Corpus Christ festival in 1311 provided a public holiday dedicated to dramatic representations of Biblical history. The growing importance of fairs, and the increase in wealth of the trading classes made miracle plays a regular feature of the 15th century, retaining their religious basis but developing dramatically at the same time.

The miracle play proper, dealing with the lives of the saints, has been traced back to early 12th century, when a play of St. Katherine was performed at Dunstable. A Norman clerk called Hilarius composed several miracles of which *St. Nicholas* and *Raising of Lazarus* are extant. The oldest English fragment, *Harrowing of Hell*, dates back to the 13th century.

The mystery plays dealing with the Scripture history were developed from the Easter and Christmas plays and were especially associated with the Corpus Christi festival. They were performed in a cycle of pageants, each representing a single episode. These plays were enacted by several guilds at especially the towns of York, Wakefield, Chester, Norwich and Coventry. The stage was a crude contrivance of two stories – the lower representing hell and the upper signifying heaven.

The mystery plays had little literary merit. Though the dialogue was sometimes lively and witty, the verse was crude and limping. These plays had no freedom of plot and the least suspicion of heresy could be fatal.

Several complete cycles of mysteries have been preserved. The York cycle consists of 48 plays. The Towneley Mysteries, consisting of 30 plays, were performed at Wakefield. They treat their themes in a freer, less religious spirit, and hence, are more dramatic. They are less didactic and the human interest is heightened. The Chester group of 24 plays is more uneven and those of Coventry, 42 in number, have a serious, moralizing allegorical tone. Nothing is known of the authors of any of these plays.

In the group of 4 plays known as the Digby Mysteries (c. 1500), an unmistakable advance in the direction or regular drama is made, especially in *Mary Magdalene*. But this realistic line of growth was interrupted by the morality play. The morality play retained the crude versification of the mystery, making use of alliteration as well as rhyme. It was, like the mystery, serious in intention and dealt with the basic problem of good and evil. They were written in the then fashionable allegorical manner – the characters were abstractions of virtues and vices. For the first time they employed a definite plot which was a great advance in dramatic development. The earliest mention of a morality is that of the *Play of the Paternoster* (not extant) and the oldest extant play is *The Castle of Perseverance*. Even more abstract are such plays like *Mind, Wit and Understanding, The Four Elements*, and *Wit and Science*. The best of the older moralities is the impressive Everyman, in which the powerful allegory is reinforced by considerable knowledge of human nature and well-handled dialogue.

Under Henry VIII, a patron of the drama, the morality grew into the interlude, a short dramatic piece filling the intervals of long spectacular ones. The interlude lost its didactic purpose and employed humour freely, as in the interludes of John Heywood like the *Four PP* (Four Ps). The interludes were the harbingers of regular drama.

WORDSWORTH'S THEORY OF POETRY

Wordsworth's theory of poetry, if there is one—has to be extracted from three documents: 1) the Advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads* 2) the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and 3) the Appendix on poetic diction. Wordsworth was not much of a deliberate theorist. He was wretchedly ill-read on literary criticism as on all other subjects. He was incapable of sustained cogitation. He was blind to logical flaws and contradictions.

Wordsworth holds that by the very act of writing a poet undertakes 1) to fulfill the expectations of his readers. These expectations vary from age to age. At times, as a result of conscious effort, it is possible for the poet to alter them. This precisely is what he and Coleridge have attempted to do in *Lyrical Ballads*.

Lyrical Ballads attempts to bring about a revolution in the areas of both content and form. The content of the poems in rooted in the everyday life of ordinary people. The form is a selection of the language of common social intercourse. Wordsworth holds, and this conviction lies at the core of Wordsworthian poetic theory, that this is how it should be in the case of all true poetry.

But by just fulfilling these two conditions a piece of verse cannot become good poetry. The Poet has to ensure that strong emotions are associated with the subjects of his poems and he can do that only through long habits of meditation. At the same time the piece should not be artificially composed, it should be an inspired creation. Thus poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings that take its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility. It evokes in the reader the original emotions of the poet.

The use of metre distinguishes poetry from prose. But beyond that Wordsworth is unable to identify any basic difference. The objectives of verse and prose are identical; they use the very same medium; emotion and passion are the life-blood of both.

A poet, according to Wordsworth, is a man speaking to men. He is very much a common man who thinks and feels like all other common men. But he is endowed with a more than common power of imagination and articulation. He speaks to other men and also for other men. The language and situation of his poetry should go together. The aim of poetry is universal truth. It should represent nature and man with the conviction of truth. The poet must endeavour to give immediate pleasure to the reader by appealing to the humanity within him. The poet's obligation to give pleasure is an affirmation of the value and validity of human life Wordsworth declares that genuine passion is always the ultimate source of true poetry. In all cultures and languages classical poets worked under the influence of genuine passion generated by real life events. Being stimulated by genuine passion their language was highly metaphorical and daringly innovative. In succeeding ages even, when not genuinely moved, the same figurative language came to be employed. Thus a poetic diction was produced which took the language of poetry away from the real language of men turning the poetry into life less verbiage. At such points in history a special, conscious effort is required to take the language of poetry back to the people. This is what *Lyrical Ballads* has attempted to do.

However, as Coleridge points out in Biographia Literaria, some of Wordsworth's pieces are those which speak of uncommon experiences in a language far more subtle and sophisticated than that used by common men. A good example is "Tintern Abbey" generally accepted as one of Wordsworth's masterpieces. Neither its mystic philosophy nor its highly inspired language as anything everyday about it.

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From Objective Questions (Page 399)

1. Theatres were closed down in the year _____. (1642)
2. Dryden's *All for Love* shares the theme of Shakespeare's _____. (*Antony and Cleopatra*)
3. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was written by _____. (John Locke)
4. *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* was written by _____. (Joseph Glanvill)
5. Who said, "True wit is nature to advantage dressed, / What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed"? (Pope in "An Essay on Criticism")
6. Dr. Primrose is a character in _____. (*The Vicar of Wakefield*)
7. Neo-classical satire has been influenced by the classical Roman satirists _____ and _____. (Horace and Juvenal)
8. *Moral Essays* were written by _____. (Alexander Pope)
9. Swift's *The Battle of Books* was written as a result of the publication of an essay on ancient and modern learning by _____. (William Temple)
10. Johnson's *Dictionary* was published in the year _____. (1755)

From Question Bank (a random selection)

1. How far was the Gothic Romance a harbinger of the Romantic tradition in fiction?
2. The classical and the romantic meet in the poetry of the graveyard poets. Elucidate.
3. Write a note on the features of Jonathan Swift's prose.
4. Comment on the epistolary mode used by 18th century novelists.
5. What are Coleridge's views on fancy and imagination?
6. In what respect does Coleridge disagree with Wordsworth on his theory of poetry?
7. What did Keats mean by "negative capability"?
8. Modernism in fiction was a reaction to the hegemony of realism" Substantiate.
9. Comment on the mythical method of Modernist poets.
10. Discuss the concept of 'metropolis' in Modernist fiction.
11. Describe the stream of consciousness technique as used by James Joyce or Virginia Woolf.
12. How far is 'Self-reflexivity' a feature of modernism?
13. What do you mean by Canon-formation in Literature?
14. What is the concept of Intertextuality?
15. On what grounds do modernism and post-modernism differ?

UGC-NET Notes Set Two

Contents

A Brief History of English Literature: A very interesting and enjoyable account of English literature.

English Literary Criticism: An Introduction: An exhaustive essay on the trends in English literary criticism.

Theoretical Movements: A detailed and interdisciplinary account of major theoretical movements including classicism, colonialism, modernism, enlightenment, romanticism, new criticism, feminism, postcolonialism, etc.

Literary Theory: An Introduction: Introduction to major literary theories and theoreticians

20th century American literature: A detailed essay.

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Quick Revision guide: All major topics in British literary history and Literary theory given in a nutshell.

EXTRACTS FROM UGC-NET Notes Set Two

From the Introduction to the section entitled "Spenser and the Lyric Poets of the Sixteenth Century" (Pages 10-11)

LYRICS OF LOVE. Love was the subject of a very large part of the minor poems of the period, the monotony being relieved by an occasional ballad, such as Drayton's "Battle of Agincourt" and his "Ode to the Virginian Voyage," the latter being one of the first poems inspired by the New World. Since love was still subject to literary rules, as in the metrical romances, it is not strange that most Elizabethan lyrics seem to the modern reader artificial. They deal largely with goddesses and airy shepherd folk; they contain many references to classic characters and scenes, to Venus, Olympus and the rest; they are nearly all characterized by extravagance of language.

MUSIC AND POETRY. Another reason for the outburst of lyric poetry in Elizabethan times was that choral music began to be studied, and there was great demand for new songs. Then appeared a theory of the close relation between poetry and music, which was followed by the American poet Lanier more than two centuries later. Much of Lanier's verse seems more like a musical improvisation than like an ordinary poem. His theory that music and poetry are subject to the same laws is developed in his 'Science of English Verse.' The stage caught up the new fashion, and hundreds of lyrics appeared in the Elizabethan drama.

From English Literary Criticism: An Introduction (Page 105)

In turning from Sidney to Dryden we pass into a different world. The philosophy, the moral fervour, the prophetic strain of the Elizabethan critic have vanished. Their place is taken by qualities less stirring in themselves, but more akin to those that modern times have been apt to associate with criticism. In fact, whatever qualities we now demand from a critic may be found at least foreshadowed, and commonly much more than foreshadowed, in Dryden. Dryden is master of comparative criticism: he has something of the historical method; he is unrivalled in the art of seizing the distinctive qualities of his author and of setting them before us with the lightest touch. His very style, so pointed yet so easy, is enough in itself to mark the gulf that lies between the age of Elizabeth and the age of the Restoration. All the Elizabethan critics, Sidney himself hardly excepted, bore some trace of the schoolmaster. Dryden was the first to meet his readers entirely as an equal, and talk to them as a friend with friends. It is Dryden, and not Sainte-Beuve, who is the true father of the literary 'causerie'; and he still remains its unequalled master. There may be other methods of striking the right note in literary criticism. Lamb showed that there may be; so did Mr. Pater. But few indeed are the critics who have known how to attune the mind of the reader to a subject, which beyond all others cries out for harmonious treatment, so skilfully as Dryden.

That the first great critic should come with the Restoration, was only to be expected. The age of Elizabeth was essentially a creative age. The imagination of men was too busy to leave room for self-scrutiny. Their thoughts took shape so rapidly that there was no time to think about the manner of their coming. Not indeed that there is, as has sometimes been urged, any inherent strife between the creative and the critical spirit. A great poet, we can learn from Goethe and Coleridge, may also be a great critic. More than that: without some touch of poetry in himself, no man can hope to do more than hack-work as a critic of others. Yet it may safely be said that, if no critical tradition exists in a nation, it is not an age of passionate creation, such as was that of Marlowe and Shakespeare, that will found it. With all their alertness, with all their wide outlook, with all their zeal for classical models, the men of that time were too much of children, too much beneath the spell of their own genius, to be critics. Compare them with the great writers of other ages; and we feel instinctively that, in spite of their surroundings, they have far more of vital kindred with Homer or the creators of the mediaval epic, than with the Greek dramatists—Aschylus excepted—or with Dante or with Goethe. The "freshness of the early world" is still upon them; neither they nor their contemporaries were born to the task of weighing and pondering, which is the birthright of the critic.

It was far otherwise with the men of the Restoration. The creative impulse of a century had at length spent its force. For the first time since Wyatt and Surrey, England deserted the great themes of literature, the heroic passions of Tamburlaine and Faustus, of Lear and Othello, for the trivial round of social portraiture and didactic discourse; for 'Essays on Satire' and 'on Translated Verse', for the Tea-Table of the 'Spectator', for dreary exercises on the 'Pleasures of the Imagination' and the 'Art of Preserving Health'. A new era had opened. It was the day of small things.

From Theoretical Movements: Classicism

Historical Context
The Renaissance. The Renaissance constituted a major shift in focus from God to the human. It started in the middle of the fourteenth century, after the Black Death (plague, 1347–1377) killed almost one"third of the population of Europe. Although the economy suffered, the remaining population earned higher wages and quickly filled in the gaps in the market. A renewed interest in classical literature, language, and philosophy fed the intellectual movement of the Renaissance: Humanism. Humanism was responsible for raising man to a level of dignity and intellectual importance that actually threatened the viability of the Church. As humanists worked to integrate pagan classical philosophy with Christian, Jewish, and gnostic theology and mysticism, they

developed the notion that man can achieve redemption through his faith, independent of the grace of God. This change accompanied a growing awareness of and discomfort about the extensive corruption of the clergy. The practice of selling indulgences began to be questioned by an emerging and somewhat educated middle class that did not share the traditional values of the ruling elite. Knowledge and ideas were more widely available due to the invention of the printing press (1457–1458) and a gradual urbanization of society. The Church still maintained its political, social, and economic power, but the Protestant Reformation was questioning its theology, and a new branch of Christianity was in its formative phase. A Counter Reformation helped to refine Church procedures and reduce corruption, but the schism between competing models of individual salvation led to the formation of Protestant denominations. Although the Church sanctioned persecution of witches and instituted the Spanish Inquisition as a backlash against the Protestant Reformation, Europe was divided along religious lines, and nations such as England went back and forth between Catholocism and Protestantism until leaders were able to stabilize society and appoint a national religion or manage to incorporate a policy of religious toleration. In this hotbed of social and philosophical turbulence, a new mode of critical thinking allowed for significant discoveries in science. New respect for individual achievement, the scientific revolution that allowed open scientific inquiry, and an established wealth led to the revolutionary discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton and set the stage for innovations in art such as the application of the golden mean in architecture, the portrayal of visual perspective in drawing and painting, and the realistic modeling of musculature in human sculpture. Niccolo Machiavelli explored human psychology to develop a theory about the role of power in politics that became the basis for modern political realism. In drama, playwrights such as Shakespeare portrayed intimate psychological studies of the human mind as it undergoes a crisis. In these and other ways, the Renaissance surpassed the achievements of classical Greece and Rome that it had rediscovered.

From Theoretical Movements: Feminism

History. The earliest works on 'the woman question' criticised the restrictive role of women without necessarily claiming that women were disadvantaged or that men were to blame. Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman is one of the few works written before the 19th century that can unambiguously be called feminist. By modern standards her metaphor of women as nobility, the elite of society, coddled, fragile and in danger of intellectual and moral sloth, does not sound like a feminist argument. Wollstonecraft believed that both sexes contributed to this situation and took it for granted that women had considerable power over men.

Feminism is generally said to have begun in the 19th century as people increasingly adopted the perception that women are oppressed in a male-centered society (see patriarchy). The feminist movement is rooted in the West and especially in the reform movement of the 19th century. The organised movement is dated from the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

Emmeline Pankhurst was one of the founders of the suffragette movement and aimed to reveal the institutional sexism in British society, forming the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Often the repeated jailing by the Cat and Mouse Act, for trivial misdemeanours in activism, inspired members to go on hunger strikes, and because of the resultant force feeding that was the practice, caused these members to be very ill, serving to draw attention to the brutality of the legal system at the time and to further their cause.

Over a century and a half the movement has grown to include diverse perspectives on what constitutes discrimination against women. Early feminists and primary feminist movements are often called the first wave and feminists after about 1960 the second wave. There is a so called third wave, but feminists disagree as to its necessity, its benefits, and its ideas. These three "waves" are known as such, because, like waves on a beach, each wave comes on top of the one before, drawing on each other.

Book on Literary History and Literary Theory

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Section One: British Literary History

Section Two: Literary Theory

Extracts from Book on Literay History & Literary Theory

From the Introduction to "Journalism and the Essay" (Page 29)

The essay (meaning, according to Montaigne, 'an attempt') originated as a repository of casual ideas on men and matters. To Montaigne it was more a means of thinking aloud, than a literary type. In England it was cultivated by Bacon and the humanists. But as literature became more formalized and academic in the latter half of the 17th century, its practice gradually passed out of fashion. Later, a combination of circumstances peculiar to England gave a group of humanists the opportunity of creating it anew. Their work appeared in a detached, fragmentary form like the essays of Montaigne, Bacon or Cowley. But in method and scope it was an achievement of marked originality, and exercised a profound influence of the prose style, and indeed on the civilization of their epoch.

In origin, the 18th century Addisonian essay had little in common with the Renaissance essay, but belongs to the history of the daily press. Since the beginning of the Civil War, England had been the home of diurnals and news-sheets. But, thanks to the Licensing Act of 1662, the 17th century produced no serious attempts at journalism. From the time of William's accession, news–sheets and Mercuries began to multiply. In 1690 John Dunton hit on the ingenious idea of publishing the *Athenian Gazette,* afterwards changed to the *Athenian Mercury,* a periodical to answer questions; in 1702 the *Daily Courant* began its long Career till 1735; and in 1704, Daniel Defoe started the publication of *The Review*.

From "Postmodernism" (Page 68)

Postmodernism shares many of the features of Modernism. Both schools reject the rigid boundaries between high and low art. Postmodernism even goes a step further and deliberately mixes low art with high art, the past with the future, or one genre with another. Such mixing of different, incongruous elements illustrates Postmodernism's use of lighthearted parody, which was also used by Modernism. Both these schools also employed pastiche, which is the imitation of another's style (for example, if I write a novel about Shakespearean characters or in a style very similar to that of T.S. Eliot, that is pastiche). Parody and pastiche serve to highlight the self-reflexivity of Modernist and Postmodernist works, which means that parody and pastiche serve to remind the reader that the work is not "real" but fictional, constructed. Modernist and Postmodernist works are also fragmented and do not easily, directly convey a solid meaning. That is, these works are consciously ambiguous and give way to multiple interpretations. The individual or subject depicted in these works is often decentred, without a central meaning or goal in life, and dehumanized, often losing individual characteristics and becoming merely the representative of an age or civilization, like Tiresias in *The Waste Land*.

In short, Modernism and Postmodernism give voice to the insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation of the 20th century Western world. The Western world, in the 20th century, began to experience this deep sense of insecurity because it progressively lost its colonies in the Third World, was torn apart by two major World Wars and found its intellectual and social foundations shaking under the impact of new social theories and developments such as Marxism and postcolonial global migrations, new technologies and the power shift from Europe to the United States.

Book on Analysis of Literary Texts

Contents

Section One: British Poetry

Section Two: British Prose and Fiction

Section Three: British Drama

Extracts from Book on Analysis of Literary Texts

From Section Two: British Fiction & Prose (Pages 95-96)

The Pilgrim's Progress as an Allegory

An allegory is a narrative fiction in which the agents and action and sometimes the setting as well are contrived to make coherent sense on the primary level of signification and at the same time signify a second, deeper level of correlated order of agents, concepts and events.

There are two types of allegory. First one is historical or political allegory in which the characters and actions that are signified literally in their turn represent historical personages and events. The second one is the allegory of ideas in which the literal characters represent abstract concepts and the plot exemplifies a doctrine. It may have political, humorous or didactic intentions.

Thus we can say that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an example of an allegory. The central device in the second type of allegory is the personification of abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind, modes of life and types of character. Thus Bunyan's work allegorizes the Christian doctrine of salvation by telling how the character named Christian, warned by Evangelist, flees to the Celestial City from the City of Destruction. During his journey he encounters characters with names like Faithful, Hopeful, Giant Despair and passes through places like the Slough of Despond, the valley of the Shadow of Death and Vanity Fair.

The Journey: *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegorical representation of Christian's struggle to attain salvation. He becomes aware of a burden on his back (an allegory for his sinfulness) and abandons life (including his unfortunate wife and family) and seeks death. However, his aim is not to "cease upon the midnight with no pain". On the other hand, his journey is one of constant struggle and conflict and the words "Life, Life, Eternal Life" are on his lips. Christian's pilgrimage is an allegory of a religious man's quest for spirituality and salvation through the renunciation of worldly pleasures. The difficulties that Christian encounters on his pilgrimage are partly overcome with the help of various characters he meets—allegorical representations of heavenly beings whom God has chosen to help Christian.

The Slough of Despond: The Slough into which Christian falls symbolizes the state of despondency into which religious men fall when their resolve is weakened. A man called Help, an allegory of Christ, shows him the steps to climb out of the Slough. These steps stand for faith in Christ.

The Wicket-gate; the Interpreter's House and the Cross: Mr. Worldly Wiseman misleads Christian to a village called Morality and wants him to follow the Church of England, not Puritanism or Calvinism. However, Evangelist shows him the right path and takes him to the Wicket-gate, a symbol of Christ. Christian's arrival there is an allegorical representation of his allegiance to Christ. Later he reaches the Interpreter's House where he sees various symbolic pictures which impart valuable lessons to him. Afterwards he sees the Cross, where the burden falls off his back. This is to show that Christ has pardoned his sins and that he is the chosen of God.

The Lions and the Palace Beautiful: On the way Christian comes to the Palace Beautiful close to which lie two chained lions. The Palace Beautiful stands for the congregation in a church and the lions connote the persecution of the non-conformists in Bunyan's time. At the Palace Beautiful, Christian is treated hospitably by a few damsels, each of whom symbolizes a virtue.

Christian's Victory over Apollyon: In the Valley of Humiliation, Christian fights a monster called Apollyon who stands for the Devil. Christian defeats him with a sword, which symbolizes faith. His victory is in fact a victory over the Devil's temptations.

Valley of the Shadow of Death: The Valley of the Shadow of Death is full of hobgoblins, satyrs and dragons, where snares, deep holes and nets await a pilgrim. These dangers symbolize the spiritual uncertainties that a religious man will have to encounter. Here Christian sees the remains of pilgrims who had gone before him. Finding his sword ineffective, he overcomes the dangers with another weapon called All-prayer. This means that spiritual uncertainties can be overcome only by means of constant prayer.

Faithful and Talkative: Faithful is now Christian's companion in his journey and stands for unshakeable faith in God and salvation. Both of them meet Mr. Talkative, and Christian warns Fathful that he is a mere talker and not a doer, and such people can hardly hope for salvation.

Vanity Fair: Christian and Faithful come to the Vanity Fair where houses, lands, honours, titles, lusts and pleasures of all kinds including whores, bawds, husbands, wives and children were sold. Christian and Faithful pay no attention to them; this angers the traders and the two pilgrims are imprisoned. On charges of sedition and violation of law, Faithful is executed. Vanity Fair represents the carnal attractions of the world. True spirituality can be attained only by overcoming them. The episode of the Vanity Fair brings into focus the victory of the spiritual over the physical.

Rejection of Monetary Gain: Christian along with a new companion Hopeful (symbolizing hope) meets Mr. By-ends, an allegorical personification of people who pretend to be religious in order to attain selfish ends. Later, on a hill called Lucre, the two pilgrims are invited by Demas to dig out silver from his silver mine. They reject the offer and continue on their journey.

Giant Despair and the Key called Promise: The pilgrims take the wrong path by mistake and are imprisoned by Giant Despair in Doubting Castle. There the giant beats them and urges them to commit suicide. Christian nearly obeys him but Hopeful asks him not to despair and tells him that suicide is sin. Christian unlocks the prison gates with a key called Promise, which represents the promise given by Christ to his disciples.

The End of the Journey: They now pass through Delectable Mountains, the Enchanted Ground and River of Death. Christian has some difficulty in crossing these places but is constantly helped and encouraged by Hopeful. These difficulties symbolize spiritual doubts, which can be overcome by hope. They finally reach the Celestial City or Jerusalem, their destination.

Conclusion: *The Pilgrim's Progress* is about attaining salvation by overcoming spiritual doubts and temptations with faith and hope. Only a man who is constantly aware of the righteousness of Christ will become the chosen of God and attain salvation.

From Section Three: British Drama

KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

Kitchen sink drama, a term applied in the late 1950s to the plays of writers such as Arnold Wesker, Shelagh Delaney and John Osborne, which portrayed working class or lower middle class life, with an emphasis on domestic realism. The term "kitchen sink" derived from an expressionist painting by John Bratby, which contained an image of a kitchen sink and which reflected a new interest among young painters in domestic scenes, with stress on the banality of life. The term was quickly applied to a new style of drama, the hallmark of which was a more realistic representation of social life; including details like ironing boards and minor domestic squalor as in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* with ironing as a piece of stage business. Kitchen sink plays were written in part as a reaction against the drawing room comedies and middle class dramas of Noel Coward and Terence Rattigan, and also undermined the popularity of the verse drama of T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry. Tynan was a principal advocate of this new group of writers.

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Extracts from Compact Guide for Quick Revision

New Historicism (Pages 129-130)

Introduction
- Critical approach that developed in the 1980s, mainly through the work of Stephen Greenblatt
- Reaction against New Criticism, Structuralism and Deconstruction, which privilege the literary text and place only secondary emphasis on historical and social context
- Literature seen as an expression of the power structures of the surrounding society
- Based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of the historical & cultural conditions of its production and interpretations, rather than as an isolated creation of genius
- New Historicists aim simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature

Basic Principles
- "Parallel" reading of literary and non-literary texts
- Instead of a literary "foreground" and a historical "background," both texts have equal weight ("co-texts") and constantly inform or interrogate each other
- Louis Montrose: New Historicism deals with "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts"

Premises (contesting Liberal Humanism)
- Literature does not occupy an aesthetic realm independent of economic, social and political conditions; nor does it have timeless artistic value
- History is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events which forms a "background" to the literature of an era, which literature simply "reflects." [Literary text is embedded in context]
- The humanistic concept of an essential human nature that is common to the author, characters and reader is to be rejected. Identity is not unified, unique, enduring or personal [The degree of involvement of the author in creating meaning contested]
- The author and the reader are "subjects" who are constructed and positioned by the conditions of their own era

The New Historicist Practice
Steps in New Historicist Reading
- Identifying what other literary and non-literary texts the public had access to at the time of writing the text [to understand the relationship between a text and the political, social and economic circumstances in which it originated]
- Placing the literary text within the "frame" of a non-literary text [Literary text as "embedded" within the non-literary text]
- The New Historicist essay begins with a powerful & dramatic "anecdote" (historical document)
- Anecdote (historical document) not "context" but "co-text"
- The text and co-text seen as expressions of the same historical moment

What Stephen Greenblatt did
- Book: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980)
- Juxtaposed Renaissance plays with horrifying colonial policies
- Drew attention to marginalization and dehumanizing of oppressed Others
- Self-fashioning is the creation of oneself according to a set of socially acceptable standards

Renaissance Self-Fashioning: A Digression
- During the Renaissance the upper class practised self-fashioning. Prescribed attire and behavior was created for the noblemen and women, and was represented through portraits. Masculinity was portrayed through symbols of authority and power. Male rulers depicted themselves in armour or with weapons. The most important characteristic attributed to women was beauty. Beauty represents the concepts of purity, virtue and modesty. In portraits women illustrated these notions through idealized features, fancy dresses, and elaborate jewelry.
- *The Book of the Courtier*, by Castiglione is one of the first texts that depicted how individuals were to behave in society. Men of the noble class were to "create" themselves as works of art, according to the conventions of dress and manner set forth by the monarchs. One was to conduct and dress in a way that reflected their position in society. One was not supposed to act in an affected manner, but present naturalness and nonchalance. In addition to this, *The Courtier* puts emphasis on the importance of not only trying to resemble one's master, but actually trying to transform himself into the master.

New and Old Historicisms: Differences
- New Historicism gives "equal weighting" to literary and non-literary texts
- New Historicism deals with history-as-text [The 'word' of the past has replaced the 'world' of the past
- Derridean view that there is nothing outside the text, or that everything is available to us only in textual form]

Influences of Other Theories
- Poststructuralism
  - Althusserian Marxism
    - Ideology manifests itself in all institutions including literature
    - Ideology operates covertly to "subjectify" and subordinate language users to the interests of the ruling classes
  - Foucault
    - The discourse of an era brings into being concepts, oppositions and hierarchies
    - These are products and propagators of power
    - These determine what is "knowledge," "truth" and "normal" at a given time
  - Deconstruction
    - Texts involve modes of signification that war against each other
  - Bakhtin's Dialogism
    - Texts incorporate a number of conflicting voices that represent diverse social classes

- Cultural Materialism
  - Term used by Raymond Williams
  - Marxist orientation of New Historicism
  - Analysis of any Historical Material (literature included), within a politicized framework
  - The four characteristics of this method are:
    - Historical context
    - Theoretical Method
    - Political Commitment
    - Textual Analysis
  - Cultural Materialists go beyond Marxism in that they focus on the marginalized rather than just focusing solely on class conflict. In this sense it is more radical and subversive.