

**E23G TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERARY THEORY:
WESTERN AND ANTI-COLONIAL THEORIES**

Lecturer: Dr. Richard Clarke
Meeting Times: Two 1-hour lectures and one 1-hour tutorial per week

COURSE DESCRIPTION

To study Literary/Critical Theory is to seek to understand exactly how readers (critics) interpret (criticise) texts, especially literary ones. Most scholars today would agree that there is no single meaning waiting to be simply *found* in any text. Meaning is, rather, *produced*, that is, it is a function of the different interpretative strategies which various readers bring to bear upon a text. A cardinal rule of modern literary criticism may be summed up as follows: *the 'answers' you get from a text depend entirely upon the kind of 'questions' you put to it*. The upshot of all this is that the same text legitimately means different things to different people. As a result, for example, a Marxist critic would necessarily come up with a different interpretation from that of a Psychoanalytic critic of the same text, each of which is equally valid (providing that there is textual evidence to support the interpretation in question).

This course seeks to introduce students to five of the most important schools of literary criticism in the Twentieth Century that have had a particularly significant impact upon the study of literature in the Caribbean: Psychoanalytic and Jungian Archetypal criticism; Marxist criticism; Existentialist criticism.; feminist criticism; and Anti-colonial criticism.

In each module, we will explore the philosophical framework informing the school in question as well as its central tenets and main interpretative strategies. We will look in particular for each school's definition of the nature of the relationship between text and reality (the question of realism); the nature of the relationship between the text and its author (the question of authorship); and the nature of the relationship linking literary texts to each other (the question of literary history or tradition). To this end, we will compare seminal European and American essays with representative Feminist and Anti-colonial articles on the same topics (e.g. Jung's "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Literature" with Annis Pratt's "Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction" and with Harris's "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas"; or Sartre's Existentialism and Humanism with appropriate excerpts from De Beauvoir's The Other Sex and Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth).

Through close examination of practical illustrations of these theories (especially with reference to Post-colonial literatures), students will be encouraged to apply the paradigms discussed in their own critical writings.

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|-----|
| Assessment: | Tutorial presentations and general participation | - | 10% |
| | Term paper | - | 30% |
| | Final examination | - | 60% |

SOME POINTS TO NOTE:

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 (some on reserve) in the library listed at the back of this pamphlet. (The sources of particular essays are listed in brackets after each entry.)

The practical illustrations (labelled **Praxis** in your schedule) are *suggested* readings only that are designed to demonstrate the theories discussed in action. It would be in your interest to read these carefully too, however. (Some, but not all of these, may be found in the E23G folder.)

You will also find in the E23G folder a list of **Recommended Readings** and **Further Readings** for each of the four schools of criticism discussed. These 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.

Essays (*preferably typed*) must be written according to the guidelines set out in the MLA Handbook or the Faculty of Humanities Essay Writing Guidelines: *carelessly documented or presented work will be penalised.*

Depending upon the number of students enrolled, you may be required to do more than *one* **Tutorial presentation**. Each should be about *ten* minutes in length at most.

Departmental regulations now decree that students, notwithstanding their final grade, must pass at least *one* question in the exam in order to pass any course in Literatures in English.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Discussion Topics: General discussion of the aims of the course, requirements, etc.
Some preliminary questions to consider carefully:

- a) **Subjectivity/Mind/Consciousness:** What is the nature of human identity (the 'self')? Are we merely physical bodies and nothing more? What, then, is responsible for the fact that we are conscious, sentient beings? In other words, how do we explain the fact of consciousness? Do we also have a 'soul' imprisoned, as Plato averred, in the dungeon of the flesh? In other words, does our true self (the 'essence' of who we really are) belong to another world that transcends the physical (what Plato termed the world of Ideal Forms/Essences)? Is our

- identity, thus, ‘pre-given’ (i.e something that precedes our birth) as a result of which we may be said to have an ‘essential self’? If there is no soul, is consciousness synonymous with the mind? What is the nature of the mind? What is the nature of the relationship linking mind and body? Does it precede and is it, thus, distinct from the body (the ‘Cartesian subject’)? On the other hand, is the mind derived in some way from and, thus, dependent upon the body? I.e. is the mind synonymous with the brain and, as such, a product of our biological existence? Is our consciousness ‘socially constructed’ or a product of our social existence? Are we entirely conscious or is there an unconscious dimension to our mind? How do human beings think? Where do our ideas come from? Do they originate with a pre-given self or are they derived from our intercourse with the external physical and social world (so-called ‘reality’)?
2. **Metaphysics/Epistemology:** What is the nature of ‘reality’? What is the nature of the relationship between the ideas which we have in our minds about external reality and the real world ‘out there’? How can we be sure that our ideas accurately correspond to what really exists external to our consciousness? What is the nature of knowledge? How do we ‘know’ anything? Is certitude possible? Is there such a thing as ‘absolute’ truth? Is truth, by contrast, ‘relative’? What is the principal medium of thought and, thus, of our knowledge of ‘reality’ (i.e. that which links our ideas of ‘reality’ with ‘reality’ itself)?
 3. **Language/Signification:** How do words (‘signs’) mean/signify? By ‘mirroring’ or ‘reflecting’ reality? By expressing the ideas of the speaker/writer? By both?
 4. **Literary Texts:** How do literary texts mean/signify? By mirroring or reflecting reality? By expressing the ideas of the author? What is the nature of the relationship between a literary text and the socio-historical context in which it is produced? What is the nature of the relationship between a literary text and the ‘reality’ which it purports to represent? What is the nature of the relationship between a literary text and its author? Do literary writers ‘express themselves’ or ‘pour their hearts into’ their texts?
 5. **Interpretation:** Do we read a literary text in order to measure how accurate its representation of reality is? Do we read a literary text for insights into the life and mind of its writer? Does the reader play a passive or active role? Is meaning simply ‘found’ in a literary text or is it ‘constructed’ or ‘produced’ by the reader?
 6. **Modern:** What is ‘Modernity’? ‘Modernism’?
 7. **Feminism:** What is the difference between sex and gender? What is misogyny?
 8. **Anti-colonialism:** What is a ‘Colony’? ‘Colonisation’? ‘Colonialism’? ‘Imperialism’? ‘Decolonisation’? ‘Independence’? ‘Neocolonialism’? ‘Anti-colonialism’? ‘Post-Colonialism’? What is a race? What is racism?

Useful Preliminary Readings:

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--|
| <u>Philosophy:</u> | Nigel Warburton | <u>Philosophy: the Basics:</u> “Mind” “The External World” |
| | Nigel Warburton | <u>Philosophy: the Classics:</u> “Plato <u>The Republic</u> ” “René Descartes <u>Meditations</u> ” “John Locke <u>An Essay Concerning Human</u> |

Understanding
 “Immanuel Kant Critique of Pure Reason”

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <u>Feminism:</u> | Rosemary Tong | <u>Feminist Thought: a Comprehensive Introduction:</u> “The Varieties of Feminist Thinking” |
| | Humm, Maggie | <u>Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics:</u> “Feminist Criticism” |
| <u>(Anti-)colonialism:</u> | Jurgen Osterhammel | <u>Colonialism: a Theoretical Overview:</u> “‘Colonization’ and ‘Colonies’” “‘Colonialism’ and ‘Colonial Empires’” “Colonial Epochs” |
| | Bill Ashcroft, et al. | <u>The Empire Writes Back:</u> “Introduction” |

MODULE ONE: PSYCHOANALYTIC AND ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Week 2: | Freudian Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analytical Psychology | |
| <i>Required Readings:</i> | Sigmund Freud | “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” (in his <u>Collected Works</u> , ed. James Strachey) |
| | Carl Jung | “The Collective Unconscious and Archetypes” (in Ellman) |

Tutorial Topics:

1. Summarise Freud’s theory of the psychic maturation of the masculine subject, showing how, in his view, the anatomically male infant acquires both a **gender** and a **heterosexual orientation**.
2. Define the following key Freudian terms: libido; the Oedipus Complex; the Castration Complex; the Pleasure Principle; the Reality Principle; the conscious; the pre-conscious; the unconscious; repression; ego; superego; id; the split psyche.
3. In what ways may dreams be said to constitute the ‘royal road to the unconscious’?
4. Define the following key Freudian terms: the dreamwork; the manifest level; the latent level; condensation; displacement.
5. Compare Freud’s theory of masculinity with the theory of femininity detailed in “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex.”
6. Compare Jung’s view of the psyche with Freud’s.
7. Compare Jung’s view of dreams with Freud’s.

8. Define the following key Jungian terms: the collective unconscious; archetypes; animus; anima; the shadow; myth; individuation.

Week 3: Psychoanalytic and Archetypal Theory and Criticism

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---|
| Required Readings: | Sigmund Freud | “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming” (in Kaplan) |
| | — | “On Oedipus and Hamlet” (in Dukore) |
| | Carl Jung | “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” (in Dukore) |
| | Harold Bloom | Selections from “The Dialectics of Poetic Tradition” (in Adams), “The Anxiety of Influence” (in Selden) and “Poetry, Revisionism, Repression” (in Newton) |

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| Praxis: | 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>) |
| | Evelyn Hinz and John Teunissen | “War, Love, and Industrialism: the Ares/Aphrodite/Hephaestus Complex in <u>Lady Chatterley’s Lover</u> ” (in Sugg) |

Tutorial Topics

1.a) What analogies does Freud perceive in “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming” between a literary work and a dream? (How useful in this respect are Freud’s notions of ‘condensation’ and ‘displacement’?)

b) What is the nature of the relationship which exists between a work and its writer?

c) How is Freud’s view of authorship different from the conventional view?

2. In what ways are Freud’s emphases in “On Oedipus and Hamlet” different from those in “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming”?

3. What are the principal features which Archetypal critics look for in a literary text?

4. In what sense, according to Jung, does literature perform a therapeutic function?

5. Compare Jung’s view of literature to Freud’s.

6. To what extent is Bloom’s model of literary history indebted to Freud’s notion of the Oedipus Complex?

7. Define the following terms as used by Harold Bloom: the anxiety of influence; belatedness; misreading; revisionism.

MODULE TWO: MARXIST CRITICISM

Week 4: Marxism

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|--|
| Required Readings: | G.W. Hegel | “History as the Self-Realization of Spirit” (in Ellman) |
| | Karl Marx | “Preface to <u>A Contribution to the Critique of Political</u> |

- Economy” (in Adam)
 “The German Ideology” (in David McLellan, ed. Karl Marx: Selected Writings)

Tutorial Topics:

1. *What does Marx mean when he writes: “It is not the consciousness of men which determines their social being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness”? To whose view is this diametrically opposed?*

2. *What do Marxists mean when they argue that any society should be conceptualised in terms of the Base/superstructure model? What is the nature of the relationship linking Base to Superstructure?*

3. *What does Marx mean when he argues that history proceeds dialectically? From whom does he borrow this concept? How is his version different, however?*

4. *Briefly summarise Marx’s dialectical account of European history.*

5. *Define the following key Marxist terms: idealism; materialism; the Economic Mode of Production; determination; reflection; Means of Production; Forces of Production; Social Relations of Production; the ruling class; the bourgeoisie; the proletariat; ideology; the dominant ideology; class-consciousness; false consciousness; Capitalism; Communism.*

Week 5: Marxist Theory and Criticism

Required Readings: Terry Eagleton “Literature and History” (in Kaplan)
 Christopher Cauldwell “Poetry’s Dream-Work” (in Melvin Rader, ed. A Modern Book of Aesthetics)
 Georg Lukács “Art and Objective Truth” (in Adams and Searle)

Praxis: Christopher Cauldwell “English Poets I, II, and III” (in his Illusion and Reality)
 Georg Lukács “The Historical Drama of Shakespeare” (in his The Historical Novel)

Tutorial Topics:

1. *What is the link perceived by Marxists between literature, the superstructure and the mode of production of a given socio-historical context?*

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

3. *What are the basic differences between an expressive Marxist approach to criticism and a mimetic Marxist approach?*

4. *Outline Cauldwell’s approach to the criticism of a literary work.*

5. *a) What exactly, according to Lukács, should a truly ‘historical’ novel or play seek to ‘reflect’?*

- b) What does Lukács mean when he speaks of 'typical' characters?
 c) What, in Lukács's view, is the best literary genre? What is the best form taken by that genre? Why does he particularly admire Shakespeare as a playwright?
 d) How does Lukács account for the degree to which an author's work is an accurate reflection of a given place and time?

6. Compare Cauldwell's approach to literary criticism with Lukács's.

MODULE THREE: EXISTENTIALIST CRITICISM

Week 6: Existentialist Phenomenology

Required Readings: G.W. Hegel "Lordship and Bondage" (in his The Phenomenology of Spirit)
 Jean-Paul Sartre Existentialism and Humanism

Tutorial Topics:

1. What does Sartre mean when he writes that 'existence precedes essence'? What are the implications of this point of view for:
 a) the nature of human identity?
 b) morality?
2. Does Sartre believe in the possibility of objective knowledge? If not, why?
3. What does Sartre mean when he speaks of 'intersubjectivity'?

Week 7: Existentialist Theory and Criticism

Required Readings: Jean-Paul Sartre "Why Write?" (in Adams)
 Georges Poulet "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority" (in Selden)
 Wolfgang Iser "Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response" (in Newton)
 Hans Robert Jauss "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (in Selden)

Tutorial Topics:

1. Why does Sartre not believe in the possibility of 'realism'?
2. Would you agree with the view that "what the critic must look for, according to Sartre, is not the accuracy of a representation (mimesis) but the author's intention"?
3. What, according to Poulet, ought a critic to look for in a literary work? What role in this quest does Poulet ascribe to the reader?

4. Do readers, according to Sartre, bring their own intentions to literary works?

5. In recent years, both the Reception (Iser) and the Reader-Response (Fish) schools of criticism have argued that the reader is less a 'passive consumer' than an 'active producer of meaning.' What do you understand by this distinction? Do you agree with it? To what degree is such a view indebted to Sartre's argument in "Why Write?"?

6. Would you agree that it is Sartre's point that the 'literary work' is the 'synthesis of author and reader'? Would you agree that such a view derives from his own comments on 'intersubjectivity'?

7. Does Sartre ignore the impact that literary works have on readers? What is the role played by his concept of 'freedom' in this regard?

8. In what ways is the 'effective' model of literary history proposed by Jauss radically different from traditional models thereof? To what degree is it indebted to Sartre's emphasis on the impact/effect of literary works?

MODULE FOUR: ANTI-COLONIAL THEORY

Week 8: Dialectical Models of Empire and the Social Construction of Race

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|
| Required Readings: | Oliver Cromwell Cox | "Race Relations--its Meaning, Beginning and Progress" (in his <u>Caste, Class, and Race</u>) |
| | Frantz Fanon | "Concerning Violence" (in his <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>) |
| | —. | "The Negro and Psychopathology" (in his <u>Black Skins White Masks</u>) |
| | W.E.B. Du Bois | "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (in the <u>W.E.B. DuBois Reader</u>) |

Tutorial Topics:

1. Would you agree with the view that for Oliver Cromwell Cox white (or anti-negro) racism is merely an ideology? To what degree is his theory indebted to the Marxist Base/superstructure model of society and dialectical model of history?

2. How does Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth rewrite Cox's Base/superstructure model in order to prioritise race over class as the crucial determinant in colonial societies?

3. Why does Fanon describe colonial society in The Wretched of the Earth as a "Manichaeian" world? How does he use this notion of Manicheism to explain white racism?

4. A) What does Fanon mean when he speaks in Black Skin White Masks of the negro's 'psychopathological' condition?

B) What, in Fanon's view, is the cause of this condition?

C) What is the role played by literature and other similar cultural practices in perpetuating this condition?

D) Discuss the degree to which Fanon is indebted to both Freudian Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analytical Psychology in his quest to analyse the impact of racism on the psyche of the negro.

5.A) What do you understand by DuBois' notion of the 'double consciousness' to which, he argues, the African American is subject?

B) To what degree is DuBois' notion of 'double consciousness' applicable to the Afric-Caribbean person?

Week 9: Colonialism, the Canon, and the Anti-colonial Reader

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <i>Required Readings:</i> | Ngugi Wa Thiong'o | "Literature and Society" (in G.D. Killam, ed. <u>Critical Perspectives on N'gugi Wa Thiong'o or his Writers in Politics</u>) |
| | Frantz Fanon | "On National Culture" (in his <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>) |
| | George Lamming | "The Negro Writer and His World" (in his <u>George Lamming—Essays, Addresses and Interviews</u>) |

Topics:

1. What historical role does Ngugi attribute to 'culture' in the process of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism?

2. What does Ngugi mean when he writes that the struggle for national liberation involves the "dialectical negation of the colonial process" and is one waged under the banner of "racial nationalism"?

c) What role does Ngugi envisage should be played by literature and other cultural practices in the anti-colonial struggle?

3. Into what stages does Fanon divide the process of cultural decolonisation which Europe's former colonies must undergo?

4. What exactly does Lamming mean when he writes that it is by virtue of the "fundamental need to redefine himself for the comprehension of the Other" (40) that the Negro writer "joins hands, not so much with a Negro audience, as with every other writer whose work is a form of self-enquiry, a clarification of relations with other men, and a report of his own very highly subjective conception of the possible meaning of man's life" (40)?

Week 10: The Negro Writer

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|--|
| <i>Required Readings:</i> | Kamau Brathwaite | "Creolization in Jamaica" (in Ashcroft, et al., eds <u>PCR</u>) |
| | —. | "Timehri" (in Orde Coombs, ed. <u>Is Massa Day</u>) |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| —. | <u>Done?</u> |
| —. | “Nation Language” (in Ashcroft, et al. <u>PCR</u>) |
| | “The African Presence in Caribbean Literature” (in his <u>Roots</u>) |
| Wilson Harris | “The Limbo Gateway” (in Ashcroft et al. <u>PCR</u>) |

Tutorial Topics:

1.A) What does Brathwaite mean when he describes Jamaican and, by extension, West Indian society as “creolised”?

B) To what degree is this notion of ‘creolisation’ indebted to Hegel’s notion of dialectical synthesis as well as to Fanon’s and/or DuBois’ rereading of Hegel?

C) How does this ‘creolisation’ impinge upon the cultural practices thereof?

2. To what extent is the West Indian’s quest for his African roots indispensable, according to Brathwaite in “Timehri,” in the light of the creolisation of West Indian societies?

3.A) Why does Brathwaite prefer to use the term ‘nation language’ instead of ‘dialect’?

B) What link does he perceive between the former and what he describes as the “submerged area” of the consciousness of Caribbean peoples?

C) To what extent is Brathwaite’s thinking here shaped, directly or indirectly, by a Freudian/Jungian/Fanonian philosophical framework?

D) To what degree could Brathwaite be described as a ‘cultural nationalist’?

4. ‘Healing archetypes inherent in certain myths and in some of the arts of the region provide the means by which the psychic self-division consequent upon the region’s brutal history may be resolved.’ Does this statement offer a fair assessment of Harris’s thesis in “The Limbo Gateway”?

5. 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.

6. Compare the views of Brathwaite with Harris’s.

MODULE FIVE: FEMINIST CRITICISM

Week 11: Dialectical Models of Patriarchy, Gender, and Misogyny

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| Required Readings: | Friedrich Engels | “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State” (in Miriam Schneir, ed. <u>Feminism: the Essential Historical Writings</u>) |
| | Simone de Beauvoir | “Introduction to <u>The Second Sex</u> ” (in Marks and deCourtivron) |
| | Nancy Chodorow | “Family Structure and Feminine Personality” (in Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds.) |

- Women, Culture and Society)
- Juliet Mitchell “The Oedipus Complex and patriarchal Society” (in her Psychoanalysis and Feminism)
- Patricia Hill Collins “Defining Black Feminist Thought” (in Linda Nicholson, ed. The Second Wave: a Reader in Feminist Theory)

Tutorial Topics:

- 1.a) How do Marxist Feminists like Engels explain the oppression of women?
 - b) What do you understand by the term ‘ideologies of gender’? What is their function?
2. How does De Beauvoir explain the structure of patriarchy? What do you understand her comment to the effect that woman has historically been defined in relation to man? What aspect(s) of Sartre’s thought does she draw on?
3. What does De Beauvoir mean when she writes that the “drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject--who always regards the self as the essential--and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential”?
4. Compare De Beauvoir’s model of patriarchy with Marxist Feminist models thereof.
5. Compare Chodorow’s account of the psychic maturation of the feminine subject with Freud’s theory of femininity.
- 6.A) How do so-called Socialist Feminists like Mitchell explain the oppression of women? To which male thinkers are they particularly indebted in this regard?
- B) Compare a Marxist Feminist account of patriarchy with that offered by Socialist Feminists.
- 7.A) What, according to Collins, is the crucial element missing in the dominant Feminist accounts of patriarchy?
- B) What do you understand by her notion of a standpoint?
- C) What particular factors are constitutive of the standpoint of an African American female?

- Week 12: Feminist Critique: the ‘Resisting (Woman) Reader’**
- Required Readings:* Elaine Showalter “Towards a Feminist Poetics” (in Adams)
 Mary Ellmann “Feminine Stereotypes” (in Jessica Munns and Gita Rajan, eds. A Cultural Studies Reader)
 Ann Ferguson “Pages 1-11 of her Introduction to Images of Women in Literature”
 Adrienne Rich “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision” (in her On Lies, Secrets and Silence)

Tutorial Topics:

1.a) What does Showalter mean by the term 'feminist critique' and to what critical approach does she oppose it?

2. What does Ellmann mean by 'feminine stereotypes'?

3. What are the principal stereotypes deployed by male literary writers, according to Ferguson?

4. What are the twin foci of Feminist criticism, according to Rich? To what extent does the female author combine both foci in her writing?

Week 13: Gynocentrism: the Female Writer's Career, the Psychodynamics of Female Creativity, Literary History, the Female Reader

- Required Readings:* The Marxist-Feminist Literature Collective
 "Women's Writing . . ." (in Mary Eagleton, ed. Feminist Literary Theory: a Reader)
- Sandra Gilbert, et al. "Infection in the Sentence: the Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" (in their The Madwoman in the Attic)
- Annis Pratt "The Roots of Self' and 'Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction'" (in her Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction and Richard Sugg, ed. Jungian Literary Criticism, respectively)
- Patrocinio Schweickart "Reading Ourselves: toward a Feminist Theory of Reading" (in Warhol and Herndl)
- Barbara Christian "Trajectories of Self-Definition" (in her Black Feminist Criticism)

Tutorial Topics:

1. What are the principle factors, according to the MFLC, which impinged upon a woman's writing career in the nineteenth century? Are these factors still important today?

2.A) What do you understand by the concept of the 'anxiety of authorship' advanced by Gilbert and Gubar?

B) Compare this concept with Bloom's notion of the 'anxiety of influence.'

3.A) What stages does Showalter ascribe to the history of the emergence of women's writing (see, too, her essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics" in this regard)?

B) What is the nature of the relationship which links, according to Showalter, female writers to female predecessors?

C) To which theorist, in your view, is Showalter implicitly or explicitly most indebted in her quest to trace the emergence of a 'literature of our own'?

4. Pratt's interest is in the archetypal narrative structures of literary texts written by women. A) What are the three main myths identified by Pratt to which these conform? B) What does she mean when she contends that these shed light on the degree to which feminine aspirations exist "in dialectical relationship to societal prescriptions against women's development" creating "textual mixtures of rebellion and repression."

5. What distinction does Schweickart seek to draw between the common emphasis in Feminist literary criticism on either 'woman as reader' or 'woman as writer,' on the one hand, and what she describes as 'feminist readings of male writers' and 'feminist readings of female writers,' on the other?

6. In what ways, according to Schweickart, are women 'immasculated' by their encounter with androcentric literature?

7. To what degree does Schweickart find Poulet's methodology a useful one for critics who seek to construe women's texts as the "manifestation of the subjectivity of the absent author"?

8. To what degree does Barbara Christian's model of African American women's writing conform to the interests typical of what Showalter describes as 'gynocentrism'?

TERM PAPER

Deadline: 5 pm, 19 February, 1999 (*Late submissions will be penalised*)

Suggested Length: 1500 - 2000 words. (*I will not read anything that exceeds this limit*)

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

Either

1. Through close reference to “Family Structure and Feminine Personality,” examine the degree to which Chodorow’s views on the psychic maturation of the subject are both influenced by and a significant departure from those of Freud.

Or

2. “For Freud, all writing is a form of sublimation.” Is this a fair assessment of Freud’s view of the relationship between a literary work and its writer in “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming”?

Or

3. Compare the views of Gilbert and Gubar with those of Harold Bloom on the question of literary history.

Or

4. In what ways are Showalter’s emphases similar to and different from those of Gilbert and Gubar?

Or

5. Compare Freud’s view of literature with Jung’s.

Or

6. “Fanon offers crucial insights into the ‘psychopathology’ of both white racism and its negro victim.” Discuss some of the ways in which Post-colonial and other critics have applied these insights to the study of literature.

SOME USEFUL SURVEYS OF / INTRODUCTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY, LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

R - on reserve

REF - in Reference section

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Ashcroft, Bill, <i>et. al.</i> | <u>The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures</u> | R |
| 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> | R |
| Grayling, A.C., ed. | <u>Philosophy: a Guide Through the Subject</u> | |
| Green, Keith, and Jill LeBihan | <u>Critical Theory and Practice: a Coursebook</u> | |
| Griffiths, Gareth | <u>“The Post-colonial Project: Critical Approaches and Problems” (in Bruce King, ed. <u>New National and Post-colonial Literatures</u>)</u> | |
| Harrison-Barbet, Anthony | <u>Mastering Philosophy</u> | |
| Hutcheon, Linda | <u>A Poetics of Postmodernism</u> | |
| --- | <u>The Politics of Postmodernism</u> | |
| Jefferson, Ann & D. Robey, eds. | <u>Modern Literary Theory: a Comparative Introduction</u> | R |
| Kim, Jagwon | <u>Philosophy of Mind</u> | |
| Loomba, Ania | <u>Colonialism/Postcolonialism</u> | R |
| Lynn, Steven | <u>Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory</u> | |
| Moi, Toril | <u>Sexual/Textual Politics</u> | |
| Moore-Gilbert, Bart | <u>Postcolonial Theory</u> | R |
| Osterhammel, Jurgen | <u>Colonialism: a Theoretical Overview</u> | R |
| Pojman, Louis | <u>What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge</u> | |
| Selden, Raman | <u>A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory</u> | R |
| —. | <u>Practising Theory and Reading Literature: an Introduction</u> | |
| Slemon, Stephen | <u>“Post-colonial Critical Theories” (in King, ed. <u>New National and Post-colonial Literatures</u>)</u> | |
| Warburton, Nigel | <u>Philosophy: the Basics</u> | R |
| Warburton, Nigel | <u>Philosophy: the Classics</u> | R |
| Wolfreys, Julian, and William Baker | <u>Literary Theories: a Case Study in Critical Performance</u> | |
| White, Robert | <u>White Mythologies: Writing History and the West</u> | R |

SOME ANTHOLOGIES OF PHILOSOPHY, LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

R - on reserve

REF - in Reference section

| | | |
|--|---|------------|
| Adams, Hazard, ed. | <u>Critical Theory Since Plato</u> | REF |
| Adams, Hazard and L. Searle, eds. | <u>Critical Theory Since 1965</u> | R |
| 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> | R |
| Belsey, Catherine and J. Moore, eds. | <u>The Feminist Reader</u> | R |
| Brooker, Peter, ed. | <u>Modernism/Postmodernism</u> | |
| Cameron, Deborah | <u>The Feminist Critique of Language: a Reader</u> | |
| Cobley, Paul, ed. | <u>The Communication Theory Reader</u> | |
| Currie, Mark, ed. | <u>Metafiction</u> | |
| Docherty, Thomas, ed. | <u>Postmodernism: a Reader</u> | |
| Dukore, Bernard, ed. | <u>Dramatic Theory: Greeks to Grotowski</u> | |
| Easthope, Anthony, and McGowan, eds. | <u>A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader</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. | <u>Classical Philosophical Questions</u> | |
| Kaplan, Charles, ed. | <u>Criticism: the Major Statements</u> | R |
| Kearney, Richard, and Mara Rainwater, eds. | <u>The Continental Philosophy Reader</u> | |
| Lodge, David, ed. | <u>Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: a Reader</u> | R |
| --- | <u>Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader</u> | R |
| Marks, Elaine and I. Courtivron, eds. | <u>New French Feminisms</u> | R |
| Mast, Gerald, et al., eds. | <u>Film Theory and Criticism</u> | |
| Mongia, Padmini, ed. | <u>Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: a Reader</u> | R |
| Moore-Gilbert, Bart, Gareth Stanton, and Willy Maley, eds. | <u>Post-colonial Criticism</u> | |
| Newton, K.M., ed. | <u>Twentieth Century Literary Theory: a Reader</u> | |
| --- | <u>Theory into Practice: a Reader in Modern Literary Criticism</u> | |
| Nicholson, Linda, ed. | <u>Feminism/Postmodernism</u> | |
| Oaklander, L. Nathan, ed. | <u>Existentialist Philosophy</u> | |
| Pojman, Louis, ed. | <u>Theory of Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Readings</u> | R |
| Rice, Philip and P. Waugh, eds. | <u>Modern Literary Theory: a Reader</u> | R |
| David Richter, ed. | <u>The Critical Tradition</u> | R |
| Ryan, Kiernan, ed. | <u>New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: a Reader</u> | |
| Rylance, Rick, ed. | <u>Debating Texts: Readings in Twentieth Century Literary Theory and Method</u> | (on order) |
| Selden, Raman, ed. | <u>The Theory of Criticism: a Reader</u> | R |

- 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
- Staton, Shirley Literary Theories in Praxis
- 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 **R**
- Williams, Patrick, and Laura Chrisman, eds. Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial
Theory: a Reader **R**