

E23G Twentieth Century Literary Theory to Saussure

This course seeks to introduce students to some of the most important developments that occurred in the field of modern literary theory before the impact of Saussure's critique of referential and expressive theories of language began to make itself felt upon literary criticism. We will discuss a wide selection of readings representative of several theoretical schools (for example, Archetypal criticism, Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Feminism and Reader-response criticism) with the goal of situating them with reference to what M.H. Abrams has described as the four orientations of literary criticism (text, author, con-text, reader). Another important objective is to stress the importance of the material factors of class, gender and race in the criticism of literary texts. To this end, we will pay special attention to how important West Indian and African writers, critics and social and political thinkers such as Brathwaite, Walcott, Lamming, Ngugi, Césaire, Fanon, etc. have situated themselves with respect to the major 'metropolitan' schools of criticism. Through close examination of practical illustrations of these theories at work (especially with reference to Post-colonial literatures), students will be encouraged to apply the paradigms discussed in their own critical writings.

Meeting times: One 1-hour lecture and one 2-hour tutorial per week

<u>Assessment:</u>	Tutorial presentations and general participation	-	10%
	Term paper	-	30%
	Final examination	-	60%

NB: Students are forewarned that a) essays (preferably typed) must be written according to the guidelines set out in the MLA Handbook: ***careless work will be penalised***; b) tutorial presentations should be about ***10 to 15 minutes in length***, one properly written (preferably typed) copy of which should be presented to your tutorial leader ***no later than 7 days after the presentation*** for deposit in the E23G folder; and c) departmental regulations now decree that ***students must pass at least one question in the exam in order to pass any course in Literatures in English***.

READING SCHEDULE

Students are cautioned that the **required readings** listed below are *absolutely essential* and *should be read in the suggested order*. **Copies of the required readings for students to photocopy in turn may be found in the E23G folder in the library**. Wherever possible, students are also encouraged to make use of the anthologies and other sources on reserve in the library listed at the back of this pamphlet. (The sources of particular essays are listed in brackets after each entry.) However, the **recommended** and **further readings** are *suggested* readings only that are designed to provide necessary background and clarification. It is entirely up to

you whether you choose to read the latter or not. You may find them especially useful, however, when it comes to composing tutorial presentations, writing term papers and/or preparing for the exam.

W E E K O N E: Introduction

- Topics:** The general aims of this course; The importance of consciously understanding what exactly it is we do as literary critics (*theorising interpretation*); Using a sample text to elicit some of the ways in which we unconsciously set about ‘criticising’ texts: the inevitability of using some sort of theoretical model even if we do not realise it. M.H. Abrams’ 4 poles of critical theory (text [objective], author [expressive], context [mimetic], reader [pragmatic]). Roman Jakobson’s model of linguistic communication (message, addresser, addressee, context, etc); Selden’s application of Jakobson’s model to literature; *Dogmatism vs. Pluralism*: R.S. Crane’s view that ‘*the answers you get depend upon the questions you ask of the text*’; the variety of critical approaches as so many ‘templates’ which, when imposed upon the raw material of the text, produce different but equally valid interpretations; Essay writing.

Required Readings:

- Cary Nelson “Problematizing Interpretation: Some Opening Questions”
 Roman Jakobson “Extract from ‘Linguistics and Poetics’”
 Raman Selden “Introduction to A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory”

WEEKS 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: AUTHOR-ORIENTED APPROACHES

W E E K T W O: Intentionality

- Topics:** Hirsch’s view that the meaning of a literary work is synonymous with the author’s intention; Four ways to verify that one has correctly identified an author’s intention: *legitimacy, correspondence, generic appropriateness, plausibility* or *coherence*; *Meaning* versus *Significance*; Similarities and Differences between the theories of Hirsch and Poulet.

Required Readings:

- Friedrich Schleiermacher

	“Foundations: General Theory and Art of Interpretation” (in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed. <u>The Hermeneutics Reader</u>)
Wilhelm Dilthey	“The Hermeneutics of the Human Sciences” (in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed. <u>The Hermeneutics Reader</u>)
E.D. Hirsch	“Objective Interpretation” (in Adams)
Edmund Husserl	“‘The Vienna Lecture’ and ‘Phenomenology’” (in Kearney and Rainwater)
Georges Poulet	“Criticism and the Experience of Interiority” (in Selden <u>ToC</u>)
J. Hillis Miller	“Introduction, Prologue, and Conclusion to his <u>Charles Dickens: the World of his Novels</u> ”

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Terry Eagleton “Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Reception Theory” (in his Literary Theory: an Introduction)
- 2) Ian Maclean “Reading and Interpretation” (in Jefferson and Robey)
- 3) Wendell V. Harris “Hermeneutics” (in his Literary Meaning)
- 4) J. Hillis Miller “The Geneva School” Critical Quarterly 8 (1966)
- 5) Sarah Lawall Critics of Consciousness: the Existential Structures of Literature
- 6) Robert Magliola Phenomenology and Literature

Further Reading:

- 1) Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed. The Hermeneutics Reader *passim*
- 2) Edmund Husserl “‘The Vienna Lecture’ and ‘Phenomenology’” (in Kearney and Rainwater)
- 3) E.D. Hirsch Validity in Interpretation
- 4) Georges Poulet “Criticism and the Experience of Interiority” (in Adams)
- 5) J. Hillis Miller Charles Dickens: the World of his Novels

Tutorial topics:

1. Discuss Hirsch’s distinction between ‘meaning’ and ‘significance.’
2. Define the four criteria identified by Hirsch by means of which the critic may verify that (s)he has correctly determined the intention of the author of a literary work.
3. To what degree does Hirsch’s emphasis on the importance of discovering the author’s intention represent a rejection of the New Critics’s notion of the ‘intentional fallacy’?
4. Compare and contrast the views of Hirsch and Poulet.

W E E K T H R E E: Eliot’s Model of Tradition

Topics: An impersonal theory of poetic creation designed to rethink Romantic expressive theories of poetic creation: using a chemical metaphor, Eliot describes the poet’s mind as a *catalyst* or *crucible* which brings feelings common to all human beings together in the form of a literary work which can then affect the reader emotionally;

Tradition: the two-way relationship between the individual writer and his predecessors (Eliot);

Practical applications: Eliot on Renaissance poetry
Showalter on the establishment of a canon of female British writers;
Woman as *reader* of male-authored fiction;
Woman as *writer* (*gynocriticism*): the importance of establishing a canon or tradition

- of female British writers;
 The 3 phases of the literary history of British female writers: *feminine, feminist and female*;
 Practical applications: rewriting the literary history of female British writers (Showalter);
 Brathwaite's notion of Tradition within the West Indian context;

Required Readings:

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| T.S. Eliot | "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (in Rylance) |
| --- | "The Metaphysical Poets" (in his <u>Selected Essays</u>) |
| Elaine Showalter | "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (in Rylance) |
| --- | "The Female Tradition" (in Warhol and Herndl) |
| 'Kamau' Brathwaite | "Roots" (in his <u>Roots</u>) |

- Recommended Readings:**
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- 1) Terry Eagleton "The Rise of English" (in his Literary Theory : an Introduction)
 - 2) David Robey "Anglo-American New Criticism" (in his Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
 - 3) Chris Baldick "The Modernist Revolution: 1918-45" (in his Literary Theory and Criticism 1890 to the Present)
 - 4) Nadi Edwards "Migrating Theories: Arnoldian Transformations in West Indian Criticism" (to be provided)
 - 5) Toril Moi "Feminist Literary Criticism" (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
 - 6) ---. "Introduction: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Feminist Readings of Woolf" (in her Sexual/Textual Politics)
 - 7) ---. "Women Writing and Writing About Women" (in her Sexual/Textual Politics)
 - 8) K.K. Ruthven Feminist Literary Studies: an Introduction
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- Further Reading:**
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- 1) Matthew Arnold "The Study of Poetry" (in his Essays in Criticism)
 - 2) T.S. Eliot Selected Essays
 - 3) Edward 'Kamau' Brathwaite Roots *passim*
 - 4) Mary Wollstonecraft A Vindication of the Rights of Women
 - 5) John Stuart Mill The Subjection of Women
 - 5) Virginia Woolf A Room of One's Own
 - 6) Ellen Moers Literary Women
 - 7) Elaine Showalter "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (in her The New Feminist Criticism)
 - 8) ---. A Literature of Their Own

Tutorial topics:

1. Summarise Eliot's theory of a) precisely how poets create; and b) the relationship between the individual writer and the Tradition of which he is part.
2. What does Showalter mean by the term 'gynocriticism' and to what critical approach does she oppose it? To what extent are her pronouncements upon the establishment of a female tradition indebted to Eliot's comments on the Great Tradition?
3. How exactly does Brathwaite adapt Eliot's pronouncements on the relationship between the writer and Tradition to different ends?

W E E K F O U R: Freudian Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Criticism

- Topics:** The *reality principle* versus the *pleasure principle*;
 The concept of 'repression';
 Freud's 2 models of the 'psyche': a) 'conscious', 'unconscious' and 'preconscious'

b) 'ego', 'id' and 'superego';
 The 'Oedipus complex';
 Dreams as the 'royal road to the unconscious';
 The 'dream-work'--'condensation' and 'displacement';
 'Instincts'; the 'drives'; 'libido'; 'neurosis'; 'symptom';
 Freud on the *gendering* of the subject: the crucial importance of the castration complex;
 Freud's view of literature: the literary work as the author's *day-dream*, that is, as his or her imaginary wish-fulfilment (literature as akin to neurosis, i.e. symptomatic of an unfulfilled wish);
 Author-oriented and mimetic uses of Freudian psychoanalysis;
 Practical application: Bonaparte's on the work of Edgar Allan Poe.

Required Readings:

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| Sigmund Freud | "The Structure of the Unconscious" (in Ellman) |
| --- | "The Theory of Dreams" (in Ellman) |
| --- | "The Oedipus Complex" (in Ellman) |
| --- | "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (in his <u>Collected Works</u> , ed. James Strachey) |
| --- | "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (in Kaplan) |
| Marie Bonaparte | "Selections from <u>The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: a Psycho-analytic Interpretation</u> " (in Muller and Richardson, eds. <u>The Purloined Poe</u>) |
| Ernest Jones | "Hamlet and Oedipus" (in <u>Hamlet Casebook</u>) |

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Sigmund Freud Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis
- 2) Juliet Mitchell Psychoanalysis and Feminism
- 3) --- "The Question of Femininity and the Theory of Psychoanalysis" (in her Women: the Longest Revolution)
- 4) Kaja Silverman "The Subject" (in her The Subject of Semiotics)
- 5) Hazel Rowley and Elizabeth Grosz "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" (in Sneja Gunew, ed. Feminist Knowledge)
- 6) Jane Gallop "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" (in her The Father's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis)
- 7) Terry Eagleton "Psychoanalysis" (in his Literary Theory: an Introduction)
- 8) Elizabeth Wright "Modern Psychoanalytic Criticism" (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
- 9) --- Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory and Practice

Further Reading:

- 1) Sigmund Freud New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis
- 2) Juliet Mitchell Psychoanalysis and Feminism
- 3) --- "Freud and Lacan: Psychoanalytic Theories of Sexual Difference" (in her Women: the Longest Revolution)

Tutorial topics:

1. How are a) the distinction between the 'reality' and the 'pleasure' principles and b) the 'repression' which occurs during the so-called castration complex important, according to Freud, to the male infant's acquisition of both a **gendered** and **sexualised** identity?

2. In what ways do dreams constitute the 'royal road to the unconscious'? (Be sure to discuss the mechanisms in the so-called 'dreamwork' which Freud terms 'condensation' and 'displacement')

3. Discuss the relationship which exists, in Freud's view, between the literary work and its writer. How useful in this respect are Freud's notions of 'condensation' and 'displacement'? How is Freud's view of literature different from Hirsch's view?

4. What are the major differences between Bonaparte's approach to the study of Poe's short stories and Jones's to the study of Hamlet?

W E E K F I V E: Bloom's Psychoanalytic Model of Tradition

Topics: The 'anxiety of influence': (male) writers as existing in a relationship akin to that of 'Oedipal' conflict with their predecessors (Bloom); Artistic creation as a *misreading* or *misinterpretation* of the work of one's predecessors (Bloom). Bloom on the *dialectical* nature of literary history; Misreading Bloom: Gilbert and Gubar, and Kolodny; The 'anxiety of authorship' experienced by female authors (Gilbert and Gubar).

Required Readings:

Harold Bloom	"The Anxiety of Influence" (in Selden ToC)
---	"The Dialectic of Poetic Tradition" (in Adams)
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar	"Infection in the Sentence: the Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" (in their <u>The Madwoman in the Attic</u>)
Adrienne Rich	"When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision" (in her <u>Lies, Secrets, and Silence</u>)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Terry Eagleton "Psychoanalysis" (in his Literary Theory: an Introduction)
- 2) Elizabeth Wright "Modern Psychoanalytic Criticism" (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
- 3) ---. Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory and Practice
- 4) Toril Moi "Feminist Literary Criticism" (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
- 5) ---. "Women Writing and Writing About Women" (in her Sexual/Textual Politics)
- 6) ---. "Theoretical Reflections" (in her Sexual/Textual Politics)
- 7) K.K. Ruthven Feminist Literary Studies: an Introduction

Further Reading:

- 1) Harold Bloom The Anxiety of Influence
- 2) ---. A Map for Misreading
- 3) Gilbert and Gubar The Madwoman in the Attic

Tutorial topics:

1. What do you understand by the terms 'anxiety of influence' and 'misreading'? To what extent is Bloom himself engaged in 'misreading' Freud?

2. To what extent is the notion of the 'anxiety of authorship' advanced by Gilbert and Gubar indebted to Bloom's notion of the 'anxiety of influence'? Would you agree that Gilbert and Gubar 'misread' Bloom in much the same way that Bloom 'misreads' Freud or Brathwaite 'misreads' Eliot?

WEEK NINE: Jungian Analytical Psychology and Archetypal Criticism I

- Topics:**
- The differences between Freud's and Jung's respective models of the psyche;
 - The *personal* versus the *collective unconscious*;
 - Some key Jungian terms: *Archetypes; Myth; Animus* and *anima*; The *shadow; Individuation*.
 - The distinction between a Freudian and a Jungian approach to literary criticism: for Jung, literature has its origin less in the personal unconscious (literature is from this point of view symptomatic of the author's *psychopathia sexualis*) than in the collective unconscious to which the author's psyche is party;
 - Writers regurgitate archetypes to be found in the collective unconscious;
 - Readers identify with these archetypes;
 - Practical application: Maude Bodkin on Coleridge;
 - The question of Post-colonial identity;
 - Fanon's fusion of the theories of Freud and Jung in an effort to understand not only the European's hatred of the non-European but also the latter's pathological dislike of him/herself;
 - The split psyche (or '*divided self*') that results from reading certain canonical texts and thereby internalising the negative stereotypes of the non-European which exist in the collective unconscious of the European.
 - Reading *Othello* for the negative stereotypes which it perpetuates;
 - Derek Walcott's divided self and the poetic quest for wholeness (individuation).
 - Wilson Harris' *cross-cultural mythopoetics*: the resemblance between the world-views of Harris and Jung;
 - Practical application: Mc Watt on Harris.

Required Readings:

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| Carl Jung | “The Collective Unconscious and Archetypes” (in Ellman) |
| ---- | “The Principal Archetypes” (in Ellman) |
| | “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” (in his <u>Collected Works</u>) |
| Maude Bodkin | “Archetypes in ‘The Ancient Mariner’” (in Lodge <u>TCLC</u>) |
| Frantz Fanon | “The Negro and Psychopathology” (in his <u>Black Skins White Masks</u>) |
| Wilson Harris | “The Limbo Gateway” (in Ashcroft et al. <u>PCR</u>) |
| Mark Mc Watt | “Form and Originality: the Amerindian Fables of Wilson Harris” (<u>JWIL</u> 1.2 [1987]: 35-49) |

- Recommended Readings:**
- 1) Frieda Fordham “Introduction” in her An Introduction to Jung’s Psychology
 - 2) Renaldo Maduro and Joseph Wheelwright “‘Archetype and Archetypal Image” (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)
 - 3) Andrew Samuels, et al. “Archetype, Myth, *Numinosum*” (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)
 - 4) Elizabeth Wright “Archetypal Criticism: Jung and the Collective Unconscious” (in her Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory and Practice)
 - 5) Evelyn Hinz and John Teunissen “Culture and Humanities: the Archetypal Approach” (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)

- 6) Mario Jacoby "The Analytical Psychology of C.G. Jung and the Problem of Literary Evaluation" (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)
 7) David Caute Fanon
 8) Michael Gilkes "Introduction" to Wilson Harris and the Caribbean Novel
 9) Mark Williams and Alan Riach "Reading Wilson Harris" (in Hena Maes-Jelinek, ed. Wilson Harris: the Uncompromising Imagination)
 10) Fred d'Aguiar "Ambiguity without a Crisis? Twin Traditions, the Individual and Community in Derek Walcott's Writings"

Further Reading:

- 1) Carl Jung Symbols of Transformation, *passim*
 2) --- Psychological Types, *passim*
 3) --- Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, *passim*
 4) --- The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, *passim*
 5) --- The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, *passim*
 6) --- Aion, *passim*
 7) ---, ed. Man and his Symbols
 8) The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature: "Psychology and Literature"
 9) Anthony Storr, ed. The Essential Jung, *passim*
 10) Maude Bodkin Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination
 11) Elizabeth Drew "T.S. Eliot: the Mythical Vision" (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)
 12) Evelyn Hinz and John Teunissen "War, Love and Industrialism: the Ares/Aphrodite/Hephaestus Complex in Lady Chatterly's Lover" (in Richard P. Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism)
 13) Frantz Fanon Black Skin White Masks
 14) Wilson Harris Tradition, the Writer and Society, *passim* (especially "Tradition and the West Indian Novel")
 15) ---, Explorations, *passim* (especially "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas")
 16) ---, The Cross-cultural Imagination
 17) Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford Enigma of Values: an Introduction to Wilson Harris
 18) ---, "Fossil and Psyche" (in Ashcroft et. al. The Post-colonial Studies Reader)
 19) Wole Soyinka Myth, Literature and the African World

Tutorial topics:

1. *What do you understand by the following key Jungian terms: the 'collective unconscious'; 'archetypes'; 'myth'; and 'individuation'?*
2. *Exactly how is Jung's approach to literary criticism both similar to and different from Freud's?*
3. *Discuss some of the ways in which Fanon has attempted to fuse elements from both Freudian Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analytical Psychology in order to analyse what he describes as the psychopathological condition of the negro.*
4. *Identify some of the negative stereotypes of the negro perpetuated by a European text like Othello.*
5. *One critic, among many others, has asserted that Derek Walcott's poetry "becomes an experience, often a painfully intense one, of resolving the personal crisis of identity by reconciling the diverse elements of his West Indian personality." To what extent is a comment like this indebted (directly or indirectly) to Fanon's discussion of the psychopathological condition of the black Antillean?*
6. *Discuss some of the analogies which may be drawn between Jung's concept of the relationship of literature to the collective unconscious and Harris's views on West Indian culture*

WEEKS 7 & 8: TEXT-ORIENTED APPROACHES**W E E K S E V E N: *New Criticism***

- Topics:**
- T.S. Eliot's influential critique of Romanticism: i) good poetry is less the expression of a poet's personal emotions (as Wordsworth and others have claimed) than an escape from (or an extinction of) the personality of the poet; and ii) good poetry does evoke emotions in the reader but this is not because a poem expresses the poet's personal emotions: rather, the poet evokes emotions in his readers by including descriptions of objects that are precisely suited to and thus evoke the feelings in question (*the objective correlative*);
 - The focus on the text-in-itself as opposed to the text's author or its socio-historical context or its effect: severing literature from biographical, historical, and ethical considerations in order to focus on form (Ransom);
 - Meaning as something objectively located in the words themselves and not something 'intended' by the writer;
 - New Criticism as an extremely useful model that permits close textual analyses of *individual poems*.
 - Logical core/structure* versus *local texture* (Ransom);
 - The *intentional* and the *affective* fallacies (Wimsatt and Beardsley);
 - The *heresy of paraphrase* (Brooks).
 - Practical application: using John Donne's "The Canonization" to a) identify 'logical core' as opposed to 'texture' and b) show that *paradox* and *tension* are intrinsic to poetry, to wit, that the chief property of poetry consists in *coherence*, that is, the harmonisation or reconciliation of potentially conflicting meanings;
 - Possible critiques of New Criticism's ahistoricism

Required Readings:

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| T.S. Eliot | "Hamlet and his Problems" (in his <u>Slected Essays</u>) |
| John Crowe Ransom | "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (in Kaplan) |
| Wimsatt and Beardsley | "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy" (in Adams) |
| Cleanth Brooks | "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (in his <u>The Well-Wrought Urn</u>) |
| --- | "The Language of Paradox" (in his <u>The Well-Wrought Urn</u>) |

Recommended Readings: 1) David Robey "Anglo-American New Criticism" (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory)

Further Reading: 1) John Crowe Ransom The New Criticism
2) Cleanth Brooks The Well-Wrought Urn

Tutorial topics:

1. Define the following key New Critical terms: "logical core/structure"; "local texture"; the "intentional" and "affective fallacies"; the "heresy of paraphrase"; "paradox"; "coherence".
2. Compare and contrast the objectives of and the techniques employed by Brooks in his interpretation of Donne's poem "The Canonization" (in his essay "The Language of Paradox") with those which a critic such as Hirsch might employ.

3. Many opponents of New Criticism have accused it of 'ahistoricism.' What does this term mean? Would you agree?

W E E K E I G H T: Archetypal Criticism II

- Topics:**
- Jung's influence on Frye: similarities and differences;
 - Archetypal criticism is an approach which does not favour the study of literary works (of any genre) in isolation from each other--rather, it underlines their necessary inter-connectedness (*intertextuality*);
 - Frye's view that literary works forms a systematic whole which can be studied scientifically;
 - An author's intention to say something is necessarily 'conditioned' by the narrative forms already in circulation (i.e. s/he undoubtedly sets out to say something but how s/he says it is always already predetermined): e.g. the tragic form 'lends itself' to a sad tale;
 - The *form* of a literary work is thus derived from the form of the literary works which precede it, not from its content;
 - The content of the literary work is best understood in relation to certain '*pre-generic plot structures*' or '*mythoi*': we understand the meaning of a particular story when we have identified the type of plot structure (tragedy, comedy, etc.) of which the story is an exemplification;
 - To set these '*mythoi*' in stark relief, we must trace literary works back to the ancient myths which share similar plot patterns: myths were used by our more primitive ancestors to make sense of their world in much the same way that we use literature to do so;
 - Myths are themselves slightly more sophisticated forms of and thus traceable to the various rituals by which our ancestors responded to the vagaries of the physical world around them (the diurnal cycle, the seasons, the fact of mortality, etc.): e.g. a tragic plot-structure is traceable to and thus ultimately related to human beings' primal encounter with the frightening darkness of night, the brutal harshness of the winter season and the inevitability of death.
 - Although Frye advocates an *intertextual* approach to understanding a given literary work, from this point of view literature is *ultimately* mimetic;
 - Within the European context, the recurrence of these narrative forms is largely derived from the corpus of Greek, Roman and Judaeo-Christian literature: the Bible has been particularly influential on European literature;
 - Where literary forms occur universally, they may speak to the existence of certain mental properties common to all humans;
 - Archetypal criticism at work: Frye on Milton's Lycidas,
 - Archetypal criticism at work: Hamner on Walcott;
 - The argument that a critical outlook such as Frye's is dangerously *universalist* in a way that conceals its *ethnocentrism* and detracts from the task of coming to grips with the specificity of non-European artforms.

Required Readings:

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| Northrop Frye

Robert Hamner | “The Archetypes of Literature” (in Kaplan)
“Literature in Context: Milton’s <u>Lycidas</u> ” (in Lodge <u>TCLC</u>)
“Mythological Aspects of Derek Walcott’s Drama” (<u>Ariel</u>) |
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Recommended Readings:

- 1) Ian Balfour “Anatomy as Criticism” (in his Northrop Frye)
 2) Hayden White “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact” (in Adams and Searle, eds. Critical Theory Since 1965): pp.396-7

Further Reading:

- 1) Northrop Frye Anatomy of Criticism
 2) Gloria Lynn “Religion and Poetry: a Study of Mervyn Morris’s On Holy Week” (JWIL)

Tutorial topics:

1. Compare and contrast a Roman or Greek epic such as The Aeneid or The Odyssey with the African epic Sundiata in order to show both a) the ways in which they share features that might be described as epic and b) the ways in which they are different from each other (i.e. what is specifically African about Sundiata and vice versa?).
2. Do you agree that ‘universalism’ and ‘ethnocentrism’ are dangers inherent in a critical approach such as Frye’s?
3. Show how Hamner’s essay is indebted to Frye’s model of literature.

WEEKS 9 & 10: MIMETIC APPROACHES

W E E K N I N E: Marxism

- Topics:**
- Hegel’s *idealism* (‘consciousness precedes social being’): *Spirit* and the quest for self-perfection;
 - Hegel’s *dialectical* view of History: the *Zeitgeist, thesis, antithesis, synthesis*;
 - Marx’s *materialist* inversion of Hegel’s idealism: ‘social being precedes consciousness’--the key to understanding human history is the fact that at every stage of human history, human beings have had to produce the means of their survival and this has shaped how human beings think at a particular place and time;
 - The ‘*Base/Superstructure*’ model of society: *economic infrastructure* (the ‘means’ or ‘*forces of production*’ and the ‘*social relations of production*’) and *superstructure* (the various social institutions and the pertinent *ideologies*);
 - Some key Marxist terms: *class, class conflict, determination, the dominant ideology, false consciousness, and revolution*.
 - The *dialectical succession* of the *economic modes of production* peculiar to each *stage of history*: the ‘*contradiction*’ between the extant *forces* and the emerging *social relations of production* is the dynamo of historical change;
 - Rethinking the static nature of the Base/superstructure model: the Hegelian Marxist

concept of the *social totality* in which everything *expresses/is mediated by* the contradiction between the extant means of production and the emerging social relations of production to be found at a particular stage of history;

A Marxist approach to understanding the oppression of women: the social relations of production and patriarchy.

Anti-negro racism as a function of European imperialism, colonialism and slavery; slavery was ‘necessitated’ by economic circumstances in the colonies and racism was an ideology used to justify brutal exploitation; racism, therefore, is ultimately determined by economic factors;

Fanon’s rewriting of the traditional Base/superstructure model to take into account the factor of race within the colonial context.

Required Readings:

G.W.F. Hegel	“History as the Self-Realization of Spirit” (in Ellman)
Karl Marx	“From <u>Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</u> ” (in Adams)
---	“The German Ideology” (in David McLellan, ed. <u>Karl Marx: Selected Writings</u>)
Friedrich Engels	“The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State” (in Miriam Schneir, ed. <u>Feminism: the Essential Historical Writings</u>)
Oliver Cromwell Cox	“Race Relations--its Meaning, Beginning and Progress” (in his <u>Caste, Class, and Race</u>)
Frantz Fanon	“Extract from ‘Concerning Violence’” (in his <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Robert Tucker “Introduction” to The Marx/Engels Reader
- 2) John Plamenatz The Marxist Philosophy of Man
- 3) Eric Williams “The Origin of Negro Slavery” (in his Capitalism and Slavery)
- 4) Samuel Yeboah “Ideology of Racism--the Origin of Racial Prejudice” (in his The Ideology of Racism)
- 5) Gail Omvedt “Patriarchy: the Analysis of Women’s Oppression” (The Insurgent Sociologist 13 1986])
- 6) Josephine Donovan “Feminism and Marxism” (in her Feminist Theory)
- 7) Louise C. Johnson “Socialist Feminisms” (in Sneja Gunew, ed. Feminist Knowledge)
- 8) Lydia Sargent, ed. The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism
- 9) Heid Hartmann “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union” (in Lydia Sargent, ed. The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism)
- 10) McDonough, Roisin, and Rachel Harrison “Patriarchy and Relations of Production” (in Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe, eds. Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production)

Further Reading:

- 1) Karl Marx “The German Ideology”(in Tucker, ed. The Marx/Engels Reader)
- 2) ---. “The Communist Manifesto” (in Tucker, ed. The Marx/Engels Reader)
- 3) ---. Capital (in Tucker, ed. The Marx/Engels Reader)
- 4) Friedrich Engels “Letters on Historical Materialism” (in Tucker, ed. The Marx/Engels Reader)
- 5) ---. The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State
- 6) Oliver Cromwell Cox Caste, Class, and Race: a Study in Social Dynamics
- 7) C.L.R. James “From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro” (in The C.L.R. James Reader)
- 8) George Lamming Conversations: Essays, Addresses and Interviews passim (especially ‘Politics and Culture’)
- 9) Aimé Césaire “Discourse on Colonialism” (in Chrisman And Williams)

Tutorial topics:

1. Define the following key Marxist terms: ‘idealism’; ‘materialism’; the ‘Base/superstructure

model'; 'economic mode of production'; the 'dialectical development of history'; the 'forces of production'; the 'social relations of production'; 'ideology'; the 'dominant ideology'.

2. Compare and contrast the so-called Base/superstructure model of society with that model termed the 'expressive totality' favoured by Hegelian Marxists. Does one have any advantage over the other?

3. How do Marxists seek to explain the oppression of women?

4. What do scholars such as Oliver Cromwell Cox and Eric Williams mean when they contend that "to understand anti-negro racism, we must place it within its socio-historical context: racism has an economic origin,, to wit, it is a function of European imperialism and colonialism"

5. How does Fanon rewrite Marx's Base/superstructure model to fit the colonial context?

W E E K T E N: Marxist(-inspired) literary criticism

- Topics:**
- Applying Marx's Base/superstructure model of society to the study of literature: viewing the literary work as part of the ideological superstructure and thus as a *reflection of or determined by* the economic Base;
 - Vulgar Marxism*
The 'sin' of *reductionism*: reducing everything in a text to economics, reading characters in a one-sided way as reflections of particular classes ('here's your wicked Capitalist, here is your good revolutionary, etc.'), and dismissing authors as unworthy of study on the basis of their class origin;
 - Hegelian Marxism*: the example of Georg Lukács;
Lukács' notions of *Realism* (literary works *reflect* not the Base but, rather, *express* or are *mediated by* the process of change which is history) and *typicality* (the presentation of characters ought to capture the essence of the '*contradiction*' peculiar to a particular stage of history);
 - Lukács's preference for the novel form over the play: the former's greater capacity for fine detail;
 - The influence of the author's class consciousness (ideology) upon his/her capacity to faithfully reproduce the '*real conditions of existence*': the sole criterion of literary greatness is historical accurateness;
 - Lukács's canon: his tradition of the greatest novelists includes, paradoxically, Bourgeois writers (Tolstoy, Scott, Balzac, etc.) who in his view were able to transcend the narrow outlook of their class and write historical(ly accurate) novels and excludes the Proletarian writers so admired in Stalinist Russia;
 - Practical application: Lukács on the historical accuracy of Shakespeare's plays.
 - The inevitable impact of the legacy of racial stratification and discrimination upon the consciousness and, thus, the writings of the Post-colonial writer: those who cannot see through it possess 'false consciousness' and exist in a state of

mystification (they are ‘Uncle Toms’) while those who understand the economic roots of racism possess revolutionary insight and the desire to awaken the consciousness of their fellows;

Practical application: reading a novel by George Lamming from the point of view afforded by a Marxist model of racism.

Practical application: a Marxist Feminist reading by Juliet Mitchell of Moll Flanders

Required Readings:

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| Ian Watt | “Realism and the Novel Form” (in Furst) |
| Terry Eagleton | “Literature and History” (in Kaplan) |
| Georg Lukács | “The Historical Drama of Shakespeare” (in his <u>The Historical Novel</u>) |
| Juliet Mitchell | “ <u>Moll Flanders</u> : the Rise of Capitalist Woman” (in her <u>Women: the Longest Revolution</u>) |
| Ngugi Wa Thiong’o | “Literature and Society” (in G.D. Killam, ed. <u>Critical Perspectives on N’gugi Wa Thiong’o</u>) |
| ---- | “George Lamming’s <u>In the Castle of my Skin</u> ” (in his <u>Homecoming</u>) |

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Terry Eagleton Marxism and Literary Criticism
- 2) David Forgacs “Marxist Literary Theories” (in Ann Jefferson and David Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
- 3) Tony Bennett Formalism and Marxism
- 4) Frederic Jameson Marxism and Form

Further Reading:

- 1) Georg Lukács “Historical truth in Fiction” (in Ellman, ed. The Modern Tradition)
- 2) ----. The Historical Novel
- 3) Ngugi Wa Thiong’o Homecoming *passim*
- 4) Juliet Mitchell Women: the Longest Revolution *passim*
- 5) Susan Fraiman “Jane Eyre’s Fall from Grace” (in Norton Critical Edition of Jane Eyre)

Tutorial topics:

1. Discuss a) where exactly Marxists locate the literary text within their Base/superstructure model of society and b) the nature of its relationship with the other elements thereof.

2. What do you understand by a so-called Vulgar Marxist approach to literary criticism? Discuss some of its limitations.

3. What exactly does Lukács mean when he speaks of a ‘historical novel’ or a ‘historical play’? What do you understand by his notion of ‘reflection’? Who, in his view, are the best literary writers and why? Why does he particularly admire Shakespeare as a playwright?

4. How is Watt’s understanding of Realism different from a Marxist view thereof?

5. Guide your colleagues through Ngugi’s interpretation of In the Castle of My Skin, showing how Ngugi’s interpretation is shaped at every step by a Marxist model of colonialism and racism.

WEEK ELEVEN: the ‘Pragmatic’ Orientation (Committed Literature)

- Topics:** Nietzsche and the ‘Death of God’: *nihilism*;
 Existentialism: *existence* precedes *essence*;
 Phenomenology: the subjective nature of all interpretation (textual and non-textual);
 The ethical ‘*responsibility*’ of the writer towards his audience: his/her duty to do all
 in his or her power to materially better the world by raising the consciousness
 of his reader, given that there is no divine plan to the universe;
 De Beauvoir’s existentialist of the female’s predicament: she is man’s *other*.
 Fanon’s existentialist *socio-diagnosis* of the predicament of the black West Indian
 in particular and the negro in general: the negro is caught up in a Manichaean
 dialectic whereby he is defined by his relationship with the white man (the
 negro is the white man’s *other*);
 Fanon’s *manichaean* view of colonial society and, thus, culture in the service of the
 anti-colonial struggle;
 Committed literature within the Post-colonial context: the responsibility of the Post-
 colonial writer towards his/her audience: Lamming & Césaire.

Required Readings:

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| Jean-Paul Sartre | Brief selections from <u>Existentialism and Humanism</u> (“Existence Precedes Essence,” “Choice in a World without God,” “Authenticity,” “Commitment,” “The Common Condition of Man”) in Ellman |
| --- | “Writing, Reading, and the Public” (in Dennis Walder, ed. <u>Literature and the Modern World</u>) |
| --- | “Black Orpheus” (in his <u>What is Literature? And Other Essays</u>) |
| Simone de Beauvoir | “Introduction to <u>The Second Sex</u> ” (in Marks and deCourtivron) |
| Jehlen, Myra | “Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism” (in Warhol and Herndl) |
| Frantz Fanon | “The Fact of Blackness” (in Gates, ed. <u>RWD</u>) |
| --- | “On National Culture” (in Chrisman and Williams) |

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Robert Solomon “Introduction” to his Phenomenology and Existentialism
- 2) L. Nathan Oaklander Existentialism: an Introduction (especially Ch. 5 “Jean-Paul Sartre”)
- 3) Walter Kauffman “Introduction” to his Existentialism: Dostoevsky to Sartre
- 4) Simone de Beauvoir ‘From an Interview’ (in Marks and DeCourtivron, eds. New French Feminisms)
- 5) Toril Moi ‘From Simone de Beauvoir to Jacques Lacan’ (in her Sexual/Textual Politics)
- 6) David Caute Fanon

Further Reading:

- 1) Friedrich Nietzsche Selections in L. Nathan Oaklander Existentialism: an Introduction Ch. 3 “Friedrich Nietzsche”
- 2) Jean-Paul Sartre Being and Nothingness (Cf. Selections in L. Nathan Oaklander Existentialism: an Introduction Ch. 5)
- 3) ---. Existentialism and Humanism
- 4) Albert Camus The Myth of Sisyphus (Cf. Selections in L. Nathan Oaklander Existentialism: an Introduction Ch.6)
- 5) Simone de Beauvoir The Ethics of Ambiguity (Cf. Selections in L. Nathan Oaklander Existentialism: an Introduction Ch.6)
- 6) ---. The Second Sex
- 7) Jean-Paul Sartre “Preface to Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth”
- 8) Wole Soyinka “The Writer in a Modern African State” (in Per Wästberg, ed. The Writer in Modern Africa)
- 9) George Lamming The Pleasures of Exile *passim*
- 10) ---. “The Negro Writer and his World”
- 11) Chinua Achebe “The Novelist as Teacher” (in his Hopes and Impediments)
- 12) Aimé Césaire “The Responsibility of the Artist” (in Wilfred Cartey, ed. The Africa Reader)

Tutorial topics:

1. What does Sartre mean when he writes that ‘existence precedes essence’? Outline some of the implications of this viewpoint. What is his view of the relationship between the individual and other people?
2. What is Sartre’s understanding of the ‘responsibility’ of the writer and what does he mean by the term ‘committed literature’?
3. What exactly does deBeauvoir mean when she says that woman has historically been constructed as ‘man’s other’? What are the implications of this statement from the point of view of women?
4. Discuss the implications for a Feminist literary practice/criticism of Jehlen’s statement that “Feminist thinking is really rethinking, an examination of the way certain assumptions about women and the female character enter into the fundamental assumptions that organize all our thinking.”
5. What exactly does Fanon mean when he says that the negro is the ‘white man’s other’? Would it be accurate, in the light of this statement, to characterise his view of black or anti-colonial culture as a Manichaean one? (Be sure to discuss the several ‘phases’ thereof which he mentions in this regard.)

WEEK TWELVE: Reception Theory / Reader-response Criticism

- Topics:**
- Objectivity versus subjectivity in literary criticism: the indispensable role of the reader;
 - The historicity of understanding (Gadamer);
 - Rethinking literary tradition from the point of view of the reader rather than the author (Jauss);
 - Writing back to the New Critics’s Affective Fallacy;
 - Traditional notions of the reader as a *passive consumer* of the work’s pre-given meaning versus contemporary notions of the reader as the *productive activator* of the text;
 - There is no text per se apart from the reader’s involvement (Fish);
 - The existence of *interpretative communities* which determine how different groups of readers interpret the same text differently.
 - Gender, race and interpretation.

Required Readings:

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| Hans Robert Jauss | “ <i>Excerpt from ‘Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’</i> ” (in Selden ToC) |
| Stanley Fish | “What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable” (in his <u>Is There a Text in this Class?</u>)” |

Elizabeth Meese

“Sexual Politics and Critical Judgement” (in Newton TCLT)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Ian Maclean “Reading and Interpretation” (in Jefferson and Robey, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction)
- 2) Terry Eagleton “Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Reception Theory” (in his Literary Theory: an Introduction)
- 3) Elizabeth Freund The Return of the Reader: Reader-response Criticism
- 4) Robert Holub Reception Theory: a Critical Introduction
- 5) Jane Tompkins “Introduction” to her Reader-Response Criticism: from Formalism to Post-Structuralism

Further Reading:

- 1) Hans-Georg Gadamer Truth and Method
- 2) ---. “The Historicity of Understanding” (in K. Mueller-Vollmer, ed. The Hermeneutics Reader)
- 3) Stanley Fish Surprised by Sin
- 4) ---. Self-Consuming Artifacts
- 5) ---. Is There a Text in this Class? passim
- 6) Wolfgang Iser “The Reading Process” (in Tompkins, ed. Reader-Response Criticism: from Formalism to Post-Structuralism)
- 7) ---. The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response
- 8) David Bleich Subjective Criticism
- 9) Norman Holland The Dynamics of Literary Response
- 10) Jonathan Culler “Reading as Woman” (in Warhol and Herndl, eds. Feminisms)

Tutorial topics:

1. *What are some of the advantages of rethinking literary history from the point of view of the reception (the reader) rather than the production (the author) of literary works?*

2. *Do you agree with Fish’s view that interpretation never involves the actual recovery of an author’s intention and that it is the reader, rather, who determines what is to be taken as the author’s intention? Is interpretation, therefore, a largely subjective, rather than objective, exercise?*

3. *Where does Fish stand with regard to the notions of the ‘Intentional’ and ‘Affective’ fallacies so cherished by the New Critics?*

4. *What does Fish mean by the terms ‘interpretive community’ and ‘canons of acceptability’?*

5. *To what extent do the factors of gender and race impinge upon any critical practice?*

Term Paper

Deadline: 5 pm, 27 February 1998

Suggested Length: 2,500 - 3,000 words.

Answer **One** (1) of the following questions:

Either

1. Choose and identify a short poem, determine the author's intention and apply the four criteria suggested by E. D. Hirsch in order to verify your interpretation. (Your answer should demonstrate an understanding of Hirsch's distinction between 'meaning' and 'significance.')

Or

2. "If Eliot's view of the relationship between the individual writer and the literary tradition of which *he* is a part has been an extremely influential one among critics from all walks of life, it is also true that the latter have in turn redefined in significant ways Eliot's rather narrow-minded model of literary history and the canon." Discuss.

Or

3. Compare and contrast a Freudian and a Jungian view of the relationship between the author and his/her literary work.

Some Useful Surveys of / Introductions to Philosophy, Theory and Criticism on Reserve in the Library

Ashcroft, Bill, et. al.	<u>The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures</u>
Barry, Peter	<u>Beginning Theory: an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory</u>
Belsey, Catherine	<u>Critical Practice</u>
Eagleton, Terry	<u>Literary Theory: an Introduction</u>
Grayling, A.C., ed.	<u>Philosophy</u>
Griffiths, Gareth	“The Post-colonial Project: Critical Approaches and Problems” (in King, ed. <u>New National and Post-colonial Literatures</u>)
Harrison-Barbet, Anthony	<u>Mastering Philosophy</u>
Jefferson, Ann & D. Robey, eds.	<u>Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction</u>
King, Bruce, ed.	<u>New National and Post-colonial Literatures: an Introduction</u>
Lynn, Steven	<u>Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory</u>
Moi, Toril	<u>Sexual/Textual Politics</u>
Moore-Gilbert, Bart	<u>Post-colonial Theory</u>
Selden, Raman	<u>A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory Practising Theory and Reading Literature: an Introduction</u>
Slemon, Stephen	“Post-colonial Critical Theories” (in King, ed. <u>New National and Post-colonial Literatures</u>)

Anthologies of Philosophy, Literary Theory and Criticism on Reserve in the Library

Adams, Hazard, ed.	<u>Critical Theory Since Plato</u>
Adams, Hazard and L. Searle, eds.	<u>Critical Theory Since 1965</u>
Appleby, Joyce, et al., eds.	<u>Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective</u>
Ashcroft, Bill, et al., eds.	<u>The Post-colonial Studies Reader</u>
Belsey, Catherine and J. Moore, eds.	<u>The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism</u>
Brooker, Peter, ed.	<u>Modernism/Postmodernism</u>
Currie, Mark, ed.	<u>Metafiction</u>
Ellman, Richard, and C. Feidelson, eds.	<u>The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature</u>
Furst, Lillian, ed.	<u>Realism</u>
Gates, Henry Louis, ed.	<u>Black Literature and Literary Theory</u>
---	<u>‘Race,’ Writing and Difference</u>

- Gould, James, ed. Classical Philosophical Questions
 Kaplan, Charles, ed. Criticism: the Major Statements
 Kearney, Richard, and Mara Rainwater, eds. The Continental Philosophy Reader
 Lodge, David, ed. Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: a Reader
 ---. Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader
 Marks, Elaine and I. Courtivron, eds. New French Feminisms
 Mast, Gerald, et al., eds. Film Theory and Criticism
 Moore-Gilbert, Bart, Gareth Stanton, and Willy Maley, eds
Post-colonial Criticism
 Newton, K.M., ed. Twentieth Century Literary Theory: a Reader
 ---. Theory into Practice: a Reader in Modern Literary Criticism
 Nicholson, Linda, ed. Feminism/Postmodernism
 Oaklander, L. Nathan, ed. Existentialist Philosophy
 Rice, Philip and P. Waugh, eds. Modern Literary Theory: a Reader
 Rylance, Rick, ed. Debating Texts: Readings in Twentieth Century Literary Theory and Method
 Selden, Raman, ed. The Theory of Criticism: a Reader
 Showalter, Elaine, ed. The New Feminist Criticism
 Singer, Marcus et al., eds. Introductory Readings in Philosophy
 Solomon, Robert, ed. Morality and the Good Life: an Introduction to Ethics Through Classical Sources
 ---. Phenomenology and Existentialism
 Taylor, Mark C., ed. Deconstruction in Context
 Tucker, Robert C. The Marx/Engels Reader
 Veeser, H. Aram The New Historicism
 Walder, Dennis, ed. Literature in the Modern World
 Warhol, Robin and D. P. Herndl, eds. Feminisms: an Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism
 Williams, Patrick and L. Chrisman, eds. Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: a Reader