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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTERS OF ARTS-ENGLISH

SEMESTER -IV

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

ELECTIVE 405

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self-Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

BLOCK-2 LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK

UNIT 8: Analysis of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Afterword of "Introduction to Orientalism"and Functioning of Orientalism.

UNIT 9: Life, Philosophy, Early Works And Politics, Influences And Peers And Contemporaries Of Jacques Derrida.

UNIT 10: Criticism Against Jacques Derrida And Structure, Sign, And Play In The Discourses Of The Human Sciences.

UNIT 11: Life Of Jean Lyotard And His Works, Criticism Against Lyotard And Influence And Some Of His Selected Publications.

UNIT 12: Post Modernism

UNIT 13: Early Life And Education Of Adrienne Rich Her Views On Feminism; List Of Her Works And Selected Awards And Honours Received By Her And Compulsory Heterosexuality And Lesbian Existence.

UNIT 14: About Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar; Feminist Literary Criticism And Theory; Sandra Gilbert's Works and The Anxiety Of Authorship and The Madwoman In The Attic: The Woman Writer And The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination.

UNIT-8 EDWARD SAID-INTRODUCTION TO ORIENTALISM – 4

STRUCTURE

8.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would also go through the analysis of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Afterword of "Introduction to Orientalism".
- further, you would also go through the Functioning of Orientalism.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Edward W. Said's Orientalism published in 1978 represents the initial phase of postcolonial theory. It is well known that the publication of Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978 was responsible for the rise of a range of cultural and critical theories from multiculturalism to post

culturalism. It was a study that not only polarized critics and forced scholars to re-examine Orientalist archives, but also persuaded creative writers to re-think their ethnographic positions when it came to the literary representations of cultures other than their own.

It marked a paradigm shift in thinking about the relationship between the West and the non-West. Rather than engaging with the conditions of the colonial aftermath, or with the history of anti-colonial resistance, it directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings and to the consolidation of colonial hegemony. Said argues that the whole notion of the Orient was a construct of the West. By foisting its erotic fantasies on the Orient, the West exercised power and disenfranchised the people who lived there.

In this book Said unravels the ideological mask of imperialism. This study that has been greatly inspired from Foucault and, to a lesser extent, Gramsci, brought a great upheaval in the way of studying non-Western cultures and their literatures and pushed it in to the direction of what is termed as postcolonial theory. Noam Chomsky had described Said's intellectual contribution in a newspaper interview in September 1999 in this manner:

His scholarly work has been devoted to unravelling mythologies about ourselves and our interpretation of others, reshaping our perceptions of what the rest of the world is and what we are. The second is the harder task; nothing is harder than looking into the mirror. Indeed it is, because, if our intellectuals, past and present, were to look into the mirror held up by the corpus of Said's writings, it will crack from side to side.

Understanding well the strict demands of a research on such a pioneering postcolonial classic, I intend to summarize the project here by providing a brief background to the much debated, argued, contested, criticized and heavily quoted text Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the East, 1978 and its author Edward W. Said. Unless I locate Said in his geography, his view on Orientalism, will not be easy to comprehend.

Edward Said was born in British–mandate Palestine in 1935, but spent most of his childhood in Egypt. His early education had been in elite

colonial schools, designed by the British to bring up a generation of Arabs with natural ties to Britain. He finished his graduate studies at Harvard and started teaching English and Comparative Literature in 1963 at Columbia University. He received Harvard University's Bowdoin Prize and the Lionel Trilling Award in 1976 and in 1994 respectively. In the summers of 1969 and 1970 he visited Amman; a time when Palestinian factions were mobilizing Jordan into military base. Said could not prevent himself from taking up the political cause of Palestine.

In the following years Said almost became a public intellectual. The Liberal opinion inside the media began to divide over Israel's policies after 1967. The media began to seek out some cogent Palestinian voices. Apart from his Lebanon connection which brought him closer to Palestinian cause, two other factors also shaped and moulded his intellectual career, and provided him a distinct subject position to speak and write form. The first factor is the establishment of the Zionist regime in Israel and its controlling of Arab land, people, and culture and its politics; the intellectual and moral and the military support of the West, especially of America, to the Zionist government in order to suppress the Arab world in a series of wars against Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. The second factor that has shaped Said's career is his experience of exile. The condition of a permanent exile has subsequently offered Said a distinct subject position of not belonging to any particular space; of moving around; of exploring in a true sense the multi-dimensional world.

Said seized the opportunity or the opportune chance seized Said, whatever may be the case, yet it happened in the way that the seeds were sown in the right season for a discourse that was to shake the world to a well acknowledged binary opposition that Kipling emphasized way back. Partha Chatterjee writes that, "Orientalism was a book, which talked of things I felt I had known all along but had never found the language to formulate with clarity. Like many great books it seemed to say to me for the first time what one had always wanted to say." (qtd. in Sprinker 66)

Said's academic competence and his luminous passion for the Palestinian cause came out to be a novel yet long needed fusion. He could not

remain just another hankering voice in the Western chaos. I cannot resist myself from quoting him:

Orientalism is very much a book tied to the tumultuous dynamics of contemporary history. Its first page opens with a description of the Lebanese war that ended in 1990, but the violence and the ugly shedding of human blood continues up to this minute. We have had the failure of the Oslo peace process, the outbreak of the second intifada, and the awful suffering of the Palestinians on the reinvaded West Bank and Gaza………As I write these lines, the illegal occupation of Iraq by Britain and the United States proceeds. Its aftermath is truly awful to contemplate. This is all part of what is supposed to be a clash of civilizations, unending, implacable, and irremediable. (Said, The Guardian, Saturday August 2, 2003)

The deep understanding of the contemporary socio-politico-literary world made an invincible defence mechanism with which, possibly, he could chain the whole West with a single strand. The influence was phenomenal. Apart from his continuing importance in the fields of literary criticism and cultural studies, his work has also particularly influenced various scholars studying India, such as Gyan Prakash, Nicholas Dirks, and Ronald Ingen, and literary theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak.

 Until Said, 'Orientalism' was generally understood to refer to academic Oriental studies in the older, European tradition. Said resurrected the term and defined it as a supremacist ideology of difference that was being articulated in the West to justify its dominion over the East. As Bertens rightly says, "Orientalism offered a challenging theoretical framework a new perspective on the interpretation of Western writing about the East (and other non-Western cultures) and of writing produce under colonial rule –which might be read both for signs of complicity with Western hegemony and for possibly counter hegemonic stance." (205-206)

Said concentrated largely on the Middle East, Palestine and Egypt, as his own roots lay there. Said paid less attention to the British Raj in India, the most successful example of European hegemony in the Orient, and

entirely ignored Russia's dominions in Asia, possible due to the fact as some critics argue (Irwin 281) that Said was more interested in making polemical points about the Middle east. It came to be understood almost within a decade of the publishing of his book that there was much that was to be explored in the cross cultural encounters that Said could not, and possibly no one could, include.

It can be said that by making traditions and cultural background the test of authority and neutrality in studying the Orient, Said drew attention to the question of his own identity as a Palestinian, and as a "Subaltern". Ironically, given Said's largely Anglophone upbringing and education, the fact that he spent most of his life in the United States, and his prominent position in American academia, his own argument that, "..any and all representations….are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambience of the representor…… [and are] interwoven with a great many other things beside the 'truth', which is itself a representation" (Said, Orientalism 272) could be said to disenfranchise him from writing about the Orient himself. But as Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (5-6) suggest:

The intimate connection between Said's identity and his cultural theory, and the paradoxes these reveal, shows us something about the contractedness and complexity of cultural identity itself. Said is an Arab and a Palestinian, and indeed, a Christian Palestinian, which in itself, if not a paradox in an increasingly Islamic Middle East, is certainly paradoxical in an intellectual who is the most prominent critic of the contemporary Western demonization of Islam. The paradox of Edward Said's identity is the most strategic feature of his own 'worldliness', a feature which provides a key to the interests and convictions of his cultural theory….Indeed his own cultural identity has been enhanced rather than diminished by his choice to locate himself in New York.

In fact, this location in an intermediate space empowered him enough to speak on behalf of those marginalized and expelled and to shoulder the Palestinian cause.

Said raises a number of questions regarding culture in this book and simultaneously tries to respond to these questions at various levels.

Throughout his works Said had tried to formulate a comprehensive critique of culture and had opened up a large number of issues relating different areas of knowledge as well as different aspects of our socio-political and cultural life. According to Mohanty (94-95), "His attempt has been primarily to liberate culture from the limitations of aesthetics, ethics, anthropology and epistemology…he wanted to erase the existing subtle distinctions among these different areas in order to offer a "worldly" basis to the concept of culture."

In all the works of Said one could see that he focuses on an ontological, epistemological, ethical, and a cultural crisis in modern Western culture. There can be myriad perspectives from which one can examine the way Said has critiqued the modern Western culture. Herein lies my area of interest which I intent to explore through my thesis. What relationship he describes between modern eastern culture and imperialism? How Said establishes connection between Gramscian paradigm of 'hegemony' and Western culture and imperialism? How 'representation of others' and 'anthropology' aligned with the consolidation of the Western power? Is there really any way to objectify the stance of the Orientalists, or, is there a plausible solution towards achieving or perceiving the real truth about another's culture. The questions that might and definitely will arise while critiqu0ing Said's Orientalism are numerous and require a lot of research.

Arriving at definite conclusions after going through the whole gamut of facts and findings in an extensive research like this is a Herculean task. And this task requires a thorough, yet confined to details, searches of ubiquitous phenomenon called Orientalism. The research exacts the cultural dimension of this canonical book.

This thesis traces the development of the phenomenon called Orientalism which is very much alive in contemporary cultural practice and specifically focuses on interpreting the Palestinian/American scholar Edward W. Said's influential work Orientalism as a multidisciplinary cultural analysis. In Orientalism Said argues, how Europe invented the fictional Orient and Orientals and how this representation was used as an instrument for control and subjugation in colonialism. Edward said argues that no matter how the 'Orient' has been represented in the past

the 'occident' has always been placed in a superior position. This is a result of a long history of symbolic representations and associations in European culture.

This work is designed not so much as a progression of argument but more as a process of refinement that becomes a reiteration of the argument in different discursive contexts. It is not enough to theorize Orientalism; we must also understand its specific histories. Thus, the first chapter traces the development of the concept of Orientalism. The second chapter explores the meaning of culture and attempts to focus on the theory of cultural discourse redefined in the words of Said. The third chapter deals with Said's Orientalism wherein he unmasks the ideological disguises of imperialism. It provides a critical overview of the dynamic structure of "Orientalism". The fourth chapter forms the crux of the thesis as it studies and analyses Said's Orientalism as a critique of culture. The conclusion sums up the analysis of previous chapters and traces the postmodern future of Orientalism. The study seeks to explore the perspective offered by Said and through that attempt, critiquing his monumental work as a critique of culture.

8.2 ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS CHAPTER 1

PART - I

Said sets up his argument against Orientalism by focusing on the views of two early Orientalists, Arthur James Balfour and Lord Cromer. By beginning the text with specific definitions of Orientalism, Said sets the tone for the rest of the text. Rather than focus on flushing out a purely theoretical argument, he uses specific, textual examples to support his ideas. While previous scholarly works had broached similar ideas regarding Orientalism, the strength of Said's text—and why it continues to be considered one of the seminal anthropological works—is the level of detail he provides across a wide span of history. In order to do this,

Said provides sections of Balfour and Cromer's speeches, breaking down their arguments sentence-by-sentence and word-by-word. From the outset, he provides historical evidence for the use of the terms Orient and Orientalism within literature.

Thus, Said is able to make the argument that these terms have a historical basis found in literature. This is a fundamental concept for his argument that Orientalism was formed from previously conceived definitions and understandings. These archaic understandings of a complex group of people, clumped under the term Orient, were continuously used for centuries and up to the present day. Said claims their basis is in original, literary texts such as "Chaucer and Mandeville ... Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, and Byron."

Furthermore, by breaking down the individual arguments of Balfour and Cromer, Said is able to evaluate their tone and perspective to illustrate how they create an "us" versus "them" dichotomy, how the Orient is dehumanized, and how the natives' power to speak is removed. Using both Balfour and Cromer, Said is able to show that, in the case of two different Orientalists—one removed from the Orient and the other directly involved in the everyday management of the Orient—the framework for talking about the Orient remained the same. Thus, Orientalism was not confined to a specific group of people, but was a pervasive paradigm.

PART - II

Using a historical approach, Said begins by describing the beginning of Orientalism as based on religious texts, the study of language, and historical accounts. In essence, none of the initial work on the Orient was concerned with the people themselves as much as with their cultural attributes. In order to describe how this ended up creating an image of the "mythology of the Orient," Said turns to cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. Trained in comparative literature, Lévi-Strauss drew on the work of contemporary anthropologists to describe how the mind organizes the surrounding world, creating an Orient that was "something more than what was empirically known about it."

This is fundamental to Said's argument. From the outset, the understanding of the Orient was derived not from the people, but rather a perception about the people of the Orient based on cultural attributes. This understanding is inherently flawed, especially from the postcolonial standpoint Said is taking here. The voice of the Orient was being created by, and spoken through, the words of the West. Said draws on literary texts, specifically two plays, The Persians and The Bacchae, to illustrate this point. He analyzes how East and West are depicted, respectively, describing the literary devices used to do so, such as the "motif of the Orient as insinuating danger." Thus, the West was concerned mainly with an unknown or potentially threatening culture. Here, Said is using literary analysis to describe exactly how the Orient is being framed, drawing on Dante's Divine Comedy and other texts to detail how a physical, cultural geography is created through words. He later extended this line of analysis to contemporary media studies in Covering Islam.

PART – III

Moving on from the literary tradition of Orientalism, Said discusses the first texts to arise out of European and Eastern contact as the first Orientalist texts. Despite "going beyond the comparative shelter of the Biblical Orient," these initial works detailing contact with individuals were written in a way to reinforce the Oriental "myth." For instance, Said notes how Simon Ockley's History of the Saracens focuses on describing Islam as "heresy." Said posits that prior to contact with the Orient, there was very little to be done to prepare except to read the early literary works. This reinforced the view surrounding the Orient and did nothing to dispel the "threat" of Islam.

Thus, when later contact with the Orient occurred—such as Napoleon's expedition to Egypt as detailed in Description de l'Égypte—the West began to assert its power over the East. In order to serve his goal of domination over the East, Napoleon categorized it, defining it in connection to the "distant European past," thus making it inherently subservient to the West with himself as the hero. Said says this served to decrease the threat of Islam.

Said also claims the major change resulting from Napoleon's expedition was that it "destroyed the Orient's distance," symbolized by the creation of the Suez Canal, which was completed in 1869. The Orient was no longer the "other," but was a physical location the West now had power over. Equally, the Orient had become a product of Orientalism based on the literature of the period. The problem with this characterization, as Said argues in future chapters, is that the basis of knowledge remained the same despite changing relations with the Orient. Said uses this chapter to set the premise for how Orientalism changed throughout history.

PART – IV

Orientalism has persisted in a form relatively unchanged since its initial conception. Said is able to break down the components of Orientalism, using techniques drawn from his background in literary comparison because the basis of Orientalism is not only inherently textual in nature but also sustained through text. Despite physical encounters with the Orient, Orientalists prefer to rely on their textual knowledge at the expense of adapting to actual conditions. Said draws on Foucault, Napoleon, and de Lesseps to illustrate how textual knowledge creates the very reality described. In this case, the Orient was something wild that needed to be controlled. However, this was the case only because it was defined as such within the texts.

Said also draws on contemporary scholars to support his ideas. For instance, he describes how Anwar Abdel Malek used the history of Orientalism to describe how the Orient became an "object" of study. At the same time, it is clear the issue is a contemporary one with opposing sides, as evidenced by Said's reference to H.A.R. Gibb.

ANALYSIS CHAPTER 2

PART - I

Said moves on to a discussion of the 18th century. He specifically discusses the contribution of philological and anthropological frameworks for understanding Orientalism during this period, mainly as a method of categorizing the Orient and claiming scientific validity. He

employs anthropological techniques to support his idea that, in reality, the method of categorization is inherently flawed since the categories were born out of historical and textual generalizations about the Orient.

The shift to philological and anthropological explanations for Orientalism is important for understanding the concept within the context of the 18th century. Whereas previous centuries focused on contextualizing Orientalism within the religious context of the times, by the 18th century, the focus was on scientific thought in a period known as the "Age of Reason," or the Enlightenment. Said emphasizes this transition because of what failed to change. While the argument for Orientalism changed, the essential characteristics of Orientalism remained the same. This explains how a fundamentally religious framework for understanding the Orient has persisted up to the present day.

What Said makes exceptionally clear is that the staying power of Orientalism is the ability of Orientalists to categorize "vast geographical domains into treatable, and manageable, entities." He does not attempt to define the Orient or what Orientalism should then be. He suggests directions it can go, but at its core the Orient is inherently multifaceted and requires more specialized scholars than the general term Orientalist can accommodate.

PART - II

Said discusses the work and influence of two Orientalists—Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan. He uses these individuals as examples of how the transition from a religious justification for Oriental views to an anthropological or scientific argument allowed for the continuation of traditional Oriental paradigms. Just as the religious approach to Orientalism of the 17th and early 18th centuries allowed for imperial and colonial policies, the scientific approach to Orientalism of the latter 18th century and beyond dictated public policy on the Orient.

Traditional Oriental views were adapted to fit the period's paradigm of thought, either through anthropology (Sacy) or with philology (Renan). However, the very systems of study used to characterize Orientalism in

the 18th–20th centuries were those sciences that were "premised on the unity of the human species." It is through this paradox that Said characterizes the nonrational basis of Orientalism. Even when framed as "a science of all humanity," the basis for Orientalism was inherently flawed. It was concerned not with the good of the cultural groups defined under the "Orient" but rather with the ability to maintain control over these groups through knowledge and power.

Said also claims that through the categorization of these groups, they lost their human qualities and were no longer "fully a natural object." Thus, placing them under the guise of scientific thought had two purposes: the first to place Orientalism within the context of modern policymaking, and the second to obfuscate the purpose of Orientalism. If the expressed goal of anthropological and philological thought is to make clear the unity of humanity, there should be no questioning the intent behind Orientalism when placed within the context of these fields of study. Said makes this paradox clear through his discussion of how the East, in contrast to the West, was considered "inorganic" even as it was being discussed within the context of a field concerned with humanity. It was within the context of the "philological laboratory" that the Orient was transformed into an "Occidental cultural figure."

PART - III

Said places a great deal of emphasis on the comparability of Orientalism, both through time as well as across philology and "popular stereotypes." The strength of Said's comparison case is not in what changes but rather in what stays the same. He claims that because of the comparability of Orientalism across cultures, the Orient was perceived as weak and malleable. He emphasizes this point by revealing how Karl Marx characterizes the Orient within this pervasive paradigm using Marx's own words. Despite arguing for the strength of the economically disenfranchised, Marx continues to see the Orient as subservient to England.

While the comparability of the Orient facilitated the creation of knowledge, the establishment of authority by Orientalists resulted in the continued establishment of the power of the West over the East. Said

again relies on textual analysis to support his point, arguing that Orientalist authors such as Lane, who wrote Modern Egyptians in 1836, created a sense of authority through drama, "manipulation of narrative voice," and the degree of "detail" he employed. In this way, Lane was able to construct his own knowledge about the Orient—rather than depict the real story—and become an authority on the subject. In this way, Orientalist knowledge was "specialized." This ability to literally remake and construct the history of the Orient is fundamental to Said's argument that Orientalism itself does not have anything to do with the Orient. It is instead a purely Western construct.

PART – IV

The choice to name the chapter after pilgrims and pilgrimages is indicative of Said's view that the relationship between East and West was one grounded in a religious framework. The original texts about the Orient, such as Dante's Inferno and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, were religious in nature. Later works about the Orient were also religious in nature, framed as a pilgrimage, and thus inherently personal and subjective in nature. Said dichotomizes the English and the French for the first time in the work to argue for slightly different interpretations of the Orient based on the specific pilgrimage routes taken by citizens of their respective countries. However, as is made clear through the textual analysis of such works as Chateaubriand's Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem, the pilgrimage served as a method of justification for the pilgrim's religion. Thus, the Orient becomes a "decrepit canvas awaiting [the pilgrim's] restorative efforts."

It is beneath this religious framework that the conquest of Islam becomes transformed into a moral obligation that is then perpetuated throughout the history of Orientalism. Throughout the chapter, Said contrasts Chateaubriand's work with Lane's in order to explain how the creation of knowledge in Lane's work differs fundamentally from the creation of power in Chateaubriand's work. The goal of the Orientalist is no longer the mere accumulation of knowledge. It is rather the creation of a specific mythology that places the Orient within the context of needing a moral savior in the form of the Christian pilgrim.

ANALYSIS CHAPTER 3

PART – I

Said begins the section entitled "Orientalism Now" by stating how modern Orientalism is a "school of interpretation." He goes on to describe how this school of interpretation is structured through latent and manifest Orientalism. If Orientalism is a school of interpretation, it is then able to become a product of "political forces." This "political product" is what the majority of people then experience as Orientalism.

By dividing Orientalism into "latent" and "manifest" Orientalism, Said is able to describe how it is possible for the basis of Orientalism to remain the same, while the details that allow it to be manipulated for political purposes can change, depending on the period or the nation. He says the development of latent Orientalism is what allowed the creation of such ideas as "second-order" or "social Darwinism," which categorized and ranked cultures and societies based on race.

Thus, it was from these "latent" desires of conquest and Oriental inferiority that the modern political relationship with the Orient was framed. Said supports this through a discussion of the political climate in Britain and France regarding the Orient, exemplified by their "carving up the Near Orient ... into spheres of influence" following World War I. Latent Orientalism thus explains why during this period, the British and French saw themselves as having "traditional entitlement" over the Orient. The difficulty during this period, however, was the collision between the traditional latent, academic Orientalism and the modern manifest, policy-oriented Orientalism. The result was occasional contradictions as the "essential" Orient was conversely refuted and supported by policy-advising Orientalists. While Said has emphasized the differences between English and French Orientalism up to this point, he suggests the difference between latent and manifest Orientalism is of greater importance.

PART – II

Said argues that "Kipling's White Man" is a physical manifestation of latent Orientalist views. At a time when the Orientalist was being

employed to create public policy, a physical manifestation of these Oriental ideas was being created in the form of Kipling's White Man. While Rudyard Kipling gave words to this persona, the idea itself was a generic, but widespread, character. Said points out this creation as a way to argue that the idea of the Orient has become so removed from reality, so generalized, that the white "scientist" himself had become generalized as well.

In essence, the idea of the Orient had become so entrenched at this point that there was "no escape." Said provides evidence for this in the work of William Robertson Smith, a scholar who wrote on the "kinship and marriage customs" of the Orient. In an analysis of Smith's writing, it is clear that the traditional categories are in place with all natives of the Orient placed under generalized terms such as the Arab, and a generalized religious term of Mohammedanism. Smith exemplifies the White Man's vantage point, characterizing the Orient as "totalitarian," or without cultural variation. Once again, it is clear—given Said's ability to characterize the Orient based on Orientalist literature—that the basis of Orientalism remains textual.

In contrast to earlier Orientalist endeavors, those after World War I were "imperial agents" who forsook the actual narrative of the Orientals for the constructed, Orientalist narrative. Said supports this idea by analyzing the work of T.E. Lawrence, a British military officer. In his work, Lawrence becomes a "representative Oriental." Oddly enough, the Orientalist "sees himself as accomplishing the union of Orient and Occident" when in actuality, he is perpetuating Orientalist ideals. Thus, and this is Said's ultimate point, the Orientalist point of view "retards the process of enlarged and enlarging meaning" as it pertains to the Orient.

PART – III

Said expands on the same argument, moving forward in history. He claims the only difference between Orientalism before and after World War I is the reasoning behind the Orientalist framework. Interestingly, during this period, Orientalism was in a "retrogressive position" when compared to the other fields of study *because* it continued to be tied to "its Biblical 'origins'" and to the fear of Islam. While the geographical

area characterized as the Orient was under reorganization after the war, it was a relatively peaceful period compared to the conflict to come. However, in this period, the beginnings of Arabic and Israeli nationalism were on the rise. In this way, Orientalism acted as a system for "certain kinds of statements" about the Orient in order to continue the separation and differentiation between the Orientalists and their subject. This separation was based on the fear of the "destruction of the barriers that kept East and West" separate, barriers that appeared increasingly weakened with the changing political climate.

During this period, in part because of the new geographical and political delineations of space that were occurring in the Orient, Orientalism was being "broken into many parts." However, each facet of Orientalism was still based very much on the traditional views of the Orient. Said uses the work of Gibb and Massignon to provide evidence that the Orientalist representations persist because they serve a larger purpose. In this case, the larger purpose provides five "representations of the Orient": the imprint of the scholar; what the Orient is or should be; to argue against a different representative of the Orient; to create a discourse about the Orient responding to a particular period; and to respond to modern "cultural, professional, national, political, and economic requirements."

PART – IV

At this point, Said's argument takes a different turn. Rather than discuss the same countries of France and England, he turns to the modern condition of the Orient and America's role on the world stage. Said focuses on the particulars of American Orientalism as it relates to public perception and politics. However, the key words he has used throughout the text to describe Orientalism, such as fear and imperial, continue to be used to describe American Orientalism.

The difference is that American Orientalism has moved even further away from its literary basis. Rather than draw on the original Orientalist texts, the American Orientalist at this point "applies" his social "science to the Orient." The emphasis is on facts. However, Said argues through

the example of Morroe Berger that the original Orientalist framework remains in place. Rather than a "catholic issue," Said claims it is "an administrative one, a matter for policy."

Said also raises an important question regarding the appropriateness of "ethnic origins and religion" versus "socio-economic" descriptions of the Orient. He poses this as a "fundamental question" of modern Orientalism but fails to provide an answer. However, he does argue that it is likely "to insist on both." This is at the core of what Said is arguing for throughout the text. Rather than use single-dimension descriptions to describe cultural groups, it is necessary to take each group and place it in its own religious, ethnic, social, and economic context before offering an "explanation" or sense of understanding on the level of policy-making.

While the majority of Said's work up to this point has been based on criticism of his peers and predecessors, he notes "there is scholarship that is not as corrupt." While he fails to note it within this text, Said's arguments have been built upon the work of previous scholars. In later works, he calls these individuals out specifically, but what makes Orientalism so notable is the breadth and depth he goes into in order to evaluate the impact of Orientalism.

ANALYSIS AFTERWORD

In the Afterword, Said addresses the main points of criticism that immediately followed the book's publication. He spends a great deal of time addressing what he calls "the book's alleged anti-Westernism." He asserts that by leveling criticism at Orientalism, he is not inherently supporting "Islamism or Muslim fundamentalism." Yet, this is how his work has been perceived. Said attempts to clarify that it was not his intention to create an anti-Western tone. Rather, it was his intention to show how the West constructed the "identity" of the Orient.

The explicit purpose of his book, rather than to present an anti-Western viewpoint, was to "liberate intellectuals" from the falseness of the Orientalist framework. Perhaps more importantly, Said intended for his

work to be utilized in other regions of the world and for other cultural groups. In this respect, he contributed greatly to postcolonial anthropology, which sought to give voice to the disenfranchised. Said ends his work with a discussion of the other works he wrote in the years after Orientalism. In this way, he attempts to provide physical evidence of his efforts to address the criticisms leveled against Orientalism. His conclusion makes clear that there remains much to be done in the field of Orientalism.

8.3 THE FUNCTIONING OF ORIENTALISM

We have to see how a large number of disciplines, interests, practices, and power groups function together in concert under Orientalism without a written contract. Said uses Gramsci and his idea of cultural hegemony to explain how Orientalism functions effectively. Antonio Gramsci's analysis of society distinguished between civil and political society. Gramsci argued that civil society is made up of voluntary affiliation, in which he listed schools, families and unions. Membership to these units is voluntary and affiliation to the "influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons" is by consent, not domination or coercion. Culture operates within civil society and the cultural leadership that emerges through the process of some cultures dominating over others is what Gramsci calls 'hegemony'. Said points to the Gramscian notion of the cultural hegemony of the industrial West to show how Orientalism is produced and maintained in a historical, socio-political context.

The move from the last definition of Orientalism to Gramsci's formulation of cultural hegemony is a smooth one. Said locates the central idea that defines the culture of Europe as "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." (p.7) Orientalism arises out of Europe's need to identify the Other over whom it can assert its superiority in a neat binary of "us" against "them". The binary of Self/ Other is not a static one; Orientalism's power and longevity is founded on what Said terms its strategy of "flexible positional superiority". (p.7 original emphasis) As a

result of this strategy it is possible to have series of relationships and circumstances between the West and the Orient in which the West always emerges superior. Said points to the historical circumstances that facilitated this assertion of superiority of culture - that of Europe's extraordinary ascendancy from the late Renaissance to the present. The economic and political situation of Europe and the Orient allowed diverse people to be present in the Orient and to speak about it - that is, to construct knowledge about it - with very little resistance from the Orient itself.

The linguistic appeal of Orientalism lies in the range of occupations, disciplines and institutions it is able to catalogue in its examination of the complex, multi-layered formation of this field: "the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, [or] the soldier" p.7), a list of people that includes scientific and intellectual pursuits, religion, business and the military, occupations that are not usually seen in relation with each other as sharing common grounds. While it is well known that the trader and the missionary were often followed by the soldier in the process of colonization . (as with the East India Company), or that religion and business were given safe entry by the army in colonized areas, the idea that they all worked towards the common goal of onentalising it is novel.

The emerging theories of mankind and the universe in anthropology, sociology, linguistics, race and history are catalogued and documented further by Said. Postcolonial theory has examined in detail how each of these disciplines and the theories that emerged from their 'academic research' functioned to support and justify colonization while maintaining their sanctity as pure, apolitical scholarship. It is important to remember that all these theories of the Orient emerged from what Gramsci calls the civil society and thus illustrate "Western hegemony over the. Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century". (p.7) Said is not concerned with the state institutions of the army, the police and the central bureaucracy, which form the political society and function through domination.

Abstract Knowledge and Realistic Comprehension

We discern a few gaps in Said's theoretical mapping of divisions in the contemporary world. Said is able to bring in such an impressive array of socio-political institutions in his study of Orientalism because he shows scant respect for the self-preserving boundaries they have drawn around them in academic study and research. We noted in the second definition of Orientalism that Said has advanced from transgressing boundaries of academic disciplines to violating those drawn between academics and politics. While a quarter of a century later we are well aware that the nexus between politics and culture is one that is used to gain authority and establish hegemonic control over society, Said needed to labour the point to convince the academy that saw anything influenced by politics as tainted.

In Said, the distinction between pure and political knowledge is an extremely tenuous one. Said spends the time and effort on establishing this fact because he is defining Orientalism as a study of politics and culture, or imperialism and culture, of which culture belongs to the realm of pure, academic knowledge and politics to ,the world of power and administration, and the two were rarely seen as having anything in common. To argue that the Orient is a willful, manmade construct Said first needs to discuss how knowledge is constructed first.

Said outlines the distinction made in the academy between the humanities, and the ideological sciences such as economics, politics and sociology. In the case of the former I the humanities, this area of study is supposed to be completely divorced from politics, irrespective of the academician's political loyalties, whereas, in the case of the latter (i.e., the ideological sciences such as economics, politics and sociology), the ideology of the scholar researcher is said to be woven into his1 her material. However, both these streams are supposed to produce "true" scholarship that is untouched by his political beliefs or social, class position. Said explains it by saying that just as texts always exist in context with other texts - like the idea of inter-textuality - so too:

Political, institutional, and ideological constraints act in the same manner on the individual author. " (p. 13)

This definition would imply that it is impossible for a European or even an American who is studying the Orient to be aware of the fact that he/she belongs to a power that has vested interests in the Orient, and that however subconsciously, this will be the first reaction to the Orient. Thus, the individual response will be secondary. If this argument is, extended to the study of Orientalism itself, it would as Said says include the entire field of study, imagination and scholarly institutions & being governed by political imperialism to such an extent that it is impossible to bracket it off.

For Said, investigating the political ideology that shapes academic or creative writing is not demeaning but highly enabling. It helps us to understand "the persistence and the durability of saturating hegemonic systems like culture" and to see how they enabled the production of writers and thinkers rather than inhibiting them. And by investigating the construction of Orientalism as a dynamic exchange between those writing about the Orient and the political concerns of the empire we are able to address a large number of questions that appear in the space opened up by yoking culture to imperialism:

What other sorts of intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies went into the making of an imperialist tradition like the Orientalist one? How did philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel writing, and lyric poetry come into the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world? (p. 15)

The question now is not of finding which disciplines were complicit with empire. Once it is accepted that no pure knowledge is possible, the question can be reframed as one of investigating how individual authors and disciplines have worked towards constructing Orientalism. Being a theorist Said moves within well-defined . parameters. Here, we can see what can be learnt from the critical tools and methods used by Edward Said.

Check your Progress-1

1. Against which two orientalists did Said set up his argument against Orientalism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What was the effect of Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978?

_____

_____

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_____

3. For describing the possibility of Orientalism to remain the same, how does Said divide "Orientalism"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.4 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we saw the Analysis and also the Functioning of Orientalism.

8.5 KEYWORDS

1. **Hegemony**: leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others
2. **Retrogressive :** The process of returning to an earlier state, typically a worse one
3. **Anthropological:** relating to the study of humankind
4. **Irremediable:** impossible to cure or put right
5. **Ubiquitous:** present, appearing, or found everywhere

8.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write the analysis of Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of "Introduction to Orientalism".
- Write the functioning of Orientalism.

8.7 SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

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- Christopher Hitchens, "A Valediction for Edward Said" Slate, September 2003.

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Said sets up his argument against Orientalism by focusing on the views of two early Orientalists, Arthur James Balfour and Lord Cromer. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q1)**

- Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978 was responsible for the rise of a range of cultural and critical theories from multiculturalism to post culturalism. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q2)**

- By dividing Orientalism into "latent" and "manifest" Orientalism, Said is able to describe how it is possible for the basis of Orientalism to remain the same. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q3)**

- Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978 was responsible for the rise of a range of cultural and critical theories from multiculturalism to post culturalism.

UNIT- 9 JACQUES DERRIDA- 'STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES', LYOTARD, 'DEFINING THE POSTMODERN' - 1

STRUCTURE

9.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would learn about the life and philosophy of Jacques Derrida;
- you would also learn about his early works and politics;

- Further, you would also learn about the influences on Jacques Derrida and about his peers and contemporaries.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida was an Algerian-born French philosopher best known for developing a form of semiotic analysis known as deconstruction, which he discussed in numerous texts, and developed in the context of phenomenology. He is one of the major figures associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy.

During his career Derrida published more than 40 books, together with hundreds of essays and public presentations. He had a significant influence upon the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, literature, law, anthropology, historiography, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychoanalysis and political theory.

His work retains major academic influence throughout continental Europe, South America and all other countries where continental philosophy has been predominant, particularly in debates around ontology, epistemology (especially concerning social sciences), ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of language. In the Anglosphere, where analytic philosophy is dominant, Derrida's influence is most presently felt in literary studies due to his longstanding interest in language and his association with prominent literary critics from his time at Yale. He also influenced architecture (in the form of deconstructivism), music, art, and art criticism.

Particularly in his later writings, Derrida addressed ethical and political themes in his work. Some critics consider Speech and Phenomena (1967) to be his most important work. Others cite: Of Grammatology (1967), Writing and Difference (1967), and Margins of Philosophy (1972). These writings influenced various activists and political movements. He became a well-known and influential public figure, while his approach to philosophy and the notorious abstruseness of his work made him controversial.

9.2 LIFE OF JACQUES DERRIDA

Derrida was born on July 15, 1930, in a summer home in El Biar (Algiers), Algeria, into a Sephardic Jewish family (originally from Toledo) that became French in 1870 when the Crémieux Decree granted full French citizenship to the indigenous Arabic-speaking Jews of Algeria. His parents, Haïm Aaron Prosper Charles (Aimé) Derrida (1896–1970) and Georgette Sultana Esther Safar (1901–1991), named him "Jackie", "which they considered to be an American name", though he would later adopt a more "correct" version of his first name when he moved to Paris; some reports indicate that he was named Jackie after the American child actor Jackie Coogan, who had become well-known around the world via his role in the 1921 Charlie Chaplin film The Kid. He was also given the middle name Élie after his paternal uncle Eugène Eliahou, at his circumcision; this name was not recorded on his birth certificate unlike those of his siblings, and he would later call it his "hidden name".

Derrida was the third of five children. His elder brother Paul Moïse died at less than three months old, the year before Derrida was born, leading him to suspect throughout his life his role as a replacement for his deceased brother. Derrida spent his youth in Algiers and in El-Biar.

On the first day of the school year in 1942, French administrators in Algeria —implementing antisemitism quotas set by the Vichy government—expelled Derrida from his lycée. He secretly skipped school for a year rather than attend the Jewish lycée formed by displaced teachers and students, and also took part in numerous football competitions (he dreamed of becoming a professional player). In this adolescent period, Derrida found in the works of philosophers and writers (such as Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Gide) an instrument of revolt against family and society. His reading also included Camus and Sartre.

In the late 1940s, he attended the Lycée Bugeaud , in Algiers; in 1949 he moved to Paris, attending the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, where his professor of philosophy was Étienne Borne. At that time he prepared for his

entrance exam to the prestigious École Normale Supérieure (ENS); after failing the exam on his first try, he passed it on the second, and was admitted in 1952. On his first day at ENS, Derrida met Louis Althusser, with whom he became friends. After visiting the Husserl Archive in Leuven, Belgium (1953–1954), he completed his master's degree in philosophy (diplôme d'études supérieures) on Edmund Husserl (see below). He then passed the highly competitive agrégation exam in 1956. Derrida received a grant for studies at Harvard University, and he spent the 1956–57 academic year reading James Joyce's Ulysses at the Widener Library. In June 1957, he married the psychoanalyst Marguerite Aucouturier in Boston. During the Algerian War of Independence of 1954–1962, Derrida asked to teach soldiers' children in lieu of military service, teaching French and English from 1957 to 1959.

Following the war, from 1960 to 1964, Derrida taught philosophy at the Sorbonne, where he was an assistant of Suzanne Bachelard (daughter of Gaston), Georges Canguilhem, Paul Ricœur (who in these years coined the term school of suspicion) and Jean Wahl. His wife, Marguerite, gave birth to their first child, Pierre, in 1963. In 1964, on the recommendation of Louis Althusser and Jean Hyppolite, Derrida got a permanent teaching position at the ENS, which he kept until 1984. In 1965 Derrida began an association with the Tel Quel group of literary and philosophical theorists, which lasted for seven years. Derrida's subsequent distance from the Tel Quel group, after 1971, has been attributed to his reservations about their embrace of Maoism and of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

With "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", his contribution to a 1966 colloquium on structuralism at Johns Hopkins University, his work began to gain international prominence. At the same colloquium Derrida would meet Jacques Lacan and Paul de Man, the latter an important interlocutor in the years to come. A second son, Jean, was born in 1967. In the same year, Derrida published his first three books—Writing and Difference, Speech and Phenomena, and Of Grammatology

In 1980, he received his first honorary doctorate (from Columbia University) and was awarded his State doctorate (doctorat d'État) by submitting to the University of Paris ten of his previously published books in conjunction with a defense of his intellectual project under the title "L'inscription de la philosophie : Recherches sur l'interprétation de l'écriture" ("Inscription in Philosophy: Research on the Interpretation of Writing"). The text of Derrida's defense was based on an abandoned draft thesis he had prepared in 1957 under the direction of Jean Hyppolite at the ENS titled "The Ideality of the Literary Object" ("L'idéalité de l'objet littéraire"); his 1980 dissertation was subsequently published in English translation as "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations". In 1983 Derrida collaborated with Ken McMullen on the film Ghost Dance. Derrida appears in the film as himself and also contributed to the script.

Derrida traveled widely and held a series of visiting and permanent positions. Derrida became full professor (directeur d'études) at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris from 1984 (he had been elected at the end of 1983). With François Châtelet and others he in 1983 co-founded the Collège international de philosophie (CIPH), an institution intended to provide a location for philosophical research which could not be carried out elsewhere in the academia. He was elected as its first president. In 1985 Sylviane Agacinski gave birth to Derrida's third child, Daniel.

In 1986 Derrida became Professor of the Humanities at the University of California, Irvine, where he taught until shortly before his death in 2004. His papers were filed in the university archives. After Derrida's death, his widow and sons said they wanted copies of UCI's archives shared with the Institute of Contemporary Publishing Archives in France. The university had sued in an attempt to get manuscripts and correspondence from Derrida's widow and children that it believed the philosopher had promised to UC Irvine's collection, although it dropped the suit in 2007.

Derrida was a regular visiting professor at several other major American and European universities, including Johns Hopkins University, Yale University, New York University, Stony Brook University, and The New School for Social Research.

He was awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Cambridge (1992), Columbia University, The New School for Social Research, the University of Essex, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the University of Silesia, the University of Coimbra, the University of Athens, and many others around the world.

Derrida's honorary degree at Cambridge was protested by leading philosophers in the analytic tradition. Philosophers including Quine, Marcus, and Armstrong wrote a letter to the university objecting that "Derrida's work does not meet accepted standards of clarity and rigour," and "Academic status based on what seems to us to be little more than semi-intelligible attacks upon the values of reason, truth, and scholarship is not, we submit, sufficient grounds for the awarding of an honorary degree in a distinguished university".

Derrida was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Although his membership in Class IV, Section 1 (Philosophy and Religious Studies) was rejected, he was subsequently elected to Class IV, Section 3 (Literary Criticism, including Philology). He received the 2001 Adorno-Preis from the University of Frankfurt.

Late in his life, Derrida participated in making two biographical documentaries, D'ailleurs, Derrida (Derrida's Elsewhere) by Safaa Fathy (1999), and Derrida by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman (2002).

Derrida was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2003, which reduced his speaking and travelling engagements.He died during surgery in a hospital in Paris in the early hours of October 9, 2004.

At the time of his death, Derrida had agreed to go for the summer to Heidelberg as holder of the Gadamer professorship, whose invitation was expressed by the hermeneutic philosopher himself before his death. Peter Hommelhoff, Rector at Heidelberg by that time, would summarize Derrida's place as: "Beyond the boundaries of philosophy as an academic discipline he was a leading intellectual figure not only for the humanities but for the cultural perception of a whole age.

9.3 PHILOSOPHY

Derrida referred to himself as a historian. He questioned assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition and also more broadly Western culture.By questioning the dominant discourses, and trying to modify them, he attempted to democratize the university scene and to politicize it. Derrida called his challenge to the assumptions of Western culture "deconstruction". On some occasions, Derrida referred to deconstruction as a radicalization of a certain spirit of Marxism.

With his detailed readings of works from Plato to Rousseau to Heidegger, Derrida frequently argues that Western philosophy has uncritically allowed metaphorical depth models to govern its conception of language and consciousness. He sees these often unacknowledged assumptions as part of a "metaphysics of presence" to which philosophy has bound itself. This "logocentrism," Derrida argues, creates "marked" or hierarchized binary oppositions that have an effect on everything from our conception of speech's relation to writing to our understanding of racial difference. Deconstruction is an attempt to expose and undermine such "metaphysics."

Derrida approaches texts as constructed around binary oppositions which all speech has to articulate if it intends to make any sense whatsoever. This approach to text is, in a broad sense, influenced by the semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure, considered to be one of the fathers of structuralism, posited that terms get their meaning in reciprocal determination with other terms inside language.

Perhaps Derrida's most quoted and famous assertion, which appears in an essay on Rousseau in his book Of Grammatology (1967), is the statement that "there is no out-of-context" (il n'y a pas de hors-texte). Critics of Derrida have been often accused of having mistranslated the phrase in French to suggest he had written "Il n'y a rien en dehors du texte" ("There is nothing outside the text") and of having widely disseminated this translation to make it appear that Derrida is suggesting that nothing exists but words. Derrida once explained that this assertion "which for

some has become a sort of slogan, in general so badly understood, of deconstruction means nothing else: there is nothing outside context. In this form, which says exactly the same thing, the formula would doubtless have been less shocking."

9.4 EARLY WORKS

Derrida began his career examining the limits of phenomenology. His first lengthy academic manuscript, written as a dissertation for his diplôme d'études supérieures and submitted in 1954, concerned the work of Edmund Husserl. In 1962 he published Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, which contained his own translation of Husserl's essay. Many elements of Derrida's thought were already present in this work. In the interviews collected in Positions (1972), Derrida said: "In this essay the problematic of writing was already in place as such, bound to the irreducible structure of 'deferral' in its relationships to consciousness, presence, science, history and the history of science, the disappearance or delay of the origin, etc. this essay can be read as the other side (recto or verso, as you wish) of Speech and Phenomena."

Derrida first received major attention outside France with his lecture, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," delivered at Johns Hopkins University in 1966 (and subsequently included in Writing and Difference). The conference at which this paper was delivered was concerned with structuralism, then at the peak of its influence in France, but only beginning to gain attention in the United States. Derrida differed from other participants by his lack of explicit commitment to structuralism, having already been critical of the movement. He praised the accomplishments of structuralism but also maintained reservations about its internal limitations; this has led US academics to label his thought as a form of post-structuralism.

The effect of Derrida's paper was such that by the time the conference proceedings were published in 1970, the title of the collection had become The Structuralist Controversy. The conference was also where he met Paul de Man, who would be a close friend and source of great

controversy, as well as where he first met the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, with whose work Derrida enjoyed a mixed relationship.

Phenomenology vs structuralism debate (1959)

In the early 1960s, Derrida began speaking and writing publicly, addressing the most topical debates at the time. One of these was the new and increasingly fashionable movement of structuralism, which was being widely favoured as the successor to the phenomenology approach, the latter having been started by Husserl sixty years earlier. Derrida's countercurrent take on the issue, at a prominent international conference, was so influential that it reframed the discussion from a celebration of the triumph of structuralism to a "phenomenology vs structuralism debate."

Phenomenology, as envisioned by Husserl, is a method of philosophical inquiry that rejects the rationalist bias that has dominated Western thought since Plato in favor of a method of reflective attentiveness that discloses the individual's "lived experience;" for those with a more phenomenological bent, the goal was to understand experience by comprehending and describing its genesis, the process of its emergence from an origin or event. For the structuralists, this was a false problem, and the "depth" of experience could in fact only be an effect of structures which are not themselves experiential.

In that context, in 1959, Derrida asked the question: Must not structure have a genesis, and must not the origin, the point of genesis, be already structured, in order to be the genesis of something? In other words, every structural or "synchronic" phenomenon has a history, and the structure cannot be understood without understanding its genesis. At the same time, in order that there be movement or potential, the origin cannot be some pure unity or simplicity, but must already be articulated—complex—such that from it a "diachronic" process can emerge. This original complexity must not be understood as an original positing, but more like a default of origin, which Derrida refers to as iterability, inscription, or textuality. It is this thought of originary complexity that sets Derrida's work in motion, and from which all of its terms are derived, including "deconstruction".

Derrida's method consisted in demonstrating the forms and varieties of this originary complexity, and their multiple consequences in many fields. He achieved this by conducting thorough, careful, sensitive, and yet transformational readings of philosophical and literary texts, to determine what aspects of those texts run counter to their apparent systematicity (structural unity) or intended sense (authorial genesis). By demonstrating the aporias and ellipses of thought, Derrida hoped to show the infinitely subtle ways in which this originary complexity, which by definition cannot ever be completely known, works its structuring and destructuring effects.

1967–1972

Derrida's interests crossed disciplinary boundaries, and his knowledge of a wide array of diverse material was reflected in the three collections of work published in 1967: Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology (initially submitted as a Doctorat de spécialité thesis under Maurice de Gandillac), and Writing and Difference.

On several occasions, Derrida has acknowledged his debt to Husserl and Heidegger, and stated that without them he would not have said a single word. Among the questions asked in these essays are "What is 'meaning', what are its historical relationships to what is purportedly identified under the rubric 'voice' as a value of presence, presence of the object, presence of meaning to consciousness, self-presence in so called living speech and in self-consciousness?" In another essay in Writing and Difference entitled "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas", the roots of another major theme in Derrida's thought emerges: the Other as opposed to the Same "Deconstructive analysis deprives the present of its prestige and exposes it to something tout autre, "wholly other," beyond what is foreseeable from the present, beyond the horizon of the "same"." Other than Rousseau, Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas, these three books discussed, and/or relied upon, the works of many philosophers and authors, including linguist Saussure, Hegel, Foucault, Bataille, Descartes, anthropologist Lévi-Strauss, paleontologist Leroi-Gourhan, psychoanalyst Freud, and writers such as Jabès and Artaud.

This collection of three books published in 1967 elaborated Derrida's theoretical framework. Derrida attempts to approach the very heart of the Western intellectual tradition, characterizing this tradition as "a search for a transcendental being that serves as the origin or guarantor of meaning". The attempt to "ground the meaning relations constitutive of the world in an instance that itself lies outside all relationality" was referred to by Heidegger as logocentrism, and Derrida argues that the philosophical enterprise is essentially logocentric, and that this is a paradigm inherited from Judaism and Hellenism. He in turn describes logocentrism as phallocratic, patriarchal and masculinist. Derrida contributed to "the understanding of certain deeply hidden philosophical presuppositions and prejudices in Western culture", arguing that the whole philosophical tradition rests on arbitrary dichotomous categories (such as sacred/profane, signifier/signified, mind/body), and that any text contains implicit hierarchies, "by which an order is imposed on reality and by which a subtle repression is exercised, as these hierarchies exclude, subordinate, and hide the various potential meanings." Derrida refers to his procedure for uncovering and unsettling these dichotomies as deconstruction of Western culture.

In 1968, he published his influential essay "Plato's Pharmacy" in the French journal Tel Quel. This essay was later collected in Dissemination, one of three books published by Derrida in 1972, along with the essay collection Margins of Philosophy and the collection of interviews entitled Positions.

1973–1980

Starting in 1972, Derrida produced on average more than one book per year. Derrida continued to produce important works, such as Glas (1974) and The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond (1980).

Derrida received increasing attention in the United States after 1972, where he was a regular visiting professor and lecturer at several major American universities. In the 1980s, during the American culture wars,

conservatives started a dispute over Derrida's influence and legacy upon American intellectuals, and claimed that he influenced American literary critics and theorists more than academic philosophers.

Of Spirit (1987)

On March 14, 1987, Derrida presented at the CIPH conference titled "Heidegger: Open Questions," a lecture which was published in October 1987 as Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question. It follows the shifting role of Geist (spirit) through Heidegger's work, noting that, in 1927, "spirit" was one of the philosophical terms that Heidegger set his sights on dismantling. With his Nazi political engagement in 1933, however, Heidegger came out as a champion of the "German Spirit," and only withdrew from an exalting interpretation of the term in 1953. Derrida asks, "What of this meantime?" His book connects in a number of respects with his long engagement of Heidegger (such as "The Ends of Man" in Margins of Philosophy, his Paris seminar on philosophical nationality and nationalism in the mid-1980s, and the essays published in English as Geschlecht and Geschlecht II). He considers "four guiding threads" of Heideggerian philosophy that form "the knot of this Geflecht ": "the question of the question," "the essence of technology," "the discourse of animality," and "epochality" or "the hidden teleology or the narrative order."

Of Spirit contributes to the long debate on Heidegger's Nazism and appeared at the same time as the French publication of a book by a previously unknown Chilean writer, Victor Farías, who charged that Heidegger's philosophy amounted to a wholehearted endorsement of the Nazi Sturmabteilung (SA) faction. Derrida responded to Farías in an interview, "Heidegger, the Philosopher's Hell" and a subsequent article, "Comment donner raison? How to Concede, with Reasons?" He called Farías a weak reader of Heidegger's thought, adding that much of the evidence Farías and his supporters touted as new had long been known within the philosophical community.

1990s: political and ethical themes

Notes

Some have argued that Derrida's work took a "political turn" in the 1990s. Texts cited as evidence of such a turn include Force of Law (1990), as well as Specters of Marx (1994) and Politics of Friendship (1994). Others, however, including Derrida himself, have argued that much of the philosophical work done in his "political turn" can be dated to earlier essays. Derrida develops an ethicist view respecting to hospitality, exploring the idea that two types of hospitalities exist, conditional and unconditional. Though this contributed to the works of many scholars, Derrida was seriously criticized for this.

Those who argue Derrida engaged in an "ethical turn" refer to works such as The Gift of Death as evidence that he began more directly applying deconstruction to the relationship between ethics and religion. In this work, Derrida interprets passages from the Bible, particularly on Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac, and from Søren Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling. Derrida's contemporary readings of Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin, Carl Schmitt, Jan Patočka, on themes such as law, justice, responsibility, and friendship, had a significant impact on fields beyond philosophy. Derrida and Deconstruction influenced aesthetics, literary criticism, architecture, film theory, anthropology, sociology, historiography, law, psychoanalysis, theology, feminism, gay and lesbian studies and political theory. Jean-Luc Nancy, Richard Rorty, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom, Rosalind Krauss, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Duncan Kennedy, Gary Peller, Drucilla Cornell, Alan Hunt, Hayden White, Mario Kopić, and Alun Munslow are some of the authors who have been influenced by deconstruction.

Derrida delivered a eulogy at Levinas' funeral, later published as Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas, an appreciation and exploration of Levinas's moral philosophy. Derrida used Bracha L. Ettinger's interpretation of Lévinas' notion of femininity and transformed his own earlier reading of this subject respectively.

Derrida continued to produce readings of literature, writing extensively on Maurice Blanchot, Paul Celan, and others.

In 1991 he published The Other Heading, in which he discussed the concept of identity (as in cultural identity, European identity, and

national identity), in the name of which in Europe have been unleashed "the worst violences," "the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism."

At the 1997 Cerisy Conference, Derrida delivered a ten-hour address on the subject of "the autobiographical animal" entitled The Animal That Therefore I Am (More To Follow). Engaging with questions surrounding the ontology of nonhuman animals, the ethics of animal slaughter and the difference between humans and other animals, the address has been seen as initiating a late "animal turn" in Derrida's philosophy, although Derrida himself has said that his interest in animals is present in his earliest writings.

The Work of Mourning (1981–2001)

Beginning with "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" in 1981, Derrida produced a series of texts on mourning and memory occasioned by the loss of his friends and colleagues, many of them new engagements with their work. Memoires for Paul de Man, a book-length lecture series presented first at Yale and then at Irvine as Derrida's Wellek Lecture, followed in 1986, with a revision in 1989 that included "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War". Ultimately, fourteen essays were collected into The Work of Mourning (2001), which was expanded in the 2003 French edition, Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde (literally, "The end of the world, unique each time"), to include essays dedicated to Gérard Granel and Maurice Blanchot.

2002

In October 2002, at the theatrical opening of the film Derrida, he said that, in many ways, he felt more and more close to Guy Debord's work, and that this closeness appears in Derrida's texts. Derrida mentioned, in particular, "everything I say about the media, technology, the spectacle, and the 'criticism of the show', so to speak, and the markets – the becoming-a-spectacle of everything, and the exploitation of the spectacle." Among the places in which Derrida mentions the Spectacle, is a 1997 interview about the notion of the intellectual.

9.5 POLITICS

Derrida engaged with many political issues, movements, and debates:

- Although Derrida participated in the rallies of the May 1968 protests, and organized the first general assembly at the École Normale Superieure, he said "I was on my guard, even worried in the face of a certain cult of spontaneity, a fusionist, anti-unionist euphoria, in the face of the enthusiasm of a finally "freed" speech, of restored "transparence," and so forth." During May '68, he met frequently with Maurice Blanchot.

- He registered his objections to the Vietnam War in delivering "The Ends of Man" in the United States.

- In 1977, he was among the intellectuals, with Foucault and Althusser, who signed the petition against age of consent laws.

- In 1981 Derrida, on the prompting of Roger Scruton and others, founded the French Jan Hus association with structuralist historian Jean-Pierre Vernant. Its purpose was to aid dissident or persecuted Czech intellectuals. Derrida became vice-president.

- In late 1981 he was arrested by the Czechoslovakian government upon leading a conference in Prague that lacked government authorization, and charged with the "production and trafficking of drugs", which he claimed were planted as he visited Kafka's grave. He was released (or "expelled", as the Czechoslovakian government put it) after the interventions of the Mitterrand government, and the assistance of Michel Foucault, returning to Paris on January 1, 1982.

- He registered his concerns against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in 1984.

- He was active in cultural activities against the Apartheid government of South Africa and on behalf of Nelson Mandela beginning in 1983.

- He met with Palestinian intellectuals during a 1988 visit to Jerusalem.

- He protested against the death penalty, dedicating his seminar in his last years to the production of a non-utilitarian argument for its abolition, and was active in the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

- Derrida was not known to have participated in any conventional electoral political party until 1995, when he joined a committee in support of Lionel Jospin's Socialist candidacy, although he expressed misgivings about such organizations going back to Communist organizational efforts while he was a student at ENS.

- In the 2002 French presidential election he refused to vote in the run-off between far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen and center-right Jacques Chirac, citing a lack of acceptable choices.

- While supportive of the American government in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, he opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq (see Rogues and his contribution to Philosophy in a Time of Terror with Giovanna Borradori and Jürgen Habermas).

Beyond these explicit political interventions, however, Derrida was engaged in rethinking politics and the political itself, within and beyond philosophy. Derrida insisted that a distinct political undertone had pervaded his texts from the very beginning of his career. Nevertheless, the attempt to understand the political implications of notions of responsibility, reason of state, the other, decision, sovereignty, Europe, friendship, difference, faith, and so on, became much more marked from the early 1990s on. By 2000, theorizing "democracy to come," and thinking the limitations of existing democracies, had become important concerns.

9.6 INFLUENCES ON DERRIDA

Crucial readings in his adolescence were Rousseau's Reveries of a Solitary Walker and Confessions, André Gide's journal, La porte étroite, Les nourritures terrestres and The Immoralist; and the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. The phrase Families, I hate you! in particular, which inspired Derrida as an adolescent, is a famous verse from Gide's Les nourritures terrestres, book IV. In a 1991 interview Derrida commented on a similar

verse, also from book IV of the same Gide work: "I hated the homes, the families, all the places where man thinks he'll find rest" (Je haïssais les foyers, les familles, tous lieux où l'homme pense trouver un repos).

Other influences upon Derrida are Martin Heidegger, Plato, Søren Kierkegaard, Alexandre Kojève, Maurice Blanchot, Antonin Artaud, Roland Barthes, Georges Bataille, Edmund Husserl, Emmanuel Lévinas, Ferdinand de Saussure, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Claude Lévi-Strauss, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, J. L. Austin and Stéphane Mallarmé.

His book, Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas, reveals his mentorship by this philosopher and Talmudic scholar who practiced the phenomenological encounter with the Other in the form of the Face, which commanded human response

9.7 PEERS AND CONTEMPORARIES

Derrida's philosophical friends, allies, students and the heirs of Derrida's thought include Paul de Man, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Sarah Kofman, Hélène Cixous, Bernard Stiegler, Alexander García Düttmann, Joseph Cohen, Geoffrey Bennington, Jean-Luc Marion, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Raphael Zagury-Orly, Jacques Ehrmann, Avital Ronell, Judith Butler, Béatrice Galinon-Mélénec, Ernesto Laclau, Samuel Weber and Catherine Malabou.

Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe

Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe were among Derrida's first students in France and went on to become well-known and important philosophers in their own right. Despite their considerable differences of subject, and often also of a method, they continued their close interaction with each other and with Derrida, from the early 1970s.

Derrida wrote on both of them, including a long book on Nancy: Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy (On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy, 2005).

Paul de Man

Derrida's most prominent friendship in intellectual life was with Paul de Man, which began with their meeting at Johns Hopkins University and continued until de Man's death in 1983. De Man provided a somewhat different approach to deconstruction, and his readings of literary and philosophical texts were crucial in the training of a generation of readers.

Shortly after de Man's death, Derrida wrote the book Memoires: pour Paul de Man and in 1988 wrote an article in the journal Critical Inquiry called "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War". The memoir became cause for controversy, because shortly before Derrida published his piece, it had been discovered by the Belgian literary critic Ortwin de Graef that long before his academic career in the US, de Man had written almost two hundred essays in a pro-Nazi newspaper during the German occupation of Belgium, including several that were explicitly antisemitic.

Derrida complicated the notion that it is possible to simply read de Man's later scholarship through the prism of these earlier political essays. Rather, any claims about de Man's work should be understood in relation to the entire body of his scholarship. Critics of Derrida have argued that he minimizes the antisemitic character of de Man's writing. Some critics have found Derrida's treatment of this issue surprising, given that, for example, Derrida also spoke out against antisemitism and, in the 1960s, broke with the Heidegger disciple Jean Beaufret over Beaufret's instances of antisemitism, about which Derrida (and, after him, Maurice Blanchot) expressed shock.

Michel Foucault

Derrida's criticism of Foucault appears in the essay Cogito and the History of Madness (from Writing and Difference). It was first given as a lecture on March 4, 1963, at a conference at Wahl's Collège philosophique, which Foucault attended, and caused a rift between the two men that was never fully mended.

In an appendix added to the 1972 edition of his History of Madness, Foucault disputed Derrida's interpretation of his work, and accused Derrida of practicing "a historically well-determined little pedagogy

which teaches the student that there is nothing outside the text . A pedagogy which inversely gives to the voice of the masters that infinite sovereignty that allows it indefinitely to re-say the text." According to historian Carlo Ginzburg, Foucault may have written The Order of Things (1966) and The Archaeology of Knowledge partly under the stimulus of Derrida's criticism. Carlo Ginzburg briefly labeled Derrida's criticism in Cogito and the History of Madness, as "facile, nihilistic objections," without giving further argumentation.

Derrida's translators

Geoffrey Bennington, Avital Ronell and Samuel Weber belong to a group of Derrida translators. Many of Derrida's translators are esteemed thinkers in their own right. Derrida often worked in a collaborative arrangement, allowing his prolific output to be translated into English in a timely fashion.

Having started as a student of de Man, Gayatri Spivak took on the translation of Of Grammatology early in her career and has since revised it into a second edition. Barbara Johnson's translation of Derrida's Dissemination was published by The Athlone Press in 1981. Alan Bass was responsible for several early translations; Bennington and Peggy Kamuf have continued to produce translations of his work for nearly twenty years. In recent years, a number of translations have appeared by Michael Naas (also a Derrida scholar) and Pascale-Anne Brault.

Bennington, Brault, Kamuf, Naas, Elizabeth Rottenberg, and David Wills are currently engaged in translating Derrida's previously unpublished seminars, which span from 1959 to 2003. Volumes I and II of The Beast and the Sovereign (presenting Derrida's seminars from December 12, 2001 to March 27, 2002 and from December 11, 2002 to March 26, 2003), as well as The Death Penalty, Volume I (covering December 8, 1999 to March 22, 2000), have appeared in English translation. Further volumes currently projected for the series include Heidegger: The Question of Being and History (1964-1965), Death Penalty, Volume II (2000–2001), Perjury and Pardon, Volume I (1997–1998), and Perjury and Pardon, Volume II (1998–1999).

With Bennington, Derrida undertook the challenge published as Jacques Derrida, an arrangement in which Bennington attempted to provide a systematic explication of Derrida's work (called the "Derridabase") using the top two-thirds of every page, while Derrida was given the finished copy of every Bennington chapter and the bottom third of every page in which to show how deconstruction exceeded Bennington's account (this was called the "Circumfession"). Derrida seems to have viewed Bennington in particular as a kind of rabbinical explicator, noting at the end of the "Applied Derrida" conference, held at the University of Luton in 1995 that: "everything has been said and, as usual, Geoff Bennington has said everything before I have even opened my mouth. I have the challenge of trying to be unpredictable after him, which is impossible... so I'll try to pretend to be unpredictable after Geoff. Once again."

Marshall McLuhan

Derrida was familiar with the work of Marshall McLuhan, and since his early 1967 writings (Of Grammatology, Speech and Phenomena), he speaks of language as a "medium," of phonetic writing as "the medium of the great metaphysical, scientific, technical, and economic adventure of the West."

He expressed his disagreement with McLuhan in regard to what Derrida called McLuhan's ideology about the end of writing. In a 1982 interview, he said:

I think that there is an ideology in McLuhan's discourse that I don't agree with because he's an optimist as to the possibility of restoring an oral community which would get rid of the writing machines and so on. I think that's a very traditional myth which goes back to... let's say Plato, Rousseau... And instead of thinking that we are living at the end of writing, I think that in another sense we are living in the extension – the overwhelming extension – of writing. At least in the new sense... I don't mean the alphabetic writing down, but in the new sense of those writing machines that we're using now (e.g. the tape recorder). And this is writing too.

And in his 1972 essay Signature Event Context he said:

As writing, communication, if one insists upon maintaining the word, is not the means of transport of sense, the exchange of intentions and meanings, the discourse and "communication of consciousnesses." We are not witnessing an end of writing which, to follow McLuhan's ideological representation, would restore a transparency or immediacy of social relations; but indeed a more and more powerful historical unfolding of a general writing of which the system of speech, consciousness, meaning, presence, truth, etc., would only be an effect, to be analyzed as such. It is this questioned effect that I have elsewhere called logocentrism.

Architectural thinkers

Derrida had a direct impact on the theories and practices of influential architects Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi towards the end of the twentieth century. Derrida impacted a project that was theorized by Eisenman in Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman. This design was architecturally conceived by Tschumi for the Parc de la Villette in Paris, which included a sieve, or harp-like structure that Derrida envisaged as a physical metaphor for the receptacle-like properties of the khôra. Moreover, Derrida's commentaries on Plato's notion of khôra (χώρα) as set in the Timaeus (48e4) received later reflections in the philosophical works and architectural writings of the philosopher-architect Nader El-Bizri within the domain of phenomenology.

Derrida used "χώρα" to name a radical otherness that "gives place" for being. El-Bizri built on this by more narrowly taking khôra to name the radical happening of an ontological difference between being and beings. El-Bizri's reflections on "khôra" are taken as a basis for tackling the meditations on dwelling and on being and space in Heidegger's thought and the critical conceptions of space and place as they evolved in architectural theory (and its strands in phenomenological thinking), and in history of philosophy and science, with a focus on geometry and optics. This also describes El-Bizri's take on "econtology" as an extension of Heidegger's consideration of the question of being (Seinsfrage) by way of the fourfold (Das Geviert) of earth-sky-mortals-divinities (Erde und Himmel, Sterblichen und Göttlichen); and as also

impacted by his own meditations on Derrida's take on "χώρα". Ecology is hence co-entangled with ontology, whereby the worldly existential analytics are grounded in earthiness, and environmentalism is orientated by ontological thinking Derrida argued that the subjectile is like Plato's khôra, Greek for space, receptacle or site. Plato proposes that khôra rests between the sensible and the intelligible, through which everything passes but in which nothing is retained. For example, an image needs to be held by something, just as a mirror will hold a reflection. For Derrida, khôra defies attempts at naming or the either/or logic, which he "deconstructed".

Check your Progress-1

1. When and where did Derrida took birth?

_____

_____

_____

2. What did Derrida publish in the year 1962?

_____

_____

_____

3. Why was Derrida arrested in the year 1981?

_____

_____

_____

9.8 LET US SUM UP

Jacques Derrida, (born July 15, 1930, El Biar, Algeria—died October 8, 2004, Paris, France), French philosopher whose critique of Western philosophy and analyses of the nature of language, writing, and meaning were highly controversial yet immensely influential in much of the intellectual world in the late 20th century.

Life And Work

Derrida was born to Sephardic Jewish parents in French-governed Algeria. Educated in the French tradition, he went to France in 1949, studied at the elite École Normale Supérieure (ENS), and taught philosophy at the Sorbonne (1960–64), the ENS (1964–84), and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (1984–99), all in Paris. From the 1960s he published numerous books and essays on an immense range of topics and taught and lectured throughout the world, including at Yale University and the University of California, Irvine, attaining an international celebrity comparable only to that of Jean-Paul Sartre a generation earlier.

Derrida is most celebrated as the principal exponent of deconstruction, a term he coined for the critical examination of the fundamental conceptual distinctions, or "oppositions," inherent in Western philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks. These oppositions are characteristically "binary" and "hierarchical," involving a pair of terms in which one member of the pair is assumed to be primary or fundamental, the other secondary or derivative. Examples include nature and culture, speech and writing, mind and body, presence and absence, inside and outside, literal and metaphorical, intelligible and sensible, and form and meaning, among many others. To "deconstruct" an opposition is to explore the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering assumed or asserted in the text and other aspects of the text's meaning, especially those that are indirect or implicit. Such an analysis shows that the opposition is not natural or necessary but a product, or "construction," of the text itself.

The speech/writing opposition, for example, is manifested in texts that treat speech as a more authentic form of language than writing. These texts assume that the speaker's ideas and intentions are directly expressed and immediately "present" in speech, whereas in writing they are comparatively remote or "absent" and thus more easily misunderstood. As Derrida points out, however, speech functions as language only to the extent that it shares characteristics traditionally assigned to writing, such as absence, "difference," and the possibility of misunderstanding. This fact is indicated by philosophical texts themselves, which invariably describe speech in terms of examples and

metaphors drawn from writing, even in cases where writing is explicitly claimed to be secondary to speech. Significantly, Derrida does not wish simply to invert the speech/writing opposition—i.e., to show that writing is really prior to speech. As with any deconstructive analysis, the point is to restructure, or "displace," the opposition so as to show that neither term is primary.

The speech/writing opposition derives from a pervasive picture of meaning that equates linguistic meaning with the ideas and intentions in the mind of the speaker or author. Building on theories of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, Derrida coined the term différance, meaning both a difference and an act of deferring, to characterize the way in which linguistic meaning is created rather than given. For Derrida as for Saussure, the meaning of a word is a function of the distinctive contrasts it displays with other, related meanings. Because each word depends for its meaning on the meanings of other words, it follows that the meaning of a word is never fully "present" to us, as it would be if meanings were the same as ideas or intentions; instead it is endlessly "deferred" in an infinitely long chain of meanings. Derrida expresses this idea by saying that meaning is created by the "play" of differences between words—a play that is "limitless," "infinite," and "indefinite."

In the 1960s Derrida's work was welcomed in France and elsewhere by thinkers interested in the broad interdisciplinary movement known as structuralism. The structuralists analyzed various cultural phenomena—such as myths, religious rituals, literary narratives, and fashions in dress and adornment—as general systems of signs analogous to natural languages, with their own vocabularies and their own underlying rules and structures, and attempted to develop a metalanguage of terms and concepts in which the various sign systems could be described. Some of Derrida's early work was a critique of major structuralist thinkers such as Saussure, the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the intellectual historian and philosopher Michel Foucault. Derrida was thus seen, especially in the United States, as leading a movement beyond structuralism to "poststructuralism," which was skeptical about the possibility of a general science of meaning.

In other work, particularly three books published in 1967— L'Écriture et la différence (Writing and Difference), De la grammatologie (Of Grammatology), and La Voix et le phénomène (Speech and Phenomena)—Derrida explored the treatment of writing by several seminal figures in the history of Western thought, including the philosophers Edmund Husserl and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Other books, published in 1972, include analyses of writing and representation in the work of philosophers such as Plato (La Dissémination) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Husserl, and Martin Heidegger (Marges de la philosophie). Glas (1974) is an experimental book printed in two columns—one containing an analysis of key concepts in the philosophy of Hegel, the other a suggestive discussion of the thief, novelist, and playwright Jean Genet. Although Derrida's writing had always been marked by a keen interest in what words can do, here he produced a work that plays with juxtaposition to explore how language can incite thought.

One might distinguish in Derrida's work a period of philosophical deconstruction from a later period focusing on literature and emphasizing the singularity of the literary work and the play of meaning in avant-garde writers such as Genet, Stéphane Mallarmé, Francis Ponge, and James Joyce. His later work also took up a host of other issues, notably the legacy of Marxism (Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale) and psychoanalysis (La Carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà). Other essays considered political, legal, and ethical issues, as well as topics in aesthetics and literature. He also addressed the question of Jewishness and the Jewish tradition in Shibboleth and the autobiographical "Circumfession" (1991).

9.9 KEYWORDS

1. **Nihilistic:** rejecting all religious and moral principles in the belief that life is meaningless.
2. **Pedagogy:** the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.
3. **Anti-Semitic:** hostile to or prejudiced against Jews

4. **Rabbinical:** relating to Jewish law or teachings

5. **Envisaged:** contemplate or conceive of as a possibility or a desirable future event.

9.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write a note on early life of Jacques Derrida.

- Write a note on the influences on Derrida.

9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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- Derrida on Religion: Thinker of Differance By Dawne McCance. Equinox. p. 7.

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- Bensmaïa, Réda, "Poststructuralism", in Kritzman (2005), pp. 92–93.

- Poster (1988), pp. 5–6.

- Vincent B. Leitch Postmodernism: Local Effects, Global Flows, SUNY Series in Postmodern Culture (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 27.

9.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PRO

- Derrida was born on July 15, 1930, in a summer home in El Biar (Algiers), Algeria   **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 1)**

  - In 1962 he published Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, which contained his own translation of Husserl's essay. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 2)**

- In late 1981 he was arrested by the Czechoslovakian government upon leading a conference in Prague that lacked government authorization, and charged with the "production and trafficking of drugs". **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 3)**

UNIT-10 JACQUES DERRIDA- 'STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES', LYOTARD, 'DEFINING THE POSTMODERN' - 2

STRUCTURE

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Criticism against Jacques Derrida

10.3 Structure, Sign, And Play In The Discourses Of The Human Sciences

10.4 Let us sum up

10.5 Keywords

10.6 Questions for Review

10.7 Suggested Reading and References

10.8 Answers to Check your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would learn about the criticism against Jacques Derrida;
- and, you will also learn about the Structure, Sign, And Play In The Discourses Of The Human Sciences.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida's work has been through a lot of criticism through many Marxists and analytic philosophers.

Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences was a lecture presented at Johns Hopkins University on 21 October 1966 by philosopher Jacques Derrida. The lecture was then published in 1967 as chapter ten of Writing and Difference.

10.2 CRITICISM AGAINST JACQUES DERRIDA

Criticism from Marxists

In a paper entitled Ghostwriting, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—the translator of Derrida's De la grammatologie (Of Grammatology) into English—criticised Derrida's understanding of Marx. Commenting on Derrida's Specters of Marx, Terry Eagleton wrote "The portentousness is ingrained in the very letter of this book, as one theatrically inflected rhetorical question tumbles hard on the heels of another in a tiresomely mannered syntax which lays itself wide open to parody.

Criticism from analytic philosophers

Though Derrida addressed the American Philosophical Association on at least one occasion in 1988, and was highly regarded by some contemporary philosophers like Richard Rorty, Alexander Nehamas, and Stanley Cavell, his work has been regarded by other analytic philosophers, such as John Searle and Willard Van Orman Quine, as pseudo philosophy or sophistry.

Some analytic philosophers have in fact claimed, since at least the 1980s, that Derrida's work is "not philosophy." One of the main arguments they gave was alleging that Derrida's influence had not been on US philosophy departments but on literature and other humanities disciplines.

In his 1989 Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, Richard Rorty argues that Derrida (especially in his book, The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond, one section of which is an experiment in fiction)

purposefully uses words that cannot be defined (e.g., différance), and uses previously definable words in contexts diverse enough to make understanding impossible, so that the reader will never be able to contextualize Derrida's literary self. Rorty, however, argues that this intentional obfuscation is philosophically grounded. In garbling his message Derrida is attempting to escape the naïve, positive metaphysical projects of his predecessors.

Philosopher Sir Roger Scruton wrote in 2004, "He's difficult to summarise because it's nonsense. He argues that the meaning of a sign is never revealed in the sign but deferred indefinitely and that a sign only means something by virtue of its difference from something else. For Derrida, there is no such thing as meaning – it always eludes us and therefore anything goes."

On Derrida's scholarship and writing style, Noam Chomsky wrote "I found the scholarship appalling, based on pathetic misreading; and the argument, such as it was, failed to come close to the kinds of standards I've been familiar with since virtually childhood. Well, maybe I missed something: could be, but suspicions remain, as noted."

Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt also criticized his work for misusing scientific terms and concepts in Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels With Science (1994).

Three quarrels (or disputes) in particular went out of academic circles and received international mass media coverage: the 1972–88 quarrel with John Searle, the analytic philosophers' pressures on Cambridge University not to award Derrida an honorary degree, and a dispute with Richard Wolin and the NYRB.

Searle–Derrida Debate

In the early 1970s, Searle had a brief exchange with Jacques Derrida regarding speech-act theory. The exchange was characterized by a degree of mutual hostility between the philosophers, each of whom accused the other of having misunderstood his basic points. Searle was particularly hostile to Derrida's deconstructionist framework and much later refused to let his response to Derrida be printed along with Derrida's papers in

the 1988 collection Limited Inc. Searle did not consider Derrida's approach to be legitimate philosophy or even intelligible writing and argued that he did not want to legitimize the deconstructionist point of view by dedicating any attention to it. Consequently, some critics have considered the exchange to be a series of elaborate misunderstandings rather than a debate, while others have seen either Derrida or Searle gaining the upper hand. The level of hostility can be seen from Searle's statement that "It would be a mistake to regard Derrida's discussion of Austin as a confrontation between two prominent philosophical traditions", to which Derrida replied that that sentence was "the only sentence of the "reply" to which I can subscribe". Commentators have frequently interpreted the exchange as a prominent example of a confrontation between analytical and continental philosophy.

The debate began in 1972, when, in his paper "Signature Event Context", Derrida analyzed J. L. Austin's theory of the illocutionary act. While sympathetic to Austin's departure from a purely denotational account of language to one that includes "force", Derrida was sceptical of the framework of normativity employed by Austin. He argued that Austin had missed the fact that any speech event is framed by a "structure of absence" (the words that are left unsaid due to contextual constraints) and by "iterability" (the constraints on what can be said, given by what has been said in the past). Derrida argued that the focus on intentionality in speech-act theory was misguided because intentionality is restricted to that which is already established as a possible intention. He also took issue with the way Austin had excluded the study of fiction, non-serious or "parasitic" speech, wondering whether this exclusion was because Austin had considered these speech genres governed by different structures of meaning, or simply due to a lack of interest. In his brief reply to Derrida, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida", Searle argued that Derrida's critique was unwarranted because it assumed that Austin's theory attempted to give a full account of language and meaning when its aim was much narrower. Searle considered the omission of parasitic discourse forms to be justified by the narrow scope of Austin's inquiry. Searle agreed with Derrida's proposal that intentionality presupposes iterability, but did not apply the same concept

of intentionality used by Derrida, being unable or unwilling to engage with the continental conceptual apparatus. (This caused Derrida to criticize Searle for not being sufficiently familiar with phenomenological perspectives on intentionality.) Searle also argued that Derrida's disagreement with Austin turned on his having misunderstood Austin's type–token distinction and his failure to understand Austin's concept of failure in relation to performativity. Some critics have suggested that Searle, by being so grounded in the analytical tradition that he was unable to engage with Derrida's continental phenomenological tradition, was at fault for the unsuccessful nature of the exchange.

The substance of Searle's criticism of Derrida in relation to topics in the philosophy of language—referenced in Derrida's Signature Event Context—was that Derrida had no apparent familiarity with contemporary philosophy of language nor of contemporary linguistics in Anglo-Saxon countries. Searle explains, "When Derrida writes about the philosophy of language he refers typically to Rousseau and Condillac, not to mention Plato. And his idea of a "modern linguist" is Benveniste or even Saussure." Searle describes Derrida's philosophical knowledge as pre-Wittgensteinian—that is to say, disconnected from analytic tradition—and consequently, in his perspective, naive and misguided, concerned with issues long-since resolved or otherwise found to be non-issues.

Searle also wrote in The New York Review of Books that he was surprised by "the low level of philosophical argumentation, the deliberate obscurantism of the prose, the wildly exaggerated claims, and the constant striving to give the appearance of profundity by making claims that seem paradoxical, but under analysis often turn out to be silly or trivial."

Derrida, in his response to Searle ("a b c ..." in Limited Inc), ridiculed Searle's positions. Claiming that a clear sender of Searle's message could not be established, he suggested that Searle had formed with Austin a société à responsabilité limitée (a "limited liability company") due to the ways in which the ambiguities of authorship within Searle's reply circumvented the very speech act of his reply. Searle did not reply. Later

in 1988, Derrida tried to review his position and his critiques of Austin and Searle, reiterating that he found the constant appeal to "normality" in the analytical tradition to be problematic from which they were only paradigmatic examples.

In the description of the structure called "normal," "normative," "central," "ideal," this possibility must be integrated as an essential possibility. The possibility cannot be treated as though it were a simple accident-marginal or parasitic. It cannot be, and hence ought not to be, and this passage from can to ought reflects the entire difficulty. In the analysis of so-called normal cases, one neither can nor ought, in all theoretical rigor, to exclude the possibility of transgression. Not even provisionally, or out of allegedly methodological considerations. It would be a poor method, since this possibility of transgression tells us immediately and indispensable about the structure of the act said to be normal as well as about the structure of law in general.

He continued arguing how problematic was establishing the relation between "nonfiction or standard discourse" and "fiction," defined as its "parasite", "for part of the most original essence of the latter is to allow fiction, the simulacrum, parasitism, to take place-and in so doing to 'de-essentialize' itself as it were". He would finally argue that the indispensable question would then become:

what is "nonfiction standard discourse," what must it be and what does this name evoke, once its fictionality or its fictionalization, its transgressive "parasitism," is always possible (and moreover by virtue of the very same words, the same phrases, the same grammar, etc.)? This question is all the more indispensable since the rules, and even the statements of the rules governing the relations of "nonfiction standard discourse" and its fictional "parasites," are not things found in nature, but laws, symbolic inventions, or conventions, institutions that, in their very normality as well as in their normativity, entail something of the fictional.

In the debate, Derrida praises Austin's work but argues that he is wrong to banish what Austin calls "infelicities" from the "normal" operation of language. One "infelicity," for instance, occurs when it cannot be known

whether a given speech act is "sincere" or "merely citational" (and therefore possibly ironic, etc.). Derrida argues that every iteration is necessarily "citational," due to the graphematic nature of speech and writing, and that language could not work at all without the ever-present and ineradicable possibility of such alternate readings. Derrida takes Searle to task for his attempt to get around this issue by grounding final authority in the speaker's inaccessible "intention". Derrida argues that intention cannot possibly govern how an iteration signifies, once it becomes hearable or readable. All speech acts borrow a language whose significance is determined by historical-linguistic context, and by the alternate possibilities that this context makes possible. This significance, Derrida argues, cannot be altered or governed by the whims of intention.

In 1994, Searle argued that the ideas upon which deconstruction is founded are essentially a consequence of a series of conceptual confusions made by Derrida as a result of his outdated knowledge or are merely banalities. He insisted that Derrida's conception of iterability and its alleged "corrupting" effect on meaning stems from Derrida's ignorance of the type–token distinction that exists in current linguistics and philosophy of language. As Searle explains, "Most importantly, from the fact that different tokens of a sentence type can be uttered on different occasions with different intentions, that is, different speaker meanings, nothing of any significance follows about the original speaker meaning of the original utterance token."

In 1995, Searle gave a brief reply to Derrida in The Construction of Social Reality. He called Derrida's conclusion "preposterous" and stated that "Derrida, as far as I can tell, does not have an argument. He simply declares that there is nothing outside of texts..." Searle's reference here is not to anything forwarded in the debate, but to a mistranslation of the phrase "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" ("there is no outside-text"), which appears in Derrida's Of Grammatology.

According to Searle, the consistent pattern of Derrida's rhetoric is:

(a) announce a preposterous thesis, e.g. "there is no outside-text" (il n'y a pas de hors-texte);

(b) when challenged on (a) respond that you have been misunderstood and revise the claim in (a) such that it becomes a truism, e.g. "'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' means nothing else: there is nothing outside contexts";

(c) when the reformulation from (b) is acknowledged then proceed as if the original formulation from (a) was accepted. The revised idea—for example that everything exists in some context—is a banality but a charade ensues as if the original claim—nothing exists outside of text — had been established.

Cambridge honorary doctorate

In 1992 some academics at Cambridge University, mostly not from the philosophy faculty, proposed that Derrida be awarded an honorary doctorate. This was opposed by, among others, the university's Professor of Philosophy David Mellor. Eighteen other philosophers from US, Austrian, Australian, French, Polish, Italian, German, Dutch, Swiss, Spanish, and UK institutions, including Barry Smith, Willard Van Orman Quine, David Armstrong, Ruth Barcan Marcus, and René Thom, then sent a letter to Cambridge claiming that Derrida's work "does not meet accepted standards of clarity and rigour" and describing Derrida's philosophy as being composed of "tricks and gimmicks similar to those of the Dadaists." The letter concluded that:

 ... where coherent assertions are being made at all, these are either false or trivial. Academic status based on what seems to us to be little more than semi-intelligible attacks upon the values of reason, truth, and scholarship is not, we submit, sufficient grounds for the awarding of an honorary degree in a distinguished university.

In the end the protesters were outnumbered—336 votes to 204—when Cambridge put the motion to a vote; though almost all of those who proposed Derrida and who voted in favour were not from the philosophy faculty. Derrida suggested in an interview that part of the reason for the attacks on his work was that it questioned and modified "the rules of the dominant discourse, it tries to politicize and democratize education and the university scene." To answer a question about the "exceptional violence," the compulsive "ferocity," and the "exaggeration" of the

"attacks," he would say that these critics organize and practice in his case "a sort of obsessive personality cult which philosophers should know how to question and above all to moderate".

Dispute with Richard Wolin and the NYRB

Richard Wolin has argued since 1991 that Derrida's work, as well as that of Derrida's major inspirations (e.g., Bataille, Blanchot, Levinas, Heidegger, Nietzsche), leads to a corrosive nihilism. For example, Wolin argues that the "deconstructive gesture of overturning and reinscription ends up by threatening to efface many of the essential differences between Nazism and non-Nazism".

In 1991, when Wolin published a Derrida interview on Heidegger in the first edition of The Heidegger Controversy, Derrida argued that the interview was an intentionally malicious mistranslation, which was "demonstrably execrable" and "weak, simplistic, and compulsively aggressive". As French law requires the consent of an author to translations and this consent was not given, Derrida insisted that the interview not appear in any subsequent editions or reprints. Columbia University Press subsequently refused to offer reprints or new editions. Later editions of The Heidegger Controversy by MIT Press also omitted the Derrida interview. The matter achieved public exposure owing to a friendly review of Wolin's book by the Heideggerian scholar Thomas Sheehan that appeared in The New York Review of Books, in which Sheehan characterised Derrida's protests as an imposition of censorship. It was followed by an exchange of letters. Derrida in turn responded to Sheehan and Wolin, in "The Work of Intellectuals and the Press (The Bad Example: How the New York Review of Books and Company do Business)", which was published in the book Points....

Twenty-four academics, belonging to different schools and groups – often in disagreement with each other and with deconstruction – signed a letter addressed to The New York Review of Books, in which they expressed their indignation for the magazine's behaviour as well as that of Sheenan and Wolin.

10.3 STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

Derrida begins the essay by referring to 'an event' which has 'perhaps' occurred in the history of the concept of structure, that is also a 'redoubling'. The event which the essay documents is that of a definitive epistemological break with structuralist thought, of the ushering in of post-structuralism as a movement critically engaging with structuralism and also with traditional humanism and empiricism. It turns the logic of structuralism against itself insisting that the "structurality of structure" itself had been repressed in structuralism.

Derrida starts this essay by putting into question the basic metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy since Plato which has always principally positioned itself with a fixed immutable centre, a static presence. The notion of structure, even in structuralist theory has always presupposed a centre of meaning of sorts. Derrida terms this desire for a centre as "logocentrism" in his seminal work "Of Grammatology (1966)". 'Logos', is a Greek word for 'word' which carries the greatest possible concentration of presence. As Terry Eagleton explains in "Literary Theory: An Introduction (1996)", "Western Philosophy…. has also been in a broader sense, 'logocentric', committed to a belief in some ultimate 'word', presence, essence, truth or reality which will act as the foundation for all our thought, language and experience. It has yearned for the sign which will give meaning to all others, – 'the transcendental signifier' – and for the anchoring, unquestioning meaning to which all our signs can be seen to point (the transcendental signified')."

Derrida argues that this centre thereby limits the "free play that it makes possible", as it stands outside it, is axiomatic – "the Centre is not really the centre". Under a centered structure, free play is based on a fundamental ground of the immobility and indisputability of the centre, on what Derrida refers to "as the metaphysics of presence". Derrida's critique of structuralism bases itself on this idea of a center. A structure

assumes a centre which orders the structure and gives meanings to its components, and the permissible interactions between them, i.e. limits play. Derrida in his critique looks at structures diachronically, i.e., historically, and synchronically, i.e. as a freeze frame at a particular juncture. Synchronically, the centre cannot be substituted: "It is the point at which substitution of contents, elements and terms is no longer possible." (Structuralism thus stands in tension with history as Derrida argues towards the end of the essay.) But historically, one centre gets substituted for another to form an epistemological shift: "the entire history of the concept of structure must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center." Thus, at a given point of time, the centre of the structure cannot be substituted by other elements, but historically, the point that defines play within a structure has changed. The history of human sciences has thereby been a process of substitution, replacement and transformation of this centre through which all meaning is to be sought – God, the Idea, the World Spirit, the Renaissance Man, the Self, substance, matter, Family, Democracy, Independence, Authority and so on. Since each of these concepts is to found our whole system of thought and language, it must itself be beyond that system, untainted by its play of linguistic differences. It cannot be implicated in the very languages and system it attempts to order and anchor: it must be somehow anterior to these discourses. The problem of centers for Derrida was thereby that they attempt to exclude. In doing so, they ignore, repress or marginalize others (which become the Other). This longing for centers spawns binary opposites, with one term of the opposition central and the other marginal. Terry Eagleton calls these binary opposition with which classical structuralism tends to function as a way of seeing typical of ideologies, which thereby becomes exclusionary. To quote him, "Ideologies like to draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not".

Derrida insists that with the 'rupture' it has become "necessary to begin to think that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a being-present, that the center had no natural locus….a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play." Derrida attributes this initiation of the process of decentering "to

the totality of our era". As Peter Barry argues in "Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural (1995)" that in the twentieth century, through a complex process of various historico-political events, scientific and technological shifts, "these centers were destroyed or eroded". For instance, the First World War destroyed the illusion of steady material progress; the Holocaust destroyed the notion of Europe as the source and centre of human civilization. Scientific discoveries – such as the way the notion of relativity destroyed the ideas of time and space as fixed and central absolutes. Then there were intellectual and artistic movements like modernism in the arts which in the first thirty years of the century rejected such central absolutes as harmony in music, chronological sequence in narrative, and the representation of the visual world in art. This 'decentering' of structure, of the 'transcendental signified' and of the sovereign subject, Derrida suggests – naming his sources of inspiration – can be found in the Nietzchean critique of metaphysics, and especially of the concepts of Being and Truth, in the Freudian critique of self-presence, as he says, "a critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity, and of the self-proximity or self-possession", and more radically in the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, "of the determination of Being as Presence".

Derrida argues that all these attempts at 'decentering' were however, "trapped in a sort of circle". Structuralism, which in his day was taken as a profound questioning of traditional Western thought, is taken by Derrida to be in support of just those ways of thought. This is true, according to deconstructive thought, for almost all critique of Western thought that arises from within western thought: it would inevitably be bound up with that which it questions – "We have no language-no syntax and no lexicon-which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest." Semiotics and Phenomenology are similarly compromised. Semiotics stresses the fundamental connection of language to speech in a way that it undermines its insistence on the inherently arbitrary nature of sign. Phenomenology rejects metaphysical truths in the favor of phenomena and appearance, only to insist for truth to be discovered in human

consciousness and lived experience. To an extent Derrida seems to see this as inevitable, "There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics"; however, the awareness of this process is important for him – "Here it is a question of a critical relationship to the language of the human sciences and a question of a critical responsibility of the discourse. It is a question of putting expressly and systematically the problem of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary of that heritage itself." It is important to note that Derrida does not assert the possibility of thinking outside such terms; any attempt to undo a particular concept is likely to become caught up in the terms which the concept depends on. For instance: if we try to undo the centering concept of 'consciousness' by asserting the disruptive counterforce of the 'unconscious', we are in danger of introducing a new center. All we can do is refuse to allow either pole in a system to become the center and guarantor of presence.

In validate this argument, Derrida takes up the example of Saussure's description of sign. In Saussure, the 'metaphysics of presence' is affirmed by his insistence on the fact that a sign has two components – the signifier and the signified, the signified which the mental and psychological. This would imply that the meaning of a sign is present to the speaker when he uses in, in defiance of the fact that meaning is constituted by a system of differences. That is also why Saussure insists on the primacy of speaking. As soon as language is written down, a distance between the subject and his words is created, causing meaning to become unanchored. Derrida however critiques this 'phonocentrism' and argues that the distance between the subject and his words exist in any case, even while speaking – that the meaning of sign is always unanchored. Sign has no innate or transcendental truth. Thus, the signified never has any immediate self-present meaning. It is itself only a sign that derives its meaning from other signs. Hence a signified can be a signifier and vice versa. Such a viewpoint entails that sign thus be stripped off its signified component. Meaning is never present at face-value; we cannot escape the process of interpretation. While Saussure still sees language as a closed system where every word has its place and consequently its meaning, Derrida wants to argue for language as an

open system. In denying the metaphysics of presence the distances between inside and outside are also problematized. There is no place outside of language from where meaning can be generated.

Derrida next considers the theme of decentering with respect to French structuralist Levi Strauss's ethnology. Ethnology too demonstrates how although it sets out as a denouncement of Eurocentrism, its practices and methodologies get premised on ethnocentricism in its study and research of the 'Other' – "the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he is employed in denouncing them This necessity is irreducible; it is not a historical contingency". Derrida uses the classical debate on the opposition between nature and culture with respect to Levi Strauss's work. In his work, Elementary Structures, Strauss starts with the working definition of nature as the universal and spontaneous, not belonging to any other culture or any determinate norm. Culture, on the other hand, depends on a system of norms regulating society and is therefore capable of varying from one social structure to another. But Strauss encountered a 'scandal' challenging this binary opposition – incest prohibition. It is natural in the sense that is it almost universally present across most communities and hence is natural. However, it is also a prohibition, which makes it a part of the system of norms and customs and thereby cultural. Derrida argues that this disputation of Strauss's theory is not really a scandal, as it the pre-assumed binary opposition that makes it a scandal, the system which sanctions the difference between nature and culture. To quote him, "It could perhaps be said that the whole of philosophical conceptualization, systematically relating itself to the nature/culture opposition, is designed to leave in the domain of the unthinkable the very thing that makes this conceptualization possible: the origin of the prohibition of incest."

This leads Derrida to his theory of the bricoleur inspired from Levi Strauss. He argues that it is very difficult to arrive at a conceptual position "outside of philosophy", to not be absorbed to some extent into the very theory that one seeks to critique. He therefore insists on Strauss's idea of a bricolage, "the necessity of borrowing one's concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur." It is thereby important to

use these 'tools at hand' through intricate mechanisms and networks of subversion. For instance, although Strauss discovered the scandal, he continued to use sometimes the binary opposition of nature and culture as a methodological tool and to preserve as an instrument that those truth value he criticizes, "The opposition between nature and culture which I have previously insisted on seems today to offer a value which is above all methodological." Strauss discusses bricolage not only as an intellectual exercise, but also as "mythopoetical activity". He attempts to work out a structured study of myths, but realizes this is not a possibility, and instead creates what he calls his own myth of the mythologies, a 'third order code'. Derrida points out how his 'reference myth' of the Bororo myth, does not hold in terms of its functionality as a reference, as this choice becomes arbitrary and also instead of being dependent on typical character, it derives from irregularity and hence concludes, "that violence which consists in centering a language which is describing an acentric structure must be avoided".

Derrida still building on Strauss's work, introduces the concept of totalization – "Totalization is…. at one time as useless, at another time as impossible". In traditional conceptualization, totalization cannot happen as there is always too much one can say and even more that exists which needs to be talked/written about. However, Derrida argues that non-totalization needs to conceptualized not the basis of finitude of discourse incapable of mastering an infinite richness, but along the concept of free-play – "If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infinity of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field-that is, language and a finite language-excludes totalization." It is finite language which excludes totalization as language is made up of infinite signifier and signified functioning inter-changeably and arbitrarily, thereby opening up possibilities for infinite play and substitution. The field of language is limiting, however, there cannot be a finite discourse limiting that field.

Derrida explains the possibility of this free play through the concept of "supplementality" – "this movement of the free play, permitted by the lack, the absence of a center or origin, is the movement of supplementarily. One cannot determine the center, the sign which

supplements it, which takes its place in its absence-because this sign adds itself, occurs in addition, over and above, comes as a supplement". Supplementality is thus involves infinite substitutions of the centre which is an absence which leads to the movement of play. This becomes possible because of the lack in the signified. There is always an overabundance of the signifier to the signified. So a supplement would hence be an addition to what the signified means for already. Derrida also introduces the concept of how this meaning is always deferred (difference), how signifier and signified are inter-changeable in a complex network of free-play.

This concept of free-play Derrida believes also stands in tension with history. Although history was thought as a critique of the philosophy of presence, as a kind of shift; it has paradoxically become complicitous "with a teleological and eschatological metaphysics." Free-play also stands in conflict with presence. Play is disruption of presence. Free play is always interplay of presence and absence. However, Derrida argues that a radical approach would not be the taking of presence or absence as ground for play. Instead the possibility of play should be the premise for presence or absence.

Check your Progress-1

1. Derrida was criticised by which analytic philosophers?

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2. In which year did the "Searle–Derrida Debate" began**?**

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3. What did Richard Wolin argued about Derrida's work since the year 1991?

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10.4 LET US SUM UP

CRITICISM AGAINST JACQUES DERRIDA

Although critical examination of fundamental concepts is a standard part of philosophical practice in the Western tradition, it has seldom been carried out as rigorously as in the work of Derrida. His writing is known for its extreme subtlety, its meticulous attention to detail, and its tenacious pursuit of the logical implications of supposedly "marginal" features of texts. Nevertheless, his work has met with considerable opposition among some philosophers, especially those in the Anglo-American tradition. In 1992 the proposal by the University of Cambridge to award Derrida an honorary doctorate generated so much controversy that the university took the unusual step of putting the issue to a vote of the dons (Derrida won); meanwhile, 19 philosophers from around the globe published a letter of protest in which they claimed that Derrida's writing was incomprehensible and his major claims either trivial or false. In the same vein, other critics have portrayed Derrida as an antirational and nihilistic opponent of "serious" philosophical thinking. Despite such criticism, Derrida's ideas remain a powerful force in philosophy and myriad other fields.

STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

"Structure, Sign, and Play" identifies a tendency for philosophers to denounce each other for relying on problematic discourse, and argues that this reliance is to some degree inevitable because we can only write in the language we inherit. Discussing the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Derrida argues that we are all bricoleurs, creative tinkerers who must use the tools we find around us.

Although presented at a conference intended to popularize structuralism, the lecture is widely cited as the starting point for post-structuralism in the United States. Along with Derrida's longer text Of Grammatology, it is also programmatic for the process of deconstruction.

Colloquium

Derrida wrote "Structure, Sign, and Play" to present at a conference titled "The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" held at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore from 18–21 October 1966. The conference, organized by Richard A. Macksey for the newly founded Humanities Center, and sponsored by the Ford Foundation, brought together a collection of notable French thinkers, including Paul de Man, Roland Barthes, Jean Hyppolite and Jacques Lacan. (Michel Foucault was, in the words of Jean-Michel Rabaté, "notoriously absent".) Derrida reportedly wrote his essay rather quickly in the ten or fifteen days preceding the conference. (According to one report, Derrida was a last-minute replacement for anthropologist Luc de Heusch.)

Many attendees came from France, and spoke French during the event; French lectures were translated into English and distributed in print. Derrida's lecture was listed in the program and delivered in French, as "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines". (Lacan was one of the few French attendees to lecture in English; Lacan makes a point of this gesture at the beginning of the lecture, titled "Of Structure as the Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever".)

"Structure, Sign, and Play" was first published in English in 1970, within a volume dedicated to the Johns Hopkins colloquium titled The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences

of Man. Macksey and Donato write in the preface to this volume that the goal of the conference was to clarify the field of structuralism and define some of its common problems across disciplines.

Content

"Structure, sign, and play" discusses how philosophy and social science understand 'structures' abstractly. Derrida is dealing with structuralism, a type of analysis which understands individual elements of language and culture as embedded in larger structures. The archetypal examples of structuralism come from Ferdinand de Saussure, who showed how phonemes and words gain meaning only through relations with each other. (Derrida dealt directly with Saussure in a related book titled Of Grammatology). The main object of this text is Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose structuralist anthropology analyzed the relationships between elements of cultural systems such as mythology.

Derrida admires the reflexivity and abstract analyses of structuralism, but argues that these discourses have still not gone far enough in treating structures as free-floating (or 'playing') sets of relationships. In particular, he accuses structuralist discourses of holding on to a "center": a privileged term that anchors the structure and does not play. Whether this center is "God", "being", "presence", or "man" (as it was at the colloquium), its function is the same, and the history of structures is a history of substitutions, one center after another, for this constant position. Derrida suggests that this model of structure will end—is ending—and that a newer and freer (though still unknown) thinking about structures will emerge.

An 'event' has perhaps occurred

Where's the center?

The essay begins by speculating, "Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an 'event,' if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural—structuralist—thought to reduce or suspect." The 'event' involves changes in structuralism, structure, and in particular "the structurality of structure", which has hitherto been limited, writes

Derrida, through the process of being assigned a stabilizing "center". The "center" is that element of a structure which appears given or fixed, thereby anchoring the rest of the structure and allowing it to play. In the history of metaphysics specifically, this function is fulfilled by different terms (which Derrida says are always associated with presence): "eidos, archè, telos, energia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth." Whichever term is at the center of the structure, argues Derrida, the overall pattern remains similar. This central term ironically escapes structurality, the key feature of structuralism according to which all meaning is defined relationally, through other terms in the structure. From this perspective, the center is the most alien or estranged element in a structure: it comes from somewhere outside and remains absolute until a new center is substituted in a seemingly arbitrary fashion. "The center", therefore, "is not the center."

The 'event' under discussion is the opening of the structure, which became inevitable "when the structurality of structure had to begin to be thought" and the contradictory role of the center exposed. The result of the event, according to Derrida, must be the full version of structural "freeplay", a mode in which all terms are truly subject to the openness and mutability promised by structuralism. Derrida locates the beginning of this process in the writings of earlier philosophers, who continued to use the pattern of metaphysics even as they denounced it in others.

Reciprocal destroyers

Derrida depicts Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, three of his greatest influences, as ultimately trapped within a destructive spiral of denunciation. Nietzsche questioned the power of representation and concepts to really convey truth; Freud challenged the idea that mind was limited to consciousness; and Heidegger criticized the idea of "being as presence". Derrida argues that these theoretical moves share a common form:

But all these destructive discourses and all their analogues are trapped in a sort of circle. This circle is unique. It describes the form of the relationship between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of

the history of metaphysics. there are many ways of being caught in this circle. They are all more or less naïve, more or less empirical, more or less systematic, more or less close to the formulation or even to the formalization of this circle. It is these differences which explain the multiplicity of destructive discourses and the disagreement between those who make them. It was within concepts inherited from metaphysics that Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger worked, for example. Since these concepts are not elements or atoms and since they are taken from a syntax and a system, every particular borrowing drags along with it the whole of metaphysics. This is what allows these destroyers to destroy each other reciprocally—for example, Heidegger, considering Nietzsche, with as much lucidity and rigor as bad faith and misconstruction, as the last metaphysician, the last "Platonist." One could do the same for Heidegger himself, for Freud, or for a number of others. And today no exercise is more widespread.

Derrida does not assert the possibility of thinking outside such terms; any attempt to undo a particular concept is likely to become caught up in the terms which the concept depends on. For instance: if we try to undo the centering concept of 'consciousness' by asserting the disruptive counterforce of the 'unconscious', we are in danger of introducing a new center. All we can do is refuse to allow either pole in a system to become the center and guarantor of presence.

Lévi-Strauss

Culinary Triangle, a prototypical diagram of Lévi-Straussian structuralist anthropology

Having described a pattern—denouncing metaphysics while relying on it—in discourses about metaphysics, Derrida suggests consideration of the same pattern within the "human sciences", whose subjection to the "critique of ethnocentrism" parallels the "destruction of the history of metaphysics" in philosophy. Derrida argues that, just as philosophers use metaphysical terms and concepts to critique metaphysics (and criticize the use of these concepts by others), the ethnologist "accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he is employed in denouncing them". He examines the work of Claude Lévi-

Strauss, particularly as it concerns "the opposition between nature and culture", as his case study and primary focus for the essay.

Bricolage

Derrida highlights Lévi-Strauss's use of the term bricolage, the activity of a bricoleur. "The bricoleur, says Lévi-Strauss, is someone who uses 'the means at hand,' that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary." Bricolage becomes a metaphor for philosophical and literary critiques, exemplifying Derrida's previous argument about the necessity of using the language available. The bricoleur's foil is the engineer, who creates out of whole cloth without the need for bricolage—however, the engineer is merely a myth since all physical and intellectual production is really bricolage.

Structure and myth

Derrida praises Lévi-Strauss for his insights into the complexities, limitations, and circularities of examining 'a culture' from the outside in order to classify its mythological system. In particular he praises Lévi-Strauss's recognition that a mythological system cannot be studied as though it was some finite portion of physical reality to be scientifically divided and conquered. Derrida quotes Lévi-Strauss's The Raw and the Cooked:

In effect the study of myths poses a mythological problem by the fact that it cannot conform to the Cartesian principle of dividing the difficulty into as many parts as are necessary to resolve it. There exists no veritable end or term to mythical analysis, no secret unity which could be grasped at the end of the work in decomposition. The themes duplicate themselves to infinity. When we think we have disentangled them from each other and can hold them separate, it is only to realize that they are joining together again, in response to the attraction of unforeseen affinities.

In Derrida's words, "structural discourse on myths—mythological discourse—must itself be mythomorphic". Lévi-Strauss explicitly describes a limit to totalization (and at the same time the endlessness of 'supplementarity'). Thus Lévi-Strauss, for Derrida, recognizes the structurality of mythical structure and gestures towards its freeplay

But Derrida criticizes Lévi-Strauss for an inability to explain historical changes—for describing structural transformation as the consequence of mysterious outside forces (paralleling the substitute "centers" that make up the history of metaphysics).

Ultimately, Derrida perceives in Lévi-Strauss "a sort of ethic of presence, an ethic of nostalgia for origins, an ethic of archaic and natural innocence, of a purity of presence and self-presence in speech", arguing that "this structuralist thematic of broken immediateness is thus the sad, negative, nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauist facet of the thinking of freeplay of which the Nietzschean affirmation—the joyous affirmation of the freeplay of the world and without truth, without origin, offered to an active interpretation—would be the other side." True freeplay, argues Derrida, actually undoes this certainty about presence:

Freeplay is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Freeplay is always an interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be radically conceived, freeplay must be conceived before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or absence beginning with the possibility of freeplay and not the other way around.

Derrida concludes by reaffirming the existence of a transformation within structuralism, suggesting that it espouses this affirmative view of unlimited freeplay and presenting it as unpredictable yet inevitable.

Influence

The 1966 colloquium, although intended to organize and strengthen the still-murky field of structuralism became known through Derrida's lecture as a turning point and the beginning of the post-structuralist

movement. Derrida acknowledged the influence of the Hopkins colloquium, writing in 1989:

It is more and more often said that the Johns Hopkins colloquium ("The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man") was in 1966, more than twenty years ago, an event in which many things changed (it is on purpose that I leave these formulations somewhat vague) on the American scene—which is always more than the American scene. What is now called "theory" in this country may even have an essential link with what is said to have happened there in 1966.

Scholars attempting to explain the success of Derrida's presentation have argued that it fit well with the current of radicalism developing in the United States.

The essay sowed the seeds of popularity for French post-structuralism at eastern universities in the United States, particularly Johns Hopkins, Cornell, and Yale. Derrida also returned several times to the Hopkins Humanities Center, the faculty of which still credits his influence. The colloquium also created a demand for the French intellectuals on American campuses, which led notably to Derrida's 1986 recruitment by University of California, Irvine.

Criticism

The colloquium came under scrutiny from the new journal Telos when, in 1970, Richard Moss published an article criticizing its sponsors and denouncing it as an agent of multinational capitalism. Derrida, in particular, drew criticism from Marxists such as Fredric Jameson who called deconstruction overly intellectual and distant from class struggle.

The New York Times argued in its obituary for Derrida that "Structure, Sign, and Play" offered professors of literature a philosophical movement they could legitimately consider their own.

10.5 KEYWORDS

1. **Sophistry:** the use of clever but false arguments, especially with the intention of deceiving.

2. **Axiomatic:** self-evident or unquestionable.

3. **Eschatology:** the part of theology concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.

4. **Colloquium:** an academic conference or seminar.

5. **Empiricism:** the theory that all knowledge is based on experience derived from the senses

10.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write a note on the criticism faced by Derrida

- Write a brief note on Searle–Derrida Debate.

- Write a note on structure, sign, and play in the discourses of the human sciences.

10.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Macksey & Donato, The Structuralist Controversy (2007), pp. 186–200. Available online at lacan.com. "Somebody spent some time this afternoon trying to convince me that it would surely not be a pleasure for an English-speaking audience to listen to my bad accent and that for me to speak in English would constitute a risk for what one might call the transmission of my message. Truly, for me it is a great case of conscience, because to do otherwise would be absolutely contrary to my own concept of the message: of the message as I will explain it to you, of the linguistic message. "

- Rabaté argued in 2002 that the change in title reflected a desire to sensationalize the colloquium as a turning point in structuralism and academic "theory"; Macksey retorted in his 2007 introduction to the 40th anniversary volume that he changed the title due to a request from JHU press that the title be "shorter, zippier" and that

it downplay the gendered term "Man". See: Macksey & Donato, The Structuralist Controversy (2007), p. xii.

- Macksey & Donato, The Structuralist Controversy (2007), p. xxii. "As this was the first time in the United States that structuralist thought had been considered as a cross-disciplinary phenomenon, the organizers of the program sought to identify certain basic problems and concerns common to every field of study"

- Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play" (1966), as printed/translated by Macksey & Donato (1970). p. 427.

- Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play" (1966), as printed/translated by Macksey & Donato (1970). p. 249. "…the whole history of the concept of structure, before the rupture I spoke of, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center, as a linked chain of determinations of the center. Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the center receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies."

- Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play" (1966), as printed/translated by Macksey & Donato (1970). p. 248.

10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Derrida's work has been regarded by a few analytic philosophers, such as John Searle and Willard Van Orman Quine, as pseudo philosophy or sophistry. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 1)**

  - The Searle–Derrida Debate began in the year 1972. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 2)**

  - Wolin argues that the "deconstructive gesture of overturning and reinscription ends up by threatening to efface many of the essential differences between Nazism and non-Nazism". **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 3)**

UNIT-11 JACQUES DERRIDA-'STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES', LYOTARD, 'DEFINING THE POSTMODERN' - 3

STRUCTURE

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Life of Jean- Lyotard

11.3 Jean- Lyotard's Work

11.4 Criticism against Jean- Lyotard

11.5 Influence

11.6 Selected Publication

11.7 Let us sum up

11.8 Keywords

11.9 Questions for Review

11.10 Suggested Reading and References

11.11 Answers to Check your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would learn about the life of Jean Lyotard and his works
- and, you will also learn about the criticism against Lyotard and influence and some of his selected publications.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Jean-François Lyotard was a French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist. His interdisciplinary discourse spans such topics as epistemology and communication, the human body, modern art and postmodern art, literature and critical theory, music, film, time and memory, space, the city and landscape, the sublime, and the relation between aesthetics and politics. He is best known for his articulation of postmodernism after the late 1970s and the analysis of the impact of postmodernity on the human condition. Lyotard was a key personality in contemporary Continental philosophy and author of 26 books and many articles. He was a director of the International College of Philosophy which was founded by Jacques Derrida, François Châtelet, Jean-Pierre Faye and Dominique Lecourt.

11.2 LIFE OF JEAN- LYOTARD

Early Life, Educational Background, And Family

Jean François Lyotard was born on August 10, 1924 in Vincennes, France to Jean-Pierre Lyotard, a sales representative, and Madeleine Cavalli. He went to primary school at the Paris Lycée Buffon and Louis-le-Grand. As a child, Lyotard had many aspirations: to be an artist, a historian, a Dominican friar, and a writer. He later gave up the dream of becoming a writer when he finished writing an unsuccessful fictional novel at the age of 15. Ultimately, Lyotard describes the realization that he would not become any of these occupations as "fate" in his intellectual biography called Peregrinations, published in 1988.

He studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in the late 1940s. His 1947 DES thesis, Indifference as an Ethical Concept (L'indifférence comme notion éthique), analyzed forms of indifference and detachment in Zen Buddhism, Stoicism, Taoism, and Epicureanism. In 1950, Lyotard took up a position teaching philosophy in Constantine in French Algeria but

returned to mainland France in 1952 to teach at the Prytanée military academy in La Flèche, where he wrote a short work on Phenomenology, published in 1954.Lyotard moved to Paris in 1959 to teach at the Sorbonne: introductory lectures from this time (1964) have been posthumously published under the title Why Philosophize? Having moved to teach at the new campus of Nanterre in 1966, Lyotard participated in the events following March 22 and the tumult of May 1968. In 1971, Lyotard earned a State doctorate with his dissertation Discours, figure under Mikel Dufrenne—the work was published the same year.Lyotard joined the Philosophy department of the experimental University at Vincennes, later Paris 8, together with Gilles Deleuze, in the academic year 1970-71; it remained his academic home in France until 1987. He married his first wife, Andrée May, in 1948 with whom he had two children, Corinne and Laurence, and later married for a second time in 1993 to Dolores Djidzek, the mother of his son David (born in 1986).

Political Life

In 1954, Lyotard became a member of Socialisme ou Barbarie ("Socialism or Barbarism"), a French political organisation formed in 1948 around the inadequacy of the Trotskyist analysis to explain the new forms of domination in the Soviet Union. Socialisme ou Barbarie had an objective to conduct a critique of Marxism from within during the Algerian war of liberation. His writings in this period are mostly concerned with ultra-left politics, with a focus on the Algerian situation—which he witnessed first-hand while teaching philosophy in Constantine. He wrote optimistic essays of hope and encouragement to the Algerians, which were reproduced in Political Writings. Lyotard hoped to encourage an Algerian fight for independence from France, and a social revolution. Following disputes with Cornelius Castoriadis in 1964, Lyotard left Socialisme ou Barbarie for the newly formed splinter group Pouvoir Ouvrier ("Worker Power"), from which he resigned in turn in 1966. Although Lyotard played an active part in the May 1968 uprisings, he distanced himself from revolutionary Marxism with his 1974 book Libidinal Economy. He distanced himself from Marxism because he felt that Marxism had a rigid structuralist approach and they

were imposing 'systematization of desires' through strong emphasis on industrial production as the ground culture.

Academic Career

Lyotard taught at the Lycée of Constantine, Algeria from 1950 to 1952. In 1972, Lyotard began teaching at the University of Paris VIII; he taught there until 1987 when he became Professor Emeritus. During the next two decades he lectured outside France, notably as a Professor of Critical Theory at the University of California, Irvine and as visiting professor at universities around the world. These included: Johns Hopkins University, University of California, Berkeley, Yale University, Stony Brook University and the University of California, San Diego in the U.S., the Université de Montréal in Quebec (Canada), and the University of São Paulo in Brazil. He was also a founding director and council member of the Collège International de Philosophie, Paris. Before his death, he split his time between Paris and Atlanta, where he taught at Emory University as the Woodruff Professor of Philosophy and French.

Later life and death

Some of the latest works that Lyotard had been working on were both writings about a French writer, activist, and politician, André Malraux. One of them being a biography, Signed, Malraux. Lyotard was interested in the aesthetic views of society that Malraux shared. Lyotard's other book was named The Confession of Augustine and was a study in the phenomenology of time. This work-in-progress was published posthumously in the same year of Lyotard's death.

Lyotard repeatedly returned to the notion of the Postmodern in essays gathered in English as The Postmodern Explained to Children, Toward the Postmodern, and Postmodern Fables. In 1998, while preparing for a conference on postmodernism and media theory, he died unexpectedly from a case of leukemia that had advanced rapidly. He is buried in Division 6 of Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

11.3 JEAN- LYOTARD'S WORK

Lyotard's work is characterised by a persistent opposition to universals, métarécits (meta-narratives), and generality. He is fiercely critical of many of the 'universalist' claims of the Enlightenment, and several of his works serve to undermine the fundamental principles that generate these broad claims.

In his writings of the early 1970s, he rejects what he regards as theological underpinnings of both Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud: "In Freud, it is judaical, critical sombre (forgetful of the political); in Marx it is catholic. Hegelian, reconciliatory (...) in the one and in the other the relationship of the economic with meaning is blocked in the category of representation (...) Here a politics, there a therapeutics, in both cases a laical theology, on top of the arbitrariness and the roaming of forces". Consequently, he rejected Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectics because he viewed them as seeking a "therapeutic resolution in the framework of a religion, here the religion of history." In Lyotard's "libidinal economics" he aimed at "discovering and describing different social modes of investment of libidinal intensities".

The Postmodern Condition

Lyotard is a skeptic for modern cultural thought. According to his 1979 The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, the impact of the postmodern condition was to provoke skepticism about universalizing theories. Lyotard argues that we have outgrown our needs for metanarratives (French: grand narratives) due to the advancement of techniques and technologies since World War II. He argues against the possibility of justifying the narratives that bring together disciplines and social practices, such as science and culture; "the narratives we tell to justify a single set of laws and stakes are inherently unjust." A loss of faith in metanarratives has an effect on how we view science, art, and literature. Little narratives have now become the appropriate way for explaining social transformations and political problems. Lyotard argues that this is the driving force behind postmodern science. As

metanarratives fade, science suffers a loss of faith in its search for truth, and therefore must find other ways of legitimating its efforts. Connected to this scientific legitimacy is the growing dominance for information machines. Lyotard argues that one day, in order for knowledge to be considered useful, it will have to be converted into computerized data. Years later, this led him into writing his book The Inhuman, published in 1988, in which he illustrates a world where technology has taken over.

The collapse of the "grand narrative" and "language-games"

Most famously, in La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir (The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge) (1979), he proposes what he calls an extreme simplification of the "postmodern" as an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'. These meta-narratives—sometimes 'grand narratives'—are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the knowability of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom. Lyotard argues that we have ceased to believe that narratives of this kind are adequate to represent and contain us all. He points out that no one seemed to agree on what, if anything, was real and everyone had their own perspective and story. We have become alert to difference, diversity, the incompatibility of our aspirations, beliefs and desires, and for that reason postmodernity is characterised by an abundance of micronarratives. For this concept Lyotard draws from the notion of 'language-games' found in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Lyotard notes that it is based on mapping of society according to the concept of the language games.

In Lyotard's works, the term 'language games', sometimes also called 'phrase regimens', denotes the multiplicity of communities of meaning, the innumerable and incommensurable separate systems in which meanings are produced and rules for their circulation are created. This involves, for example, an incredulity towards the metanarrative of human emancipation. That is, the story of how the human race has set itself free that brings together the language game of science, the language game of human historical conflicts and the language game of human qualities into the overall justification of the steady development of the human race in terms of wealth and moral well-being. According to this metanarrative,

the justification of science is related to wealth and education. The development of history is seen as a steady progress towards civilization or moral well-being. The language game of human passions, qualities and faults (c.f. character flaws (narratives)), is seen as steadily shifting in favor of our qualities and away from our faults as science and historical developments help us to conquer our faults in favor of our qualities. The point is that any event ought to be able to be understood in terms of the justifications of this metanarrative; anything that happens can be understood and judged according to the discourse of human emancipation. For example, for any new social, political or scientific revolution we could ask the question, "Is this revolution a step towards the greater well-being of the mass of human beings?" It should always be possible to answer this question in terms of the rules of justification of the metanarrative of human emancipation.

This becomes more crucial in Au juste: Conversations (Just Gaming) (1979) and Le Différend (The Differend) (1983), which develop a postmodern theory of justice. It might appear that the atomisation of human beings implied by the notion of the micronarrative and the language game suggests a collapse of ethics. It has often been thought that universality is a condition for something to be a properly ethical statement: 'thou shalt not steal' is an ethical statement in a way that 'thou shalt not steal from Margaret' is not. The latter is too particular to be an ethical statement (what's so special about Margaret?); it is only ethical if it rests on a universal statement ('thou shalt not steal from anyone'). But universals are impermissible in a world that has lost faith in metanarratives, and so it would seem that ethics is impossible. Justice and injustice can only be terms within language games, and the universality of ethics is out of the window. Lyotard argues that notions of justice and injustice do in fact remain in postmodernism. The new definition of injustice is indeed to use the language rules from one 'phrase regimen' and apply them to another. Ethical behaviour is about remaining alert precisely to the threat of this injustice, about paying attention to things in their particularity and not enclosing them within abstract conceptuality. One must bear witness to the 'differend.' In a differend, there is a conflict between two parties that cannot be solved in

a just manner. However, the act of being able to bridge the two and understand the claims of both parties, is the first step towards finding a solution.

"I would like to call a differend the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim. If the addressor, the addressee, and the sense of the testimony are neutralized, everything takes place as if there were no damages. A case of differend between two parties takes place when the regulation of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom."

In more than one book, Lyotard promoted what he called paganism and contrasted it with both the rejection of the pagan gods in Book II of Plato's The Republic and the monotheism of Judaism. Lyotard argued that the pagan gods, unlike Platonic philosophy and monotheism, never claimed to have universal truth, but instead were better than humans because they were better at deceit and metamorphosis. Lyotard's paganism was also feminist because he argued that women, like paganism, are antirational and antiphilosophical.

The Differend

In The Differend, based on Immanuel Kant's views on the separation of Understanding, Judgment, and Reason, Lyotard identifies the moment in which language fails as the differend, and explains it as follows: "...the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be… the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication, learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom)". Lyotard undermines the common view that the meanings of phrases can be determined by what they refer to (the referent). The meaning of a phrase—an event (something happens)--cannot be fixed by appealing to reality (what actually happened). Lyotard develops this view of language by defining "reality" in an original way, as a complex of possible senses attached to a referent through a name. The correct sense of a phrase cannot be determined by a reference to reality, since the referent itself

does not fix sense, and reality itself is defined as the complex of competing senses attached to a referent. Therefore, the phrase event remains indeterminate.

Lyotard uses the example of Auschwitz and the revisionist historian Robert Faurisson's demands for proof of the Holocaust to show how the differend operates as a double bind. Faurisson will only accept proof of the existence of gas chambers from eyewitnesses who were themselves victims of the gas chambers. However, any such eyewitnesses are dead and are not able to testify. Either there were no gas chambers, in which case there would be no eyewitnesses to produce evidence, or there were gas chambers, in which case there would still be no eyewitnesses to produce evidence, because they would be dead. Since Faurisson will accept no evidence for the existence of gas chambers, except the testimony of actual victims, he will conclude from both possibilities (gas chambers existed and gas chambers did not exist) that gas chambers did not exist. This presents a double bind. There are two alternatives, either there were gas chambers or there were not, which lead to the same conclusion: there were no gas chambers (and no final solution). The case is a differend because the harm done to the victims cannot be presented in the standard of judgement upheld by Faurisson.

The sublime

Lyotard was a frequent writer on aesthetic matters. He was, despite his reputation as a postmodernist, a great promoter of modernist art. Lyotard saw postmodernism as a latent tendency within thought throughout time and not a narrowly limited historical period. He favoured the startling and perplexing works of the high modernist avant-garde. In them he found a demonstration of the limits of our conceptuality, a valuable lesson for anyone too imbued with Enlightenment confidence. Lyotard has written extensively also on many contemporary artists of his choice: Valerio Adami, Daniel Buren, Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Monory, Ruth Francken, Shusaku Arakawa, Bracha Ettinger, Sam Francis, Karel Appel, Barnett Newman, René Guiffrey, Gianfranco Baruchello , and Albert Ayme as well as on earlier artists, notably Paul Cézanne and Paul Klee.

He developed these themes in particular by discussing the sublime. The "sublime" is a term in aesthetics whose fortunes revived under postmodernism after a century or more of neglect. It refers to the experience of pleasurable anxiety that we experience when confronting wild and threatening sights like, for example, a massive craggy mountain, black against the sky, looming terrifyingly in our vision. A sublime is the conjunction of two opposed feelings, which makes it harder for us to see the injustice of it, or a solution to it.

Lyotard found particularly interesting the explanation of the sublime offered by Immanuel Kant in his Critique of Judgment (sometimes Critique of the Power of Judgment). In this book, Kant explains this mixture of anxiety and pleasure in the following terms: there are two kinds of 'sublime' experience. In the 'mathematically' sublime, an object strikes the mind in such a way that we find ourselves unable to take it in as a whole. More precisely, we experience a clash between our reason (which tells us that all objects are finite) and the imagination (the aspect of the mind that organizes what we see, and which sees an object incalculably larger than ourselves, and feels infinite). In the 'dynamically' sublime, the mind recoils at an object so immeasurably more powerful than we, whose weight, force, scale could crush us without the remotest hope of our being able to resist it. (Kant stresses that if we are in actual danger, our feeling of anxiety is very different from that of a sublime feeling. The sublime is an aesthetic experience, not a practical feeling of personal danger.) This explains the feeling of anxiety.

What is deeply unsettling about the mathematically sublime is that the mental faculties that present visual perceptions to the mind are inadequate to the concept corresponding to it; in other words, what we are able to make ourselves see cannot fully match up to what we know is there. We know it's a mountain but we cannot take the whole thing into our perception. Our sensibility is incapable of coping with such sights, but our reason can assert the finitude of the presentation. With the dynamically sublime, our sense of physical danger should prompt an awareness that we are not just physical material beings, but moral and (in Kant's terms) noumenal beings as well. The body may be dwarfed by its

power but our reason need not be. This explains, in both cases, why the sublime is an experience of pleasure as well as pain.

Lyotard is fascinated by this admission, from one of the philosophical architects of the Enlightenment, that the mind cannot always organise the world rationally. Some objects are simply incapable of being brought neatly under concepts. For Lyotard, in Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime, but drawing on his argument in The Differend, this is a good thing. Such generalities as 'concepts' fail to pay proper attention to the particularity of things. What happens in the sublime is a crisis where we realise the inadequacy of the imagination and reason to each other. What we are witnessing, says Lyotard, is actually the differend; the straining of the mind at the edges of itself and at the edges of its conceptuality.

Libidinal Economy

In one of Lyotard's most famous books, Libidinal Economy he offers a critique of Marx's "false consciousness" and claims that the 19th century working class enjoyed being a part of the industrialization process. Lyotard claims that this is due to libidinal energy. The term "libidinal" coming from the term libido which is used to refer to the psychoanalytical desires of our deeper consciousness. Lyotard's writings in Libidinal Economy is an achievement in our attempts to live with the rejection of all religious and moral principles through an undermining of the structures associated with it. Structures conceal libidinal intensities while intense feelings and desires force us away from set structures. However, there also can be no intensities or desires without structures, because there would be no dream of escaping the repressive structures if they do not exist. "Libidinal energy comes from this disruptive intervention of external events within structures that seek order and self-containment." This was the first of Lyotard's writings that had really criticized a Marxist view. It achieved great success, but was also the last of Lyotard's writings on this particular topic where he really went against the views of Karl Marx.

Les Immatériaux

In 1985, Lyotard co-curated the exhibition Les Immatériaux at the Centre de Création Industrielle of Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, together with the design theorist and curator Thierry Chaput.

"Mainmise"

Lyotard was impressed by the importance of childhood in human life, which he saw as providing the opportunity of creativity, as opposed to the settled hubris of maturity. In "Mainmise" however, he also explored the hold of childhood experience on the individual through the (Roman) concept of the Mancipium, or authoritative right of possession. Because parental influences affect the new-born before it has the linguistic skill even to articulate – let alone oppose – them, Lyotard considered that "We are born from others but also to others, given over defenceless to them. Subject to their mancipium."

11.4 CRITICISM AGAINST JEAN-LYOTARD

There are three major criticisms of Lyotard's work. Each coincides with a school of thought. Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy have written deconstructions of Lyotard's work (Derrida 1992; Nancy 1985). They focus on Lyotard's postmodern work and on The Differend in particular. A differend depends upon a distinction drawn between groups that itself depends upon the heterogeneity of language games and genres of discourse. Why should these differences be privileged over an endless division and reconstruction of groups? In concentrating on specific differences, Lyotard's thought becomes overly dependent on differences; between categories that are given as fixed and well defined. From the point of view of deconstruction, Lyotard's philosophy gives too much credit to illegitimate categories and groups. Underlying any differend there is a multiplicity of further differences; some of these will involve crossing the first divide, others will question the integrity of the groups that were originally separated.

Manfred Frank (1988) has put the Frankfurt School criticism best. It attacks Lyotard's search for division over consensus on the grounds that

it involves a philosophical mistake with serious political and social repercussions. Lyotard has failed to notice that an underlying condition for consensus is also a condition for the successful communication of his own thought. It is a performative contradiction to give an account that appeals to our reason on behalf of a difference that is supposed to elude it. So, in putting forward a false argument against a rational consensus, Lyotard plays into the hands of the irrational forces that often give rise to injustice and differ ends. Worse, he is then only in a position to testify to that injustice, rather than put forward a just and rational resolution.

From a Nietzschean and Deleuzian point of view (James Williams 2000), Lyotard's postmodern philosophy took a turn toward a destructive modern nihilism that his early work avoids. The different and the sublime are negative terms that introduce a severe pessimism at the core of Lyotard's philosophy. Both terms draw lines that cannot be crossed and yet they mark the threshold of that which is most valuable for the philosophy, that which is to be testified to and its proper concern. It is not possible repetitively to lend an ear to the sublime without falling into despair due to its fleeting nature. Whenever we try to understand or even memorize: the activity of testimony through the sublime, it can only be as something that has now dissipated and that we cannot capture.

Charles J. Stivale, of Wayne State University, wrote a critique of Lyotard's The Differend for The French Review, in 1990. In it, he states: "Jean-François Lyotard's is a dense work of philosophical, political and ethical reflection aimed at a specialized audience versed in current debates in logic, pragmatics and post-structuralism. Even George Van Den Abbeele's excellent translation, complete with a glossary of French terms not available in the original text (Paris: Minuit, 1983), does not, indeed cannot, alleviate the often terse prose with which Lyotard develops his reasoning. With this said, I must also observe that this work is of vital importance in a period when revisionism of all stripes attempts to rewrite, and often simply deny, the occurrence of historical and cultural events, i.e. in attempting to reconstruct 'reality" in the convenient names of "truth" and "common sense" … This overview must leave unexplored the broad philosophical bases from which Lyotard draws support, as well as important questions that he raises regarding history,

justice and critical judgement. I can conclude only by suggesting that this work, despite the formidable difficulties inherent to its carefully articulated arguments, offers readers a rich formulation of precise questions for and about the current period of critical transition and re-opening in philosophy, ethics and aesthetics."

11.5 INFLUENCE

The collective tribute to Lyotard following his death was organized by the Collège International de Philosophie, and chaired by Dolores Lyotard and Jean-Claude Milner, the College's director at that time. The proceedings were published by PUF in 2001 under the general title Jean-François Lyotard, l'exercice du différend.

Lyotard's work continues to be important in politics, philosophy, sociology, literature, art, and cultural studies. To mark the tenth anniversary of Lyotard's death, an international symposium about Jean-François Lyotard organized by the Collège International de Philosophie (under the direction of Dolores Lyotard, Jean-Claude Milner and Gerald Sfez) was held in Paris from January 25–27 in 2007.

11.6 SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Phenomenology. Trans. Brian Beakley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991 ISBN 978-0-7914-0805-6.
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Check your Progress-1

1. When and where was Jean François Lyotard born?

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_____

_____

2. In which of his works does Lyotard call "postmodern" as an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'?

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3. In his critique, how does Charles J. Stivale describe Lyotard's "The Differend for The French Review"?

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11.7 LET US SUM UP

Jean-François Lyotard was born in Vincennes, France, on August 10, 1924. His father, Jean-Pierre Lyotard, was a sales representative. His mother's maiden name was Madeleine Cavalli. He was schooled at the Paris Lycées Buffon and Louis-le-Grand, and his youthful aspirations to be a Dominican monk, a painter, an historian, or a novelist eventually gave way to a career in philosophy. He studied philosophy and literature at the Sorbonne (after twice failing the entrance exam to the Ecole Normale Supérieure), where he became friends with Gilles Deleuze. His early interest in philosophies of indifference resulted in his M.A. dissertation Indifference as an Ethical Notion. Lyotard describes his existence up until the Second World War as a 'poetic, introspective and solitary way of thinking and living.' The war disrupted both his way of life and his thought; he acted as a first-aid volunteer in the fight for liberation in the Paris streets in August 1944, and gave up the idea of indifference for a commitment to the investigation of reality in terms of social interactions. Lyotard became a husband and father at a young age, marrying Andrée May in 1948 and subsequently having two children, Corinne and Laurence. Lyotard passed the agrégation (the examination required in order to teach in France) and took up a position teaching philosophy at a boy's lycée (school) in Constantine in French-occupied East Algeria in 1950. From 1952-59 he taught at a school for the sons of military personnel at La Flèche. In Constantine Lyotard read Marx and became acquainted with the Algerian political situation, which he believed was ripe for socialist revolution. In 1954 Lyotard joined the socialist revolutionary organisation Socialisme ou Barbarie (Socialism or Barbarism). Other members of the organisation included Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort, and Pierre Souyris. Lyotard had met Souyris at a union meeting late in 1950, and they had a long and close friendship, eventually troubled by political and theoretical differences.

Lyotard became an intellectual militant, and asserts that for fifteen years he was so dedicated to the cause of socialist revolution that no other aspect of life (with the sole exception of love) diverted him from this

task. His writings in this period are solely concerned with ultra-left revolutionary politics, with a sharp focus on the Algerian situation (the war of independence had broken out in 1954). He contributed to and edited the Socialisme ou Barbarie journal, and wrote pamphlets to distribute to workers at protests and at factory gates. In 1964 a schism erupted in Socialisme ou Barbarie over Castoriadis' new theoretical direction for the group. Lyotard, along with Souyris, became a member of the splinter group Pouvoir Ouvrier (Worker's Power), but resigned in 1966. He had lost belief in the legitimacy of Marxism as a totalising theory, and returned to the study and writing of philosophy. From 1959 to 1966 Lyotard was maître-assistant at the Sorbonne, and then gained a position in the philosophy department at the University of Paris X, Nanterre. There he took part in the May 1968 political actions, organising demonstrations for the "March 22 Movement."

Lyotard attended the radical psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's seminars in the mid-60s, and his reaction to Lacan's theories resulted in Discours, figure, for which he received the degree of doctorat d'état. From 1968 to 1970 Lyotard was chargé de recherches at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. In the early 1970s Lyotard was appointed to the University of Paris VIII, Vincennes, where he was a popular teacher and a prolific writer. In 1972 he was made maître de conferences, and in 1987 he became Professor Emeritus at Vincennes. The 1979 publication of The Postmodern Condition brought Lyotard worldwide fame, and in the 1980s and 90s he lectured widely outside of France. Lyotard was professor of French and Italian at the University of California, Irvine, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of French at Emory University, and a founding member and sometime president of the Collège International de Philosophie. Lyotard was a visiting professor at numerous universities, including John Hopkins, the University of California, Berkeley and San Diego, the University of Minnesota, the Université de Montréal, Canada, the Universität Siegen, West Germany, and the University of Saõ Paulo, Brazil. Lyotard married his second wife Dolorès Djidzek in 1993 and had a son, David. Lyotard died of leukaemia in Paris on April 21, 1998.

Early Works

a. Phenomenology

Lyotard's first book, published in 1954, is a short introduction to and examination of phenomenology. The first part introduces phenomenology through the work of Edmund Husserl, and the second part evaluates phenomenology's relation to the human sciences (particularly psychology, sociology, and history). In the second part the focus shifts from Husserl to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Throughout, Lyotard is concerned with phenomenology's attempt to find a "third way" between subjectivism and objectivism, avoiding the problems of each. In particular, he is interested in the bearing this problem has on the question of whether phenomenology can think history politically, thus potentially contributing to Marxism. This theme (the relation of phenomenology to Marxism) was a prime concern for French thinkers of the fifties, and Lyotard's book is a useful documentation of the issues at stake. Much of his exposition and discussion is positive, and Lyotard argues that phenomenology can make valuable contributions to the social sciences, where it should serve two functions: firstly, to define the object of the science eidetically (i.e. in its essence) prior to all experimentation, and secondly, to philosophically reassess the results of experimentation. Lyotard argues, for example, that sociology has need of a phenomenological definition of the essence of the social before it can proceed effectively as a science. While he sees the usefulness of phenomenology in many disciplines, however, Lyotard's conclusions about the usefulness of phenomenology to Marxism are largely negative. He argues that phenomenology does not represent progress on Marxism, but is in fact a step backwards. For Lyotard phenomenology cannot properly formulate a materialist worldview and the objective nature of the relations of production; it ends up interpreting class struggle as taking place in consciousness. Lyotard rejects phenomenology's attempt to find a third way between subjectivism and objectivism, and asserts Marxism's superiority in viewing subjectivity as already contained in objectivity.

b. Algeria

In the fifteen years between his first two books of philosophy, Lyotard devoted all his writing efforts to the cause of revolutionary politics. His most substantial writings of this time were his contributions to the Socialisme ou Barbarie journal on the political situation in Algeria . The project of Socialisme ou Barbarie was to provide theoretical resources to contribute to socialist revolution, critiquing other existing socialist strands (particularly Stalinism and the French communist party) as a hindrance to revolution, and with a particular emphasis on the critique of bureaucracy. In the essays on Algeria, Lyotard applies this project to the French occupation, trying to determine the potential for socialist revolution arising from this situation. He pays close attention to the economic forces at work in occupied Algeria, arguing that it is in the economic interests of France to keep Algerians in a state of underdevelopment and poverty. Furthermore, Lyotard introduces a notion of 'terror' that he develops more fully in his later works, indicating the suppression of Algerian culture by the imposition of foreign (French) cultural forms. The conclusion Lyotard comes to is that the occupation must end if the Algerian people are to prosper, but he remains ambivalent about the possibility of revolution. He surmises that a nationalist, democratic revolution will only lead to new forms of social inequality and domination, and insists that a socialist revolution is necessary. This ambivalence was reflected in Socialisme ou Barbarie's debate about whether or not to support the Algerian war of independence, fearing that its democratic and nationalistic leanings would not bring about the result they desired. In "Algeria Evacuated," written after the end of the occupation, Lyotard regretfully asks why a socialist revolution did not take place, concluding that the social and political upheavals resulted in an opportunistic struggle for power rather than a class-based action. The end result of Lyotard's work on Algeria and the disappointment at the failure of socialist revolution to take place led him to an abandonment of revolutionary socialism and traditional Marxism on the grounds that social reality is too complex to describe accurately with any master-discourse.

c. Discourse, Figure

Lyotard's second book of philosophy is long and difficult. It covers a wide variety of topics, including phenomenology, psychoanalysis, structuralism, poetry and art, Hegelian dialectics, semiotics, and philosophy of language. The main thrust of this work, however, is a critique of structuralism, particularly as it manifests itself in Lacan's psychoanalysis. The book is divided into two parts: the first uses Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to undermine structuralism, and the second uses Freudian psychoanalysis to undermine both Lacanian psychoanalysis and certain aspects of phenomenology. Lyotard begins with an opposition between discourse, related to structuralism and written text, and figure (a visual image), related to phenomenology and seeing. He suggests that structured, abstract conceptual thought has dominated philosophy since Plato, denigrating sensual experience. The written text and the experience of reading are associated with the former, and figures, images and the experience of seeing with the latter. Part of Lyotard's aim is to defend the importance of the figural and sensual experience such as seeing. He proceeds to deconstruct this opposition, however, and attempts to show that discourse and figure are mutually implicated. Discourse contains elements of the figural (poetry and illuminated texts are good examples), and visual space can be structured like discourse (when it is broken up into ordered elements in order for the world to be recognisable and navigable by the seeing subject). He develops an idea of the figural as a disruptive force which works to interrupt established structures in the realms of both reading and seeing. Ultimately, the point is not to privilege the figural over the discursive, but to show how these elements must negotiate with each other. The mistake of structuralism is to interpret the figural in entirely discursive terms, ignoring the different ways in which these elements operate. In the second part of Discours, figure, structure and transgression are related to Freudian libidinal forces, paving the way for the libidinal philosophy developed in Libidinal Economy.

11.8 KEYWORDS

- **Perplexing:** make someone feel completely baffled.

- **Epicureanism:** an ancient school of philosophy founded in Athens by Epicurus.
- **Incredulity:** the state of being unwilling or unable to believe something.
- **Mancipium:** the power or control so exercised by such head of family over such freeman.
- **Marxism:** the political and economic theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

11.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write a note on the life and early works of Lyotard.
- Write a note on the criticism faced by Lyotard.
- Write a note on the Postmodern Condition.

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11.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Jean François Lyotard was born on August 10, 1924 in Vincennes, France. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 1)**
  - In his work "La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir" (The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge) (1979), he proposes what he calls an extreme simplification of the "postmodern" as an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 2)**
- Charles J. Stivale, of Wayne State University, wrote a critique of Lyotard's "The Differend, for The French Review", in 1990. In it, he states: "Jean-François Lyotard's is a dense work of philosophical, political and ethical reflection aimed at a specialized audience versed in current debates in logic, pragmatics and post-structuralism. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 3)**

UNIT-12 JACQUES DERRIDA-'STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSES OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES', LYOTARD, 'DEFINING THE POSTMODERN' - 4

STRUCTURE

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 What is PostModernism?

12.3 Let us sum up

12.4 Keywords

12.5 Questions for Review

12.6 Suggested Reading and References

12.7 Answers to Check your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

* you would learn in brief about postmodernism

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (French: La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir) is a 1979 book by the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, in which the author analyzes the notion of knowledge in postmodern society as the end of 'grand narratives' or metanarratives, which he considers a quintessential feature of modernity. Lyotard introduced the term 'postmodernism', which was

previously only used by art critics, into philosophy and social sciences, with the following observation: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives". Originally written as a report on the influence of technology in exact sciences, commissioned by the Conseil des universités du Québec, the book was influential. Lyotard later admitted that he had a "less than limited" knowledge of the science he was to write about, deeming The Postmodern Condition his worst book.

12.2 WHAT IS POSTMODERNISM?

Thinkers have an extremely different problem to present a vivid meaning about the exact meaning of the term 'postmodern'. This term has been used in different branches of knowledge like aesthetics, philosophy, literature, ethics, architecture, education, economics and history with different approaches. Hence, it cannot be looked at as the same and comprehensive term at all times and must be sometimes looked at subjectively. Logically the word of 'postmodernism' literally means after modernity. It refers to the incipient or actual dissolution of those social forms associated with modernity. The first time the German philosopher, Rudelf Pannwitz, used the word postmodern in connection with Nihilism of western culture in 1917. This term had appeared in the writing of Spanish literary reviewer, Federico de Onis, in 1934 as a reaction against modern literature. Then in 1939, Bernard Iddings Bell used this word in two different ways in England, for the recognition of the failure of secular modernism and a return to religion; and by Arnold Toynbee to imply the emersion of the masses society after World War I. Then this word was employed in literary critique in the decade of 1950 and 1960 for reaction against aesthetics modernism and was similarly employed in decade of 1970 in architecture. In this decade, the usage of the term of postmodern developed further. Ihab Hassan, professor of literature, had presented points about the change from modernism to postmodernism in his essay 'POSTmodernISM: A Paracritical Bibliography' in 1970. He joined philosophy, literature and sociology to one another. In 1975, Charles Jencks used this word to distinguish postmodern architect from modern architect. It was important to publish some books to propound

postmodernism as a different approach in the last decade of 1970. Some of these books are The Language of Post-Modern by Charles Jencks in 1977, The Postmodern Condition by Jean-Francois Lyotard in 1979 and Philosophi/ the Mirror of Nature by Richard Rorty in 1979.

Dick Hebdige has presented a periodic list of definitions of postmodernism: "It becomes more and more difficult as the 1980s wear on to specify exactly what it is that postmodernism is supposed to refer to as the term gets stretched in all directions across different debates, different disciplinary and discursive boundaries, as different factions seek to make it their own, using it to designate a plethora of incommensurable objects, tendencies, emergencies. When it becomes possible for people to describe as postmodern the decor of a room , the design of a building , the designs of a film , the construction of a record , or a scratch video, a television commercial, or an arts documentary, or the interstitial relations between them, the layout of a page in a fashion magazine or critical journal, an anti- theological tendency within epistemology , the attack on the metaphysics of presence a general attenuation of feeling, the collective chagrin and morbid projection of a post - war generation of baby boomers confronting disillusioned idle age, the predicament of reflexivity, a group of rhetorical tropes, a proliferation of surfaces , a new face in commodity fetishism, a fascination for images, codes and styles, a process of cultural, political or existential fragmentation and or crisis, the de-centering of the subject, an incredulity towards met narratives , the replacement of unitary power axes by a plurality of power / discourse formations, the implosion of meaning the collapse of cultural hierarchies, the dread engendered by the threat of nuclear self-distraction the decline of the university the functioning and effect of the new miniaturized technologies, broad societal and economical shifts into a media consumer or multinational phase a sense (depending on who you read) of placeless ness or the abandonment of placeless ness (critical regionalism) or (even) a generalized substitution of special for temporal co-ordinates - when it becomes possible to describe all these things as postmodern (or more simply , using a current abbreviation, as post or very post) then it is clear we are in the presence of a buzzword."

The employment of this word in philosophy was after 1980 for mentioning the French philosophy of reconstruction and for the universal reaction against Rationalism and Foundationalism. Some of the sociologists used it for new approach in methodology.

Postmodernism is "a rejection of the sovereign autonomous individual with an emphasis upon anarchic collective, anonymous experience. Collage, diversity, the mystically unpresentable, Dionysian passion are the foci of attention. Most importantly, we see the dissolution of distinctions, the merging of subject and object, self and other. This is a sarcastic playful parody of western modernity and the "John Wayne" individual and a radical, anarchist rejection of all attempts to define, reify or re-present the human subject." 2 Frederic Jameson sees postmodernism as a movement in arts and culture corresponding to a new configuration of politics and economics, "late capitalism": transnational consumer economies based on global scope of capitalism^; and Ryan Bishop, in a concise article in the Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology has defined post-modernism as an eclectic movement, originating in aesthetics, architecture and philosophy. Postmodernism espouses a systematic skepticism of grounded theoretical perspectives. Ultimately, Jean Franqois Lyotard claims postmodern as a historical/cultural "condition" based on dissolution of master narratives or met narratives, a crisis in ideology when ideology no longer seems transparent.'

In spite of the differences about postmodern, there are some similarities amongst various kind of advocates of postmodernism. They accept polarization, indetermination and transience, but enlightenment rationality has lost its importance for them.

The philosophical thought changed gradually in Europe and America in the second half of twentieth century. But the data of changes was different in England and America from France and others areas. From end of the nineteenth century, logic and mathematic was synthesized by the conscious works of Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead and then logical positivism appeared and developed on the basis of these attempts. The logical positivists claimed that human

knowledge is derived from the certainties of mathematical logic and scientific explanation of sensible inputs. They said that there are many meaningless statements in traditional philosophy, but only natural scientific propositions make it possible to express clear and significative knowledge about the external world. Therefore, metaphysical and ethical propositions became meaningless for positivism and each philosophical discussion was accepted in frame of linguistic analysis, logic and science. The logical positivism became weak after the recent philosophy of Wittgenstein {philosophical investigation, 1953) and the doubt in sufficiency of positivism arose from understanding the foundations of knowledge.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the hypercritic thought of schools like Existentialism, Marxism, and Phenomenology in the western world was prevalent, especially in France. On the basis of these thoughts, the subject or the human individual consciousness was estranged from human-self. They state that many agents like capitalism, naturalism modern civilization, religion and the vulgar culture influence the strangeness of modern man. The main question for these philosophers was to know cause of the perversion of modern civilization. They analyzed the human strangeness in the new world differently, and asserted that advertence to free and genuine human self is essential.

These hypercritics protested against modernism strongly and their propensity to correct the modern world was very intense, but they did not antagonize technology, secularism, and scientific method. In that age, the researchers and professors advocated rationality and scientism, and in fact, they confirmed the same things that were desirable to powerful groups and government. They felt that these thoughts were the confirmers of their rules. The examination of the crises of modernity was changed to aid the creating of new political condition. The students and enlightened who were interested in Existentialism and Marxism or other critical thoughts, like Freud's views, challenged important personalities in political and academic centers. In the decade of 1960, some philosophers chose other views for interpretation of the condition of human and society. Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault and Derrida were French postmodern philosophers who did not express

human self by himself. They placed cultural symbols instead natural science to know man.

Uses of the term "postmodern"

This word is used in different conditions:

1. After modernism (subsumes, assumes, extends the modern or tendencies already present in modernism, not necessarily in strict chronological succession)
2. Contra modernism (subverting, resisting, opposing, or countering features of modernism).
3. Equivalent to "late capitalism" (post-industrial, contra modernism consumerist, and multi- and trans-national capitalism)
4. The historical era following the modern (an historical time-period marker)
5. Artistic and stylistic eclecticism (hybridization of forms and genres, mixing styles of different cultures or time periods, de- and re-contextualizing styles in architecture, visual arts, literature)
6. "Global village" phenomena: globalization of cultures, races, images, capital, products ("information age" redefinition of nation-state identities, which were the foundation of the modern era; dissemination of images and information across national boundaries, a sense of erosion or breakdown of national, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identities; a sense of a global mixing of cultures on a scale unknown to pre-information era societies).

Modernism and Postmodernism

The learned knowledge about postmodernism needs the exhaustive study of modernism, because the prefix 'post' implicates structural relation with modernism, either as a successor of modernism or as chronologically after modernism. According to Tim Woods, "It is possible one can easily have the feeling of drowning when dealing with term and its manifestations. The prefix "post" suggests that any

postmodernism is inextricably bound up with modernism, indeed, with postmodernism, post-feminism, postcolonialism, and post industrialism, the 'post' can be seen to suggest a critical engagement with modernism, rather than claiming the end of modernism, or it can seem that modernism has been overturned, superseded or replaced. The relationship is something more akin to a continuous engagement, which implies that postmodernism needs modernism to survive, so that they exist in something more like a lost-parasite relationship. " The learned knowledge about postmodernism needs the exhaustive study of modernism, because the prefix 'post' implicates structural relation with modernism, either as a successor of modernism or as chronologically after modernism. According to Tim Woods, "It is possible one can easily have the feeling of drowning when dealing with term and its manifestations. The prefix "post" suggests that any postmodernism is inextricably bound up with modernism, indeed, with postmodernism, post-feminism, postcolonialism, and post industrialism, the 'post' can be seen to suggest a critical engagement with modernism, rather than claiming the end of modernism, or it can seem that modernism has been overturned, superseded or replaced. The relationship is something more akin to a continuous engagement, which implies that postmodernism needs modernism to survive, so that they exist in something more like a lost-parasite relationship."

There is a palmate dialog among theorists respecting a historical period that is called postmodernism. Habermas claims that there is no difference between these periods; and postmodernism is a form of niain conservative reaction against the deficiencies of modernity project. From Habermas's view postmodern means 'end of Enlightenment' or in other words, postmodernism is a movement beyond the tradition of rationality that European modernity understood itself in the contest of time. So postmodernism is a part of modernism or synonym of anti-modernism and the critics of reason. Alain Touraine also says if

we name an age, the postmodern age that appears as age of victory of modernism for everybody, is contradiction.

Lyotard who is most famous postmodern philosopher believes postmodern is "an unquestionable part of modern".^ But he says the transformations of twentieth century show the end of modernism period and beginning of postmodernism period. Graff argues that postmodernism does not desist from romantic and modern supposition but is counted as the continuation of logical rudiments of these past movements.^ Agnes Heller distinguishes below between six stages of historical consciousness and modernism and postmodernism are two stages of them. He says, "postmodernism is not a stage that comes after modernity, it is not the retrieval of modernity- it is modern. More precisely, the postmodern perceptive could perhaps best be described as the self-reflective consciousness of modernity itself. It is a kind of modernity that it knows itself in a Socratic way. For it (also) know that it knows very little, if anything at all." Zygmunt Bauman accentuated postmodernity as "modernity conscious of its true nature." It is a social and intellectual self reflexive mood within modernity. Modernism and postmodernism have been compared from different views. Here the philosophical and cultural points are emphasized:'

The character of postmodernism

Rationality, the inheritance of Enlightenment, which became invalid, is the most important character of Postmodernism. In the viewpoint of some thinkers, postmodernism is an opportunity for reconsidering modernism. If rationality was the main foundation of modernism to change all things of the world, criticism of modern rationality and flagrancy of the crises and impasses of modernism is the dominant tendency of postmodernism. "The Enlightenment pictured the human race as engaged in an effort tow^ards universal moral and intellectual self-realization, and so as the subject of a universal historical experience; it also

postulated a universal human reason in terms of which social and political tendencies could be assessed as 'progressive' or otherwise (the goal of politics being defined as the realization of reason in practice). Postmodernism rejects this picture: that is to say, it rejects the doctrine of the unity of reason. It refuses to conceive of humanity a unitary subject striving towards the goal of perfect coherence (in it common stock of beliefs) or of perfect cohesion and stability (in its political practice)." Marx and Nietzsche revolted against modernism on the basis of their special views. Marx upbraided to prefer individualism that had grown under the patronage of modern rationality and had earned economic wealth in the capitalist system. Egotism is the foundation of capitalism that necessarily prefers individual interest against collective interest. In other words, in capitalist economy, individual reason predominates on collective reason and does not pay attention to a worker as a chooser subject. To advocate individual reason that only likes personal interest, is a kind of irrationalism and it is adverse to the main motto of modernism. Nietzsche was known as the vanguard of postmodernism, because he was the first thinker who attacked modernism before the emersion of postmodernism, who condemned modem reason directly and foresaw the Nihilism that persisted human life after one century. During the twentieth century, philosopher and sociologists like Hoserl, Heidegger, Max Weber, Adorno, Foucault, Derrida, etc. continued the analysis and criticism of modernism and rationality.

Lyotard and Postmodern Condition

The French philosopher, Jean- Francois Lyotard, was one of the famous thinkers of the later decades of the twentieth century in postmodern discussions. He was born in Versailles city in France on 10 August 1924 and his graduation was in Algeria, Brazil and California. He became a professor of philosophy in university in 1968 and accepted the Presidentship of the International College

of Philosophy in 1985. Lyotard supported a group of socialists. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge that was written in 1979 is one of the important works in postmodern arguments, and it has been called the manifesto of postmodernism. Lyotard prepared his report on knowledge in the most highly developed societies and it was presented to the Conseil des University of the Government of Quebec at the request of its president. For Lyotard usage of the word modern is different. He writes, "I will use the term modem to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta discourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of sprit, the hermeneutic of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth."^ And his definition about postmodern is "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives." He also answers question of 'What Is Postmodernism?' "It is undoubtedly a part of the modern. ...A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modern at its end but in the nascent state and this state is constant."

Status of knowledge in computerized societies

To discuss about Knowledge is the key idea in report of Postmodern Condition. In this report, Lyotard focused on the nature and status of knowledge and how it is generated, organized and employed in contemporary societies. According to Simon Malpas, "The Postmodern Condition is a report about the ways in which advanced societies treat education, science, technology, research and development. Lyotard investigates which sorts of knowledge count as valuable, how that knowledge is communicated, who has access to Postmodernism 147 it and what it is used for, who determines and controls the flow of knowledge, and how it shapes our lives and experiences of the world."'

Lyotard believes that the situation of knowledge has changed in the second half of the twentieth century. This change has happened after the appearance of the post-industrial age and postmodern culture. The technological transformations have made a considerable impact on knowledge and research and the transmission of acquired learning has reached a new condition. Today, cybernetics, miniaturization and commercialization have changed all human knowledge. "The nature of Knowledge cannot survive unchanged within this context of general transformation. It can fit into the new channels of information. We can predict that anything in the constituted body of knowledge that is not translatable in this way will be abandoned and that the direction of new research will be directed by the possibility of its eventual result being translatable into computer language." The producers and users of knowledge need computer now and "along with the hegemony of computers comes a certain logic, and therefore a certain set of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as "knowledge" statements."!

For Lyotard, the acquisition of knowledge is dissociable from the training of minds in our age, and the relationship of man to knowledge becomes like the relationship of man to commodities. Therefore, knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in anew production. In this condition, learning circulates along the same lines as money, and there is no distinction between knowledge and ignorance, but the distinction is between 'payment knowledge' and 'investment knowledge'.

Lyotard has examined the loss of status of scientific knowledge in postmodern or postindustrial age via the terms 'language games' and 'grand narratives'.

Language games

Lyotard examines the status of knowledge and culture in the contemporary world by the term 'language games'. This term was made by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and was defined and considered in treaties of philosophical investigations. According to Wittgenstein, there are many different language games. For example, a denotative utterance, a performative utterance, orders, commands, instructions, recommendations, requests, prayers, pleas, etc. "He argues that, 'the meaning of a word is its use in language', which implies that words gain their meaning from what they do rather than being fixed labels for things. Language is therefore an active part of our day-to-day existence, and we use words in order to explain this idea, Wittgenstein developed the theory of language games." Language games are activities and usage of language that follow determined roles and arrangements. Language games show that the usage of language is a form of man methodical act and presents in agreements, transactions, obligations and sociological behaviors of individuals. In different language games, there is a sender (the person who utters the statement), an addressee (the person who receives it), a referent (what the statement deals with), the context of conversation, aim, analogies and allegories. "Wittgenstein, taking up the study of language again from scratch, focuses his attention on the effects of different modes of discourse; he calls the various types of utterances he identifies along the way (a few of which I have listed) language games. What he means by this term is that each of the various categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put - in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by asset of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them."

Lyotard presents his observations about language games on the basis of Wittgenstein's view. "The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but the object of a contract, explicit or not, between players." This means that the rules of a particular language game like poetry or novel are not

natural but determined by a community. "The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of one rule alters the nature of the game, that a 'move' or utterance that does not satisfy the rules does not belong to the game they define. The third remark is suggested by what has just been said: every utterance should be thought of as a 'move' in a game."

For Lyotard, the outcome of these three observations is that the "social bond is composed of language 'moves'." [4] The different statements made the structure of society and rules are developed to decide whether particular moves are legitimate or illegitimate. Just as different types of games have distinct sets of rules, different societies have diverse forms of politics, law and legitimation. As subjects, we exist within this series of language games, whose different sets of rules make up who we are.

Lyotard has chosen language games as a general methodological approach. He argues that the question of the social bond, insofar as it is a question, is itself a language game. The language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist. The question of social bond, insofar as it is a question, is itself a language game. According to Lyotard, "A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relation that is now more complex and mobile than over before. ... even before he is born, if only by virtue of the name he is given, the human child is already positioned as the referent of a story recounted by those around him, in relation to which he will inevitably chart his course."

The people who live in different societies acquire their identity - the self-image, the ideas and aspiration - by organization of knowledge. But "How do we understand this 'organization of knowledge'? How are the different language games related to each other in a society? How is their importance to that society

decided? And why do different societies have different ways of organization the language games that make them up?" For Lyotard the answer to this question lies in the term of grand narratives.

Grand narrative

Lyotard was the first thinker who recommends the term of 'grand narrative' in definition of modern and to describe the kind of story that underlies, gives legitimacy, and explains the particular choices a culture prescribes as possible courses of action.

Grand narrative is foundational and thus to be avoided, since works to limited the abuse of language power. "A grand narrative (or metanarritive) is a narrative form which seeks to provide a definitive account of reality (e.g. the analysis of history as a sequence of developments culminating in a workers' revolution offered by classical Marxism).270n the basis of encyclopedia of postmodernism, "A grand narrative, also called a 'master narrative,' provides coherence by covering up the various conflicts, the differeds that arise in the history of society." Some of the grand narratives are religions like Islam, Christianity and the different schools like Rationalism, Marxism and Capitalism. In other words, grand narratives are generic principal or theoretical systems that justify all individual and sociological activities of man.

Modernism was established based on grand narratives as rationalism and scientism, and they played an important role in legitimating modern sciences. For Lyotard, postmodernism is the of the age of grand narratives because, among different language gammas, there is no particular language game that predominates on all of them.

Lyotard has criticized Habermas' view about grand narratives and unity of societies in part of Postmodern Condition. For

Habermas, modern society lost its harmony and integration and these are the main roots of man's problems. So, all problems will be eliminated by establishment of harmony and integration in societies. The unity of social life is the base of human development and freedom. Habermas searches a metadiscourse or grand narrative that creates mutual agreement about all social activities, or according to Lyotard, about all language games. Lyotard believes that acquisition of this grand narrative is impossible, and writes" there is no reason to think that it would be possible to determine metaprescriptives common to all of these language games or that a revisable consensus like the one in force at a given moment in the scientific community could embrace the totality of metaprescriptives regulating the totality of statements circulating in the social collectivity.

He recommends, "it seems neither possible, nor even prudent, to follow Habermas in orienting our treatment of the problem of legitimating in the direction of a search for universal consensus through what he calls discourse, in other words, a dialogue of argumentation."

For Habermas, it is possible to come to an agreement about a set of rules and practical suggestions that are reputable for all language games and to come to agreement is the goal of all dialogs. But Lyotard rejects both of them. To come to an agreement is impossible because language games are heterogeneous and their rules also are heterogeneous. The goal of dialogue is not consensus. "I have shown in the analysis of the pragmatic of science, consensus is only a particular state of discussion. Not its end. Its end on the country is Para logy."

Lyotard's belief still underlies Habermas's research that is "humanity as a collective (universal) subject seeks its common emancipation through the regularization of the moves permitted in all language games and that the legitimacy of any statement

resides in its contributing to that emancipation." It means Habermas wanted legitimization of statements and different moves in language games, only for emancipation.

In Lyotard's view, rationalism and enlightenment created some consents like consensus, union, universality, ultimate and there is no freedom and individual creation. Their context, "Only the transcendental illusion (that of Hegel) can hope to totalize them into a real unity. But Kant also knew that the price to be paid for such an illusion is terror. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given us as much as terror as we can talk. We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror, or the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is: let us wage a war on totality, let us be witness to the unpreventable, let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name."

Finally, Lyotard opposed the trying for creation of new grand narrative that replaces modernism, because "the grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation."

He advocated local and temporary agreements instead of "we all know, as the 1970s come to a close that an attempt at an alternative of that kind would end up resembling the system it was meant to replace. We should be happy that the tendency toward the temporary contract is ambiguous: it is not totally subordinated to the goal of the system, yet the system tolerates."

Legitimating of Knowledge

The problem of legitimating of scientific knowledge is one of the most important points that Lyotard has accentuated in his reports. On the basis of his thought "scientific knowlecige does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge, which I will call narrative in the interests of simplicity."

Of course, each statement is not accepted as a scientific statement. A scientific statement has some special characters and "fulfill a given set of condition in order to be accepted as scientific in this case, legitimation is the process by which a 'legislator' dealing with scientific discourse is authorized to prescribe the stated conditions (in general, conditions of internal consistency and experimental verification) determining whether a statement to be included in that discourse for consideration by the scientific community."

In view of Lyotard, the legitimating of science is inseparable from the legitimating of the legislator. This question has been since the time of Plato. Therefore the right to decide what is true is related to the right to decide what is just, even if the statement consigned to these two authorities differs in nature. And there is also a relationship between scientific language and the language of ethics or politics, "they both stem from the same perspective, the choice called the Occident knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same question: who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided? In the computer age, the question of knowledge is now more than ever a question of government. "

Lyotard believes that the legitimating of statements depends on the authority of its teller. A sender, when invested with the authority of addresses and referent and when he uses his authority feelingly, then his authority legitimates his statements. Therefore, what is different between reasonable consequents of a statements

and authority that is in statements for demonstrating statements to others?

The reasoning and theoretical aspects of statements are unavailable and the legitimating only belongs to pragmatically aspects. For Lyotard" to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech fall within the domain of a general agonistics." The main goal of fighting and playing is only the victory and defeat of the challenger, and every challenge or playing starts to prevail over challengers. Of course, it is possible that both parties of the fight or playing follow some principles and rules. There is testing one's strength, action and reaction in these kinds of competitions and the result can be obtained after a series of activities.

In language games too, the problem is the same as other challenges. So there is no discourse about receiving a truth or to satisfy others; even if somebody uses reasoning and tries for satisfy the other part, because it is important from sociological aspects.

In another part of Postmodern Condition, the illegitimating of scientific knowledge was shown through the comparison between two kinds of knowledge. Lyotard divided knowledge into two kinds, narrative knowledge and scientific knowledge and their pragmatics also are two parts. He also distinguished between knowledge and science, and believes "knowledge is not the same as science, especially in its contemporary form;. . . knowledge in general cannot be reduced to science. Nor even to learning. Learning is the set of statements, which, to the exclusion of all other statements, denote or describe objects and may be declared true or false. Science is a subset of learning." Science contains the denotative statement and two its special characteristics are: the object of scientific statements must be "accessible in explicit conditions of observation; and it must be possible to decide whether or not a given statement pertains to the language judged relevant by the experts."

But the term knowledge is not only a set of denotative statements. "It also includes notation of 'knowledge/ 'knowledge how to live/ 'how to listen' , etc. knowledge, then, is a question of competence that goes beyond the simple determination and application of the criteria of efficiency (technical qualification), of justice and or happiness (ethical wisdom), of the beauty of a sound or color (auditory and visual sensibility), etc." This kind of knowledge has the relation with custom and "the consensus that permits such knowledge to be circumscribed and makes it possible to distinguish one who knows from one who doesn't (the foreigner, the child) is what constitutes the culture of a people."

Lyotard writs that all of the investigation agrees" the preeminence of the narratives form in the formulation of traditional knowledge ...narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge" these narratives have different characters. "First, the popular stories themselves recount what could be called positive or negative apprenticeships."' In these stories, there are the hero's that they are success or failures and present the positive or negative models to others. These success or failures either bestow legitimacy upon social institution. "Second, the narrative form unlike the developed forms of the discourse of knowledge, lends itself to a great variety of language games." For example, the ethical or interrogative determined that people can do something or cannot do. Third, "their narration usually obeys rules that define the pragmatics of their transmission."

The pragmatics of popular narratives is intrinsic to them." ...a narrative tradition is also the tradition of the criteria defining a threefold competence-'know-how,' 'knowing how to speak,' and 'knowing how to hear' - through which the community's relationship to itself and its environments is played out. What is transmitted through these narratives is the set of pragmatic rules that constitutes the social bond."' "A fourth aspect of narrative

knowledge meriting careful examination is its effect on time." The form of popular saying, proverbs, and maxims are like little splinters of potential narratives or molds of old ones. These narratives have employed in different societies till now. "In their prosody can be recognized the mark of that strange temporalization that jars the golden rule of our knowledge: never forget." Lyotard demonstrates some following points about pragmatics of scientific knowledge. The existence of sender, addresses and referent are necessary for the demonstration of scientific statement, like the path of the planets is circular. To go to some rules is also necessary in experimental scientific methods; for example: To speak the truth about the referent, to demonstrate of referent and to confute of any opposing or contradictory statements, to power addresses for agreement or disagreement, etc. in other word, to use 'verifiability' or 'falsification' rules.

If compared pragmatics of science with pragmatics of narratives, it determines some differences between them, like, there is only sovereignty of one language game and denotation in scientific knowledge and it overrules other language games. Both scientific and narrative knowledge are compounded from a set of statements. These statements are 'moves' that players do on the basis of rules. Different knowledge contains special rules and the 'moves' judged to be 'good' in one, cannot be of the same types as those judged 'good' in another. Therefore, it is impossible to judge about the existence and validity of narrative knowledge on the basis of scientific knowledge and vice versa, because their criteria are different. Lyotard believes that recourse to narratives for scientific knowledge is inevitable, "scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge from its point of view is no knowledge at all. Briefly, Jean-Francois Lyotard attacked the main foundation of modernism; rationality and positivist science.

According to Lyotard, the domination of rationalism and other grand narratives has come to an end in the age of postmodernism. It is useless to think about utopianism and redemptive systems. The positivist science that claimed the sovereignty of all different knowledge has lost its legitimacy.

Science as a goal - Lyotard, as a postmodern thinker, expresses that science in new world has changed to a goal, and to acquire knowledge has become separate from education. The stages of production, presentation and usage of science are like production, presentation and usage other goals, "knowledge in the form of an information commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major-perhaps the major-stake in the worldwide competition for power. " Science changed production force and distribution of capital after Industrial Revolution. Everyday in the postindustrial society, researchers and engineers invent newer technology more powerfully than ever before. These efficient and exact technologies are necessary for more development of science. But technology is good only when it is efficient. Truth, justice and beauty are not momentous affairs for technology. It is nice, when it acts better than other productions and uses less energy. But the more powerful and the more efficient it is, the more money it needs. The game of science has become a game of wealth and anyone who has more wealth, has more chance to be right. In this manner, the final aim of science is just efficiency not truth. The scientist and technician are educated for wealth and power, not for research of truth. Universities and educational institutes become constantly efficient and emphasize only on skills. Today, the important question is 'what is usage of this?' not 'Is this truth?' The question about usage is equal with 'Is it marketable?' or 'Is it efficient?'

Ethics

Ethics, like so many epistemic discourses, became shaky by postmodernists fundamental critique of epistemology. Modern thinkers rejected metaphysical ethics and focused on the meta-ethics which analyzes and provides rational foundation and justification of ethical principles and systems. Postmodernists based on their critical approaches, seeped modern views about existence of single ethical system. Therefore, the ethical meta-narratives lost their legitimating along with instability of other grand narratives. "Postmodernism holds that morality is not necessarily rational, that there is no foundation discoverable by reason which is available to justify any particular ethical system, there is no neutral perspective from which one might rank moral principles and system, moral values and beliefs are subjective rather than objective, there is no "true" human nature that, with the help of reason, will be expressed with the adoption of any particular ethical system, and that autonomy and rationality cannot be identified as the ideal and defining characteristics of the person qua moral subject."

Postmodernists prepare moral relativism, when ethical universally is omitted, because moral values are different among Postmodernism 162 dissimilar culture, from time period to time period and on different situations. In this manner, there is no similar answer for the question, "What ought I to do?"

Check your Progress-1

1. In connection to what, does Rudelf Pannwitz used the word "Postmodern"?

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_____

2. When was the word "Postmodern" employed in philosophy?

_____

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3. The term 'language games' was coined by whom?

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12.3 LET US SUM UP

Lyotard criticizes metanarratives such as reductionism and teleological notions of human history such as those of the Enlightenment and Marxism, arguing that they have become untenable because of technological progress in the areas of communication, mass media and computer science. Techniques such as artificial intelligence and machine translation show a shift to linguistic and symbolic production as central elements of the postindustrial economy and the related postmodern culture, which had risen at the end of the 1950s after the reconstruction of western Europe. The result is a plurality of language-games (a term coined by Ludwig Wittgenstein:67), of different types of argument. At the same time, the goal of truth in science is replaced by "performativity" and efficiency in the service of capital or the state, and science produces paradoxical results such as chaos theory, all of which undermine science's grand narrative. Lyotard professes a preference for this plurality of small narratives that compete with each other, replacing the totalitarianism of grand narratives.

The Postmodern Condition was influential. However, Lyotard later admitted that he had a "less than limited" knowledge of the science he wrote about, and to compensate for this knowledge, he "made stories up" and referred to a number of books that he hadn't actually read. In retrospect, he called it "a parody" and "simply the worst of all my books". Poet Frederick Turner writes that, like many post-structuralist works, The Postmodern Condition "has not worn well." However, he sees it more readable than other post-structuralist works, and credits

Lyotard with covering "a good deal of ground in a lively and economical fashion.

12.4 KEYWORDS

- **Epistemic:** relating to knowledge or to the degree of its validation.
- **Emancipation: t**he fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation.
- **Splinters:** a small, thin, sharp piece of wood, glass, or similar material broken off from a larger piece.
- **Cybernetics:** the science of communications and automatic control systems in both machines and living things.
- **Vanguard:** a group of people leading the way in new developments or ideas.

12.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write a note on language games.
- Write a note on Lyotard and Postmodern Condition.
- Write the differences between 'Modernism' and 'Postmodernism'.

12.6 SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

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- Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1979). "Les problèmes du savoir dans les sociétés industrielles les plus développées". Quebec: Conseil des Universités. Original report available online at: http://www.cse.gouv.qc.ca/FR/Publications_CUniv/

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12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- The first time the German philosopher, Rudelf Pannwitz, used the word postmodern in connection with Nihilism of western culture in 1917. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 1)**

  - The employment of this word in philosophy was after 1980 for mentioning the French philosophy of reconstruction and for the universal reaction against Rationalism and Foundationalism. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 2)**

  - The term 'language games' was coined by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and was defined and considered in treaties of philosophical investigations. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q 3)**

UNIT-13 ADRIENNE RICH – COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY AND LESBIAN EXISTENCE- 1

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would learn about early life and education of Adrienne Rich;
- you would also learn about her views on feminism;
- you would also go through the list of her works and selected awards and honours received by her;
- and further, you would also learn about Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Adrienne Cecile Rich was an American poet, essayist and feminist. She was called "one of the most widely read and influential poets of the second half of the 20th century", and was credited with bringing "the oppression of women and lesbians to the forefront of poetic discourse." Rich criticized rigid forms of feminist identities, and valorized what she coined the "lesbian continuum"; which is a female continuum of solidarity and creativity which has impacted and even filled women's lives.

Her first collection of poetry, A Change of World, was selected by renowned poet W. H. Auden for the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award. Auden went on to write the introduction to the published volume. She famously declined the National Medal of Arts, protesting the vote by House Speaker Newt Gingrich to end funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

13.2 EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Early career: 1953–75

In 1953, Rich married Alfred Haskell Conrad, an economics professor at Harvard University she met as an undergraduate. She said of the match: "I married in part because I knew no better way to disconnect from my first family. I wanted what I saw as a full woman's life, whatever was possible." They settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts and had three sons. In 1955, she published her second volume, The Diamond Cutters, a collection she said she wished had not been published. That year she also received the Ridgely Torrence Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America. Her three children were born in 1955 (David), 1957 (Pablo) and 1959 (Jacob).

We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way

back to this scene

carrying a knife, a camera

a book of myths

in which

our names do not appear.

—From "Diving into the Wreck"05

Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971–1972 (1973)

The 1960s began a period of change in Rich's life: she received the National Institute of Arts and Letters award (1960), her second Guggenheim Fellowship to work at the Netherlands Economic Institute (1961), and the Bollingen Foundation grant for the translation of Dutch poetry (1962). In 1963, Rich published her third collection, Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law, which was a much more personal work examining her female identity, reflecting the increasing tensions she experienced as a wife and mother in the 1950s, marking a substantial change in Rich's style and subject matter. In her 1982 essay "Split at the Root: An Essay on Jewish Identity", Rich states: "The experience of motherhood was eventually to radicalize me." The book met with harsh reviews. She comments, "I was seen as 'bitter' and 'personal'; and to be personal was to be disqualified, and that was very shaking because I'd really gone out on a limb ... I realised I'd gotten slapped over the wrist, and I didn't attempt that kind of thing again for a long time."

Moving her family to New York in 1966, Rich became involved with the New Left and became heavily involved in anti-war, civil rights, and feminist activism. Her husband took a teaching position at City College of New York. In 1968, she signed the "Writers and Editors War Tax Protest" pledge, vowing to refuse tax payments in protest against the Vietnam War. Her collections from this period include Necessities of Life (1966), Leaflets (1969), and The Will to Change (1971), which reflect increasingly radical political content and interest in poetic form.

From 1967 to 1969, Rich lectured at Swarthmore College and taught at Columbia University School of the Arts as an adjunct professor in the

Writing Division. Additionally, in 1968, she began teaching in the SEEK program in City College of New York, a position she continued until 1975. During this time, Rich also received the Eunice Tietjens Memorial Prize from Poetry Magazine. Rich and Conrad hosted anti-war and Black Panther fundraising parties at their apartment. Rising tensions began to split the marriage, and Rich moved out in mid-1970, getting herself a small studio apartment nearby. Shortly afterward, in October, Conrad drove into the woods and shot himself, widowing Rich.

In 1971, she was the recipient of the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America and spent the next year and a half teaching at Brandeis University as the Hurst Visiting Professor of Creative Writing. Diving into the Wreck, a collection of exploratory and often angry poems, split the 1974 National Book Award for Poetry with Allen Ginsberg, The Fall of America. Declining to accept it individually, Rich was joined by the two other feminist poets nominated, Alice Walker and Audre Lorde, to accept it on behalf of all women "whose voices have gone and still go unheard in a patriarchal world." The following year, Rich took up the position of the Lucy Martin Donnelly Fellow at Bryn Mawr College.

Later life: 1976–2012

In 1976, Rich began her partnership with Jamaican-born novelist and editor Michelle Cliff, which lasted until her death. In her controversial work Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution, published the same year, Rich acknowledged that, for her, lesbianism was a political as well as a personal issue, writing, "The suppressed lesbian I had been carrying in me since adolescence began to stretch her limbs." The pamphlet Twenty-One Love Poems (1977), which was incorporated into the following year's Dream of a Common Language (1978), marked the first direct treatment of lesbian desire and sexuality in her writing, themes which run throughout her work afterwards, especially in A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far (1981) and some of her late poems in The Fact of a Doorframe (2001). In her analytical work Adrienne Rich: the moment of change, Langdell suggests these works represent a central rite of passage for the poet, as she (Rich)

crossed a threshold into a newly constellated life and a "new relationship with the universe". During this period, Rich also wrote a number of key socio-political essays, including "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", one of the first to address the theme of lesbian existence. In this essay, she asks "how and why women's choice of women as passionate comrades, life partners, co-workers, lovers, community, has been crushed, invalidated, forced into hiding". Some of the essays were republished in On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966–1978 (1979). In integrating such pieces into her work, Rich claimed her sexuality and took a role in leadership for sexual equality.

From 1976 to 1979, Rich taught at City College and Rutgers University as an English professor. In 1979, she received an honorary doctorate from Smith College and moved with Cliff to Montague, MA. Ultimately, they moved to Santa Cruz, where Rich continued her career as a professor, lecturer, poet, and essayist. Rich and Cliff took over editorship of the lesbian arts journal Sinister Wisdom (1981–1983). Rich taught and lectured at UC Santa Cruz, Scripps College, San Jose State University, and Stanford University during the 1980s and 1990s. From 1981 to 1987, Rich served as an A.D. White Professor-At-Large for Cornell University. Rich published several volumes in the next few years: Your Native Land, Your Life (1986), Blood, Bread, and Poetry (1986), and Time's Power: Poems 1985–1988 (1989). She also was awarded the Ruth Paul Lilly Poetry Prize (1986), the Elmer Holmes Bobst Award in Arts and Letters from NYU, and the National Poetry Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Art of Poetry (1989).

In 1977, Rich became an associate of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP). WIFP is an American nonprofit publishing organization. The organization works to increase communication between women and connect the public with forms of women-based media.

In June 1984, Rich presented a speech at the International Conference of Women, Feminist Identity, and Society in Utrecht, Netherlands titled Notes Toward a Politics of Location. Her keynote speech is a major document on politics of location and the birth of the concept of female

"locatedness." In discussing the location from which women speak, Rich attempts to reconnect female thought and speech with the female body; specifically, with an intent of reclaiming the body through verbalizing self-representation. Further focusing on location, Rich begins the speech by noting that while at that moment in time she speaks these words in Europe, she has searched for these words in the United States. By acknowledging her location in an essay on the progression of the women's movement, she expresses her concerns for all women, not limited to just women in her Providence. Through widening her audience to women across the whole wide world Rich not only influences a larger movement but more importantly, she invites all women to consider their existence. Through imagining geographical locations on a map as history and as a place where women are created, and further focusing on the geographical locations, Rich ask women to examine where they themselves were created. In an attempt to try to find a sense of belonging in the world, Rich asks the audience not to begin with a continent, country, or house, but to start with the geography closest to themselves – which is their body. Rich, therefore, challenges members of the audience and readers to form their own identity by refusing to be defined by the parameters of government, religion, and home. The essay hypothesizes where the women's movement should be at the end of the 20th century. In an encouraging call for the women's movement, Rich discusses how the movement for change is an evolution in itself. Through de-masculinizing itself and de-Westernizing itself, the movement becomes a critical mass of so many different, voices, languages and overall actions. She pleads that the movement must change in order to experience change. She further insists that women must change it. In her essay, Rich considers how one's background might influence their identity. She furthers this notion by noting her own exploration of the body, her body, as female, as white, as Jewish and as a body in a nation. Rich is careful to define the location in which her writing takes place. Throughout her essay, Rich relates back to the concept of location. She recounts her growth towards understanding how the women's movement grounded in the Western culture is limited to the concerns of white women to the verbal and written indications of Black United States citizens. Such

professions have allowed her to experience the meaning of her whiteness as a point of location for which she needed to take responsibility. In 1986, she later published the essay in her prose collection Blood, Bread, and Poetry.

Rich's work with the New Jewish Agenda led to the founding of Bridges: A Journal for Jewish Feminists and Our Friends in 1990, a journal of which Rich served as the editor. This work coincided explored the relationship between private and public histories, especially in the case of Jewish women's rights. Her next published piece, An Atlas of the Difficult World (1991), won both the Los Angeles Times Book Award in Poetry and the Lenore Marshall/Nation Award as well as the Poet's Prize in 1993 and Commonwealth Award in Literature in 1991. During the 1990s Rich became an active member of numerous advisory boards such as the Boston Woman's Fund, National Writers Union and Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa. On the role of the poet, she wrote, "We may feel bitterly how little our poems can do in the face of seemingly out-of-control technological power and seemingly limitless corporate greed, yet it has always been true that poetry can break isolation, show us to ourselves when we are outlawed or made invisible, remind us of beauty where no beauty seems possible, remind us of kinship where all is represented as separation." In July 1994, Rich won the MacArthur Fellowship and Award, specifically the "Genius Grant" for her work as a poet and writer. Also in 1992, Rich became a grandmother to Julia Arden Conrad and Charles Reddington Conrad.

There's a place between two stands of trees where the grass grows uphill
and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows
near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted
who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, but don't be fooled
this isn't a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,
our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,
its own ways of making people disappear.

—From "What kinds of times are these?"

In 1997, Rich declined the National Medal of Arts in protesting against the House of Representatives' vote to end the National Endowment for the Arts as well as policies of the Clinton Administration regarding the arts generally and literature in particular, stating that "I could not accept such an award from President Clinton or this White House because the very meaning of art, as I understand it, is incompatible with the cynical politics of this administration ... means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of the power which holds it hostage". Her next few volumes were a mix of poetry and essays: Midnight Salvage: Poems 1995–1998 (1999), The Art of the Possible: Essays and Conversations (2001), and Fox: Poems 1998–2000 (2001).

In the early 2000s, Rich participated in anti-war activities, protesting against the threat of war in Iraq, both through readings of her poetry and other activities. In 2002, she was appointed a chancellor of the newly augmented board of the Academy of American Poets, along with Yusef Komunyakaa, Lucille Clifton, Jay Wright (who declined the honor, refusing to serve), Louise Gluck, Heather McHugh, Rosanna Warren, Charles Wright, Robert Creeley, and Michael Palmer. She was the winner of the 2003 Yale Bollingen Prize for American Poetry and applauded by the panel of judges for her "honesty at once ferocious, humane, her deep learning, and her continuous poetic exploration and awareness of multiple selves." In October 2006, Equality Forum honored Rich's work, featuring her as an icon of LGBT history.

Rich died on March 27, 2012, at the age of 82 in her Santa Cruz, California home. Her son, Pablo Conrad, reported that her death resulted from long-term rheumatoid arthritis. Her last collection was published the year before her death. Rich was survived by her sons, two grandchildren and her partner Michelle Cliff.

13.3 VIEWS ON FEMINISM

She has written several pieces that explicitly tackle the rights of women in society. In Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law she offers a critical

analysis of the life of being both a mother and a daughter-in-law, and the impact of their gender in their lives. Diving Into the Wreck was written in the early 'seventies, and the collection marks the start of her darkening tone as she writes about feminism and other social issues. In particular, she writes openly about her outrage with the patriarchal nature of the greater society. In doing so, she becomes an example for other women to follow in the hopes that continued proactive work against sexism will eventually counteract it.

Her poems are also famous for their feminist elements. One such poem is "Power", which was written about Marie Curie, one of the most important female icons of the 20th century for discovering radiation. In this poem, she discusses the element of power and feminism. More specifically, it tackles the problem that Curie was slowly succumbing to the radiation she acquired from her research, to which Rich refers in the poem as her source of power. This poem discusses the concept of power, particularly from a woman's point of view.

Besides poems and novels, Rich also wrote and published a number of nonfiction books that tackle feminist issues. Some of these books are: Of Woman Born, Motherhood as Experience and Institution, Blood, Bread and Poetry, etc. Especially the Bread and Poetry contains the famous feminist essay entitled "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", and Feminism and Community.

The works listed above, as well as her various interviews and documentaries, demonstrate that Rich has an in-depth perspective on feminism and society.

For one, Rich has something to say about the use of the term itself. According to her, she prefers to use the term "women's liberation" rather than feminism. For her, the latter term is more likely to induce resistance from women of the next generation. Also, she fears that the term would amount to nothing more than a label if it is used extensively. On the other hand, using the term women's liberation means that women can finally be free from factors that can be seen as oppressive to their rights.

Rich's views on feminism can be found in her works. She says in Of Woman Born that "we need to understand the power and powerlessness embodied in motherhood in patriarchal culture." She also speaks regarding the need for women to unite in her book On Lies, Secrets and Silence. In this book, she wrote:

"Women have often felt insane when cleaving to the truth of our experience. Our future depends on the sanity of each of us, and we have a profound stake, beyond the personal, in the project of describing our reality as candidly and fully as we can to each other."

Given the feminist conditions during the 50s-70s era, it can be said that Rich's works on feminism are revolutionary. Her views on equality and the need for women to maximize their potential can be seen as progressive during her time. Her views strongly coincide with the feminist way of thinking during that time. For Rich, society as a whole is founded on patriarchy and as such it limits the rights for women. For equality to be achieved between the sexes, the prevailing notions will have to be readjusted to fit the female perspective.

13.4 SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

Each year links to its corresponding " in poetry" article:

- 1950: Yale Younger Poets Award for A Change of World.
- 1952: Guggenheim Fellowship
- 1960: National Institute of Arts and Letters Award
- 1970: Shelley Memorial Award
- 1974: National Book Award for Poetry (a split award) for Diving into the Wreck
- 1979: Honorary Doctorate Smith College
- 1986: Inaugural Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize
- 1989: Honorary doctorate from Harvard University
- 1989: National Poetry Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Art of Poetry

- 1990: Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement (for gay or lesbian writing)
- 1991: Common Wealth Award of Distinguished Service
- 1991: Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- 1992: Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize
- 1992: Poets' Prize for Atlas of the Difficult World
- 1992: Frost Medal
- 1992: Academy of American Poets Fellowship
- 1994: MacArthur Fellowship
- 1996: Wallace Stevens Award
- 1997: National Medal of Arts (refused)
- 1999: Lifetime Achievement Award from the Lannan Foundation
- 2006: National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters
- 2010: Lifetime Recognition Award from the Griffin Poetry Prize
- 2017: Finalist, Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (posthumous)
- 2019: In June 2019, Rich was one of the inaugural fifty American "pioneers, trailblazers, and heroes" inducted on the National LGBTQ Wall of Honor within the Stonewall National Monument (SNM) in New York City's Stonewall Inn. The SNM is the first U.S. national monument dedicated to LGBTQ rights and history, and the wall's unveiling was timed to take place during the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots.

13.5 WORKS

Nonfiction

- 1976: Of Woman Born: Motherhood As Experience And Institution. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-31284-3.
- 1979: On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966–1978
- 1986: Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979–1985 (Includes the noted essay: "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence")

- 1993: What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics
- 1995: If Not with Others, How? pp. 399–405 in Weiss, Penny A.; Friedman, Marilyn. Feminism and community. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. ISBN 9781566392761.
- 2001: Arts of the Possible: Essays and Conversations. W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-05045-5.
- 2007: Poetry and Commitment: An Essay
- 2009: A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society, 1997–2008
- 2018: Essential Essays: Culture, Politics, and the Art of Poetry, W.W. Norton, 2018 ISBN 9780393652369

Poetry

Collections

- 1951: A Change of World. Yale University Press.
- 1955: The Diamond Cutters, and Other Poems. Harper.
- 1963: Snapshots of a daughter-in-law: poems, 1954-1962. Harper & Row.
- 1966: Necessities of life: poems, 1962-1965. W.W. Norton.
- 1967: Selected Poems. Chatto & Hogarth P Windus.
- 1969: Leaflets. W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-03-930419-5.
- 1971: The Will to Change: Poems 1968-1970. Norton.
- 1973: Diving into the Wreck. W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-31163-1.
- 1975: Poems: Selected and New, 1950-1974. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-04392-1.
- 1976: Twenty-one Love Poems. Effie's Press.
- 1978: The Dream of a Common Language. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-04502-4.

- 1982: A Wild Patience Has Taken Me this Far: Poems 1978-1981. W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated. ISBN 978-0-393-31037-5. (reprint 1993)

- 1983: Sources. Heyeck Press.

- 1984: The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems Selected and New, 1950-1984. W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated. ISBN 978-0-393-31075-7.

- 1986: Your Native Land, Your Life: Poems. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-02318-3.

- 1989: Time's Power: Poems, 1985-1988. Norton. 1989. ISBN 978-0-393-02677-1.

- 1991: An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems 1988-1991. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-03069-3.

- 1993: Collected Early Poems, 1950-1970. W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated. ISBN 978-0-393-31385-7.

- 1995: Dark Fields of the Republic: Poems, 1991-1995. W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-03868-2.

- 1996: Selected poems, 1950-1995. Salmon Pub. ISBN 978-1-897648-78-0.

- 1999: Midnight Salvage: Poems, 1995-1998. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-04682-3.

- 2001: Fox: Poems 1998-2000. W W Norton & Co Inc. ISBN 978-0-393-32377-1. (reprint 2003)

- 2004: The School Among the Ruins: Poems, 2000-2004. W. W. Norton & Co. ISBN 978-0-393-32755-7.

- 2007: Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth: Poems 2004–2006. ISBN 978-0-393-06565-7.

- 2010: Tonight No Poetry Will Serve: Poems 2007-2010. ISBN 0-393-07967-8.

Critical studies and reviews of Rich's work

- Chiasson, Dan (June 20, 2016). "Boundary conditions : Adrienne Rich's collected poems". The Critics. Books. The New Yorker. 92 (18): 78–81.

13.6 COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY AND LESBIAN EXISTENCE

"Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" is a 1980 essay by Adrienne Rich, which was also published in her 1986 book Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985 as a part of the radical feminism movement of the late '60s, '70s, and '80s.

Rich's work could be said to intersect between these three main schools, although she also moves throughout the piece to differentiate her writings from them; feeling that to characterize lesbian criticism as derivative of another type is ultimately reductive and disempowering, and furthermore contrary to her aims when writing of it.

The term's importance to understanding Rich's work is highlighted from the outset by its featuring in the title. Firstly, one must take note that the surrounding contexts cause this to be to some degree a reactionary text, following and taking up arms against essentialist second-wave feminism. In the years preceding this essay's publication, feminist writers and speakers arduously worked to distance themselves from suggestions of lesbianism; largely suggested by men as a means to discredit their beliefs about male privilege. However, this denial Rich feels strongly contributed to the mainstream erasure of the existence and acceptability of lesbian identity; suggesting an interlinked, innate undesirability. As such, Rich avows:

> "[I]t is not enough for feminist thought that specifically lesbian texts exist. Any theory or cultural/ political creation that treats lesbian existence as a marginal or less "natural" phenomenon, as mere "sexual preference," or as the mirror image of either heterosexual or male homosexual relations, is profoundly weakened thereby, whatever its other contributions. Feminist theory can no longer afford merely to voice a toleration of "lesbianism" as an "alternative life-style," or make token allusion to lesbians. A feminist critique of compulsory heterosexual orientation for women is long overdue."

This broad statement however must be understood in context, and in a context wherein Rich believes that women find it hard to make the connections that lesbian identity could and can be an acceptable and non-shameful alternative to heterosexuality. This, she explains, is largely due to the overwhelming prevalence of and pressure to conform to heterosexuality, through modes as simple as lack of visibility of lesbian role models, to those so insidious as erasure of female desire in heterosexual media so that the female will only explore her sexuality through contact with a male, primed and raised to think of sexuality as a male-only domain. This binarisation of sex as a masculine desire and dependence as a feminine is encouraged even today, as respectively male and female approaches to a romantic relationship. This can be seen particularly in the media of television and films in which a standard pairing of characters is a voluptuous and long-suffering wife to an unattractive and troublesome man, to whom she is nevertheless devoted and to whose desires she ultimately accedes.

Men are expected and encouraged in these media to desire women only for procreation, sexual pleasure, and physical good looks, while if a woman has these desires for a man, outside of a series aimed specifically at a female-only audience, it is treated as at best a punchline or at worst, the character is looked down upon by the rest of the cast, implying that the audience should join in the judgement. Rich aims in this piece to increase attention given to and recognition of lesbian desires and those outside of the complex of submission to men.

She asserts that compulsory heterosexuality is "an institution powerfully affecting […] mothering, sex roles, relationships, and societal prescriptions for women," continuing to cite four recent feminist works by her contemporaries within which "the idea of "preference" or "innate orientation" [is not] even indirectly questioned." By this she illustrates that the very idea of heterosexuality as a social construct chosen by and for males and benefiting males was not even being considered by many so-called feminists of the time. As such, feminists to Rich indirectly endorsed the right of males to define female desires and to police intra-gender relationships. These self-identifying female liberators feared to question the boundaries around their own desires, so convincing was

created the menace of the lesbian Other. Conclusively, women feared to raise the issue of female-female relationships and desires for fear of losing social status both amongst women and men. Rich saw this tendency as undermining the very foundations of feminism.

When Rich calls heterosexuality 'compulsory', she means that it is firstly considered as a default sexuality; anything other is deviant, and secondly she means that it is both implicitly and explicitly socially sanctioned. 'Compulsory' thus, because to think of behaving in a manner contrary to that of a heterosexual woman, for a female, is immediately shaped as rebellious and undesirable behaviour. The implicit desirability of heterosexuality creates an equally implicit binary belief that to not-desire in a heterosexual manner is definitively wrong. This not-desire can be formed as a lesbian desire or a desire for female-female sexual or romantic relations, but it can also be conceived of as a simple lack of desire for men. Rich further quotes from Kathleen Barry that:

> "As sexual power is learned by adolescent boys through the social experience of their sex drive, so do girls learn that the locus of sexual power is male."

Compulsory heterosexuality thus assumes that female and male sexual desire are directed solely each towards the other. Furthermore, the female learns, from the denial or her sexual agency by maternal, authoritative, and peer figures, that her role in this created sexual binary is simply to submit to males and surrender satisfaction as a male-only prerogative.

Furthermore, it privileges one way of being over a variety of other ways, and attempts to create a binary between heterosexuality and all kinds of non-heterosexuality by labelling all other ways of being as 'deviant'. However this seems fallacious due to majority opinion – if there are assortments of ways to desire that are not-heterosexual; it seems strange that heterosexuality alone is held up as the ideal and everything else as wrong or mistaken. It almost illustrates a cognitive bias towards heterosexuality that shapes all other modes of being as wrong, simply in order to safeguard heterosexual hegemony.

Rich in her writing thus aims to demonstrate how heterosexuality as the only and/or obvious means of expressing or feeling desire is short-sighted, limiting, and potentially unethical:

> "…heterosexuality, like motherhood, needs to be recognized and studied as a political institution-even, or especially, by those individuals who feel they are, in their personal experience, the precursors of a new social relation between the sexes."

Furthermore, Rich directly identifies certain "methods by which male power is manifested and maintained,"[1] within an essay by Kathleen Gough on the history of family relations amongst humans and for comparison, apes. Rich implicitly identifies compulsory heterosexuality to explain why even Gough "does not perceive these power-characteristics as specifically enforcing heterosexuality; only as producing sexual inequality." These characteristics of male power over women comprise:

> "men's ability to deny women sexuality or to force it upon them; to command or exploit their labor to control their produce; to control or rob them of their children; to confine them physically and prevent their movement; to use them as objects in male transactions; to cramp their creativeness; or to withhold from them large areas of the society's knowledge and cultural attainments" and largely have their roots in the idea of male physical dominance over women. This pre-civilised idea of physical dominance nevertheless forms a Foucaultian power-threat to which women learn from a young age and from the experiences of their mothers and grandmothers to submit. These are furthermore to Rich, obviously formative elements in the creation of compulsory heterosexuality to the point that it is accepted by both men and women in modern Western society as a given.

Rich views 'lesbian existence,' by contrast, as a continuum of not-male and not-heterosexual-romance acts; defined as lesbian by its non-

heterosexuality rather than by an active female-female erotic element. Even the word 'lesbian', Rich dryly notes, holds a connotation of threat to females who have already internalized a tendency "to perceive ourselves as sexual prey," the concept of the satisfaction of desires that one could feel if one allowed oneself to move out of the expected heterosexual binary is already associated with a fear of rejection. Rich suggests that this fear is created and maintained by heterosexual men desiring to monopolise women's affections from an early age. Consistent male control of female relationships and desires, through male-helmed media, advertising, and entertainment exists, she continues, to assuage a male fear:

"that women could be indifferent to them altogether, that men could be allowed sexual and emotional access to women only on women's terms, otherwise being left on the periphery of the matrix."

Rich defines women's existences outside of male relationships and confidently outside of male power structures as part of a 'lesbian continuum'. She uses this term to "connect aspects of woman-identification," including friendships between women, motherhood of girl babies, and a woman's relationship with her own mother, as well as female-female romantic and erotic partnerships. Rich admits that this can seem at first simply as "as a form of nay-saying to patriarchy, an act of resistance," but that under further consideration self-aware existence within a lesbian continuum illustrates a woman "committed to [her] own work and selfhood," rather than accepting her place as subordinate and inferior within a patriarchal unit.

To conclude, Rich's research supports a sustained effort by authors and academics to suppress, whether by act or omission, lesbian existence and lesbian experience as a valid alternative to heterosexuality. Furthermore, her essay deconstructs what many would have considered necessary and natural links between sexuality, reproduction, and social attachment; illustrating these institutions and behaviors to be socially constructed and merely performed as if they had always been innate. In this way I feel her text to be important in demonstrating the power of deconstruction to shed light upon social conventions that seemed before to be essential and

unchangeable. The implications of compulsory heterosexuality as an institution have since been heavily analyzed by feminist and queer theorists such as Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and Bonnie Zimmerman, cementing the importance of Rich's work to the continued evolution of these disciplines.

Summary

"Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" is a text that is constructed to think about and inspire change about lesbian visibility, structures of lesbian sexuality, and the role of literary criticism in relationship to lesbianism. Adrienne Rich argues that heterosexuality is not "natural" or intrinsic in human instincts, but an institution imposed upon many cultures and societies that render women in a subordinate situation. It was written to challenge the erasure of lesbian existence from a large amount of scholarly feminist literature. It was not written to widen divisions but to encourage heterosexual feminists to examine heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women and to change it.

""Compulsory" means required or obligatory and "heterosexuality" means the assumption that all romantic relationships are between a man and a woman." The normalcy of heterosexuality and the defiance of that are both political in nature. Adrienne Rich argues that heterosexuality is a violent political institution making way for the "male right of physical, economical, and emotional access" to women. She urges women to direct their energies towards other women rather than men, and portrays lesbianism as an extension of feminism. Rich challenges the notion of women's dependence on men as social and economic supports, as well as for adult sexuality and psychological completion. She calls for what she describes as a greater understanding of lesbian experience, and believes that once such an understanding is obtained, these boundaries will be widened and women will be able to experience the "erotic" in female terms.

In order to gain this physical, economical, and emotional access for women, Rich lays out a framework developed by Kathleen Gough (both a social anthropologist and feminist) that lists "eight characteristics of

male power in archaic and contemporary societies". Along with the framework given, Rich sets to define the term lesbianism by giving three separate definitions for the term. First, Rich sees lesbian existence as an act of resistance to this institution, but also as an individual choice, when in fact, the principles of radical lesbianism see lesbianism as necessary, and consider its existence as necessarily outside of the heterosexual political sphere of influence. Next that, "Lesbian Identity is the sense of self of a woman bonded primarily to women who is sexually and emotionally independent of men." Lastly, that the concept of a lesbian continuum, suggests that female sexual bonding is the only way that women experience women identification. The lesbian continuum is the overall "range—through each woman's life and throughout history—of woman-identified experiences, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman". Below are the characteristics in which male power has demonstrated the suppression of female sexuality.

To deny women their own sexuality: destruction of sexuality displayed throughout history in sacred documents.

Forcing male sexuality upon women: rape, incest, torture, a constant message that men are better, and superior in society to women.

Exploiting their labor to control production: women have no control over choice of children, abortion, birth control and furthermore, no access to knowledge of such things.

Control over their children: lesbian mothers seen as unfit for motherhood, malpractice in society and the courts to further benefit the man.

Confinement: women unable to choose their own wardrobe (feminine dress seen as the only way), full economic dependence on the man, limited life in general.

Male transactions: women given away by fathers as gifts or hostesses by the husband for their own benefit, pimping women out.

Cramp women's creativeness: male seen as more assimilated in society (they can participate more, culturally more important).

Men withholding attainment of knowledge: "Great Silence" (never speaking about lesbian existence in history), discrimination against women professionals.

All of the characteristics show how the denial of sexuality for women is a means to control and suppress any transition, creativeness, and economic advancement of women. What is essential to lesbian identity, is not women's genital activities with other women. It is their resistance to compulsory heterosexuality to a cultural system that compels women to invest their erotic energies in men. All of the above are forces that inhibit men to further ignore women as historically, culturally, and currently important. The characteristics show that society has forgotten that it is necessary (in order to function) to include women in both public and private spheres. Furthermore, the ignorance of a female's choice in sexuality has caused her position in society to be thought of as less, and more importantly, secondary to that of a man. A recurring point that Rich points out is the destruction of lesbian experiences in history (misplacement of documents, or destroying them in general) has led to a society in which having a lesbian experience, or being a lesbian all together is seen as 'the other' and unacceptable to most men and women.

Rich claims that women may not have a preference toward heterosexuality, but may find it imposed, managed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by society. In the workplace, for example, lesbian women are often still sexualized and forced to play the role of the 'heterosexual female'. Rich states, "Women endure sexual harassment to keep their jobs and learn to behave in a complaisant and ingratiatingly heterosexual manner... the woman who too decisively resists sexual overtures in the workplace is accused of being 'dried-up and sexless, or lesbian." She holds that women receive messages every day that promote heteronormativity in the form of myths and norms perpetuated by society. Rich argues that these myths have been accepted because of the historical lack of exposure that lesbians have received, being either stigmatized as diseased or ignored as non-existent. Indeed,

Rich objects to the term lesbianism, which she sees as a stigmatized clinical term, instead advocating the terms lesbian existence for the historical and contemporary presence of lesbian creation and lesbian continuum to include the entire range of a woman-identified experience; she feels that new understanding and language must be created to counter the limited and clinical terms that society has historically used to describe those it views as deviant. Rich claims that once women see lesbian existence as more than mere sexuality, it is more likely that more forms of "primary intensity" between and among women will be embraced.

Rich argues that part of the lesbian experience is an act of resistance: specifically, a rejection of the patriarchy and the male right to women. She does not, however, deny the existence of "role-playing, self-hatred, breakdown, suicide, and 'intrawoman violence'", all of which have been caused by the realities of rejecting compulsory heterosexuality. Rich writes that lesbians have been denied a continuity of their personal and political history, and that when included in history, they have been simply the female versions of male homosexuals, with no distinctiveness. At certain points in history, homosexual men and lesbians have shared a social existence, and acknowledged a common fight against society; but Rich writes that to treat the lesbian experience as a version of male homosexuality is to discard it, denying the female experience and the realities it brings, falsifying lesbian history.

Rich proposes that all women should separate themselves from men and engage in some form of lesbian relationship, whether it leads to a mere lesbian expression at one time or another or an identified lesbian sexuality. Only then, will it be possible for a woman to truly decide if heterosexuality is the right thing for her. In other words, heterosexuality has been constructed by men historically and culturally to be the only way of existence to further the male need. Yet, if we forget about this ideology and experiment in order to see what one really needs, then it can truly be a woman's decision instead of a man's. On a more radical note, Rich describes the possibility that all women exist on a lesbian continuum, and we see each other moving in and out of this space throughout the lives of women. She gives the example of as female

infants suck at their mother's breast in order to grow and obtain nutrients, the mother, experiences some orgasmic or pleasant sensation because of this act. Rich even goes to the extent to pose that women in the twelfth and fifteenth century, called the Beguines, shared living quarters, work and labor were even part of the lesbian continuum. Rich thinks of the word lesbian as meaning more than a sexual attraction and physical act, but an emotional and strong bond that women can share as they go through the same experiences. Furthermore, Rich explains that if heterosexuality is the natural way, as it was constructed over time, then women like in her examples would and were seen as deviants of society. Rich demonstrates that the debate over what is good, bad, right or wrong is a detailed and subjective one. She asserts that if one understands the term lesbian, as broken down into either the lesbian continuum or lesbian existence, a woman can further her understanding of her own sexuality and the construction of female sexuality throughout history. Rich explains, "historians need to ask at every point how heterosexuality as institution has been organized and maintained through the female wage scale, the enforcement of middle-class women's 'leisure', the glamorization of so-called sexual liberation, the withholding of education from women, the imagery of 'high art' and popular culture, the mystification of the 'personal sphere, and much else".
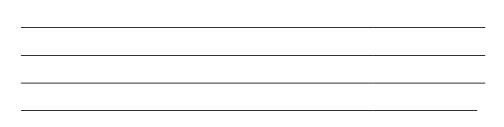
Rich holds that compulsory heterosexuality denies women of their own sexuality and comfortability in exploring their bodies and those of others. She claims that compulsory heterosexuality produces such myths as that of the vaginal orgasm. That serves to imply that only a man can sexually satisfy a woman (by delivering a vaginal orgasm), and hence that serves to prevent women from having relationships with other women.

In 1984, Rich wrote, "Reflections on Compulsory Heterosexuality" in order to address the criticism she received on her former essay, "Compulsory Heterosexuality". Furthermore, Rich re-appropriates her argument and describes her initial intent for writing the essay. Rich states, "I undertook 'Compulsory Heterosexuality' ... to contribute to an issue on sexuality, from any perspective I chose. I thought I was writing an exploratory piece, an essay in the literal sense of 'attempt:' a turning picture –the presumption of female heterosexuality—around to view it

from different angles, a hazarding of unasked questions. That it should be read as a manifesto or doctrine never occurred to me." Rich discloses that the purpose of "Compulsory Heterosexuality" was to complicate the proverbial, i.e. heterosexuality, in an attempt to include different realities, i.e. homosexuality. In no way was Rich seeking a lesbian revolution against heterosexuality.

Check your Progress-1

1. What is the name of the first collection of poetry of Adrienne Rich?

_____

_____

_____

2. Who selected Adrienne Rich's first collection of poetry for Yale Series of Younger Poets Award?

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_____

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3. Which award did Adrienne Rich decline?

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3. Which award did Adrienne Rich decline?

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4. In which year did Adrienne Rich win MacArthur Fellowship and Award?

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13.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we learned about the early life and education of Adrienne Rich; her views on feminism; list of her works and selected awards and honours received by her and about Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.

13.8 KEYWORDS

- **Heterosexuality**: the quality or characteristic of being sexually attracted solely to people of the opposite sex.
- **Complaisant**: willing to please others or to accept what they do or say without protest.
- **Lesbianism:** sexual attraction or sexual activity between women.
- **Fallacious**: based on a mistaken belief.
- **Adolescent**: (of a young person) in the process of developing from a child into an adult.

13.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write a bried note on the early life and education of Adrienne Rich.
- Write the views of Adrienne Rich on Feminism.
- Mention the list of works and selected awards and honours received by Adrienne Rich.

13.10 SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

- Collins, Michael J. "The Unearthing of the Body in Adrienne Rich's Politics". Seton Hall ERepository, Seton Hall University.

- "Book of Members, 1780-2010: Chapter R" (PDF). American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Retrieved April 7, 2011.

- "Distinguished Contribution to American Letters". National Book Foundation. Retrieved March 11, 2012. (With acceptance speech by Rich and introduction by Mark Doty.)

- "2017 Pulitzer Prizes". Pulitzer. Retrieved April 10, 2017.

- Glasses-Baker, Becca (June 27, 2019). "National LGBTQ Wall of Honor unveiled at Stonewall Inn". www.metro.us. Retrieved June 28, 2019.

- SDGLN, Timothy Rawles-Community Editor for (June 19, 2019). "National LGBTQ Wall of Honor to be unveiled at historic Stonewall Inn". San Diego Gay and Lesbian News. Retrieved June 21, 2019.

- "Groups seek names for Stonewall 50 honor wall". The Bay Area Reporter / B.A.R. Inc. Retrieved May 24, 2019.

- "Stonewall 50". San Francisco Bay Times. April 3, 2019. Retrieved May 25, 2019.

13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Adrienne Rich's first collection of poetry is named as "A Change of World". **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q1)**

- W. H. Auden selected Adrienne Rich's first collection of poetry for Yale Series of Younger Poets Award. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q2)**

- Adrienne Rich famously declined the National Medal of Arts. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q3)**

- Adrienne Rich won the MacArthur Fellowship and Award in July 1994. **(answers to check your progress – 1 Q4)**

UNIT-14 SANDRA M. GILBERT AND SUSAN GUBAR – THE MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC. CHAPTER 2: 'THE WOMAN WRITER AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERARY IMAGINATION'-1

STRUCTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVES

Once you go through this unit,

- you would learn about of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar;

- you would also learn about Feminist Literary Criticism And Theory;

- you would also go through Sandra Gilbert's Works and The Anxiety Of Authorship;

- and further, you would also learn about The Madwoman In The Attic: The Woman Writer And The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination

14.1 INTRODUCTION

SANDRA GILBERT

Sandra M. Gilbert (born December 27, 1936) is an American literary critic and poet who has published in the fields of feminist literary criticism, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic criticism. She is best known for her collaborative critical work with Susan Gubar, with whom she co-authored, among other works, The Madwoman in the Attic (1979). Madwoman in the Attic is widely recognized as a text central to second-wave feminism. She is Professor Emerita of English at the University of California, Davis.

She lives in Berkeley, California and, until 2008, in Paris, France. Her husband, Elliot L. Gilbert, was Chair of the Department of English at University of California, Davis, until his death in 1991. She also had a long-term relationship with David Gale, mathematician at University of California, Berkeley, until his death in 2008.

Academia

Gilbert received her B.A. from Cornell University, her M.A. from New York University, and her Ph.D. in English literature from Columbia University in 1968. She has taught at California State University, Hayward, Williams College, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, and Indiana University. She held the C. Barnwell Straut Chair of English at Princeton University from 1985 until 1989.

According to reports in The New York Times, Gilbert, along with Emory Elliott, Valerie Smith, and Margaret Doody all resigned from Princeton in 1989. The reports suggest that the four were unhappy with the leniency shown to Thomas McFarland after he was accused of sexual misconduct. McFarland was initially put on a one-year suspension, but

eventually took early retirement after these resignations and threats of student boycotts.

She was named the inaugural M. H. Abrams Distinguished Visiting Professor at Cornell University for spring 2007, and the Lurie Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Creative Writing MFA program at San Jose State University in 2009.

Awards

Gilbert was president of the Modern Language Association in 1996. She has been a recipient of Guggenheim, Rockefeller, NEH, and Soros Foundation fellowships and has held residencies at Yaddo, MacDowell, Bellagio, Camargo, and Bogliasco. In 1988 she was awarded a D. Litt. by Wesleyan University. In 1990 she was a co-recipient (with Karl Shapiro) of the International Poetry Forum's Charity Randall Award. More recently, she has won a Patterson Prize (for Ghost Volcano), an American Book Award (for Kissing the Bread), the John Ciardi Award for Lifetime Achievement in Poetry (from the Italian-American Foundation), the Premio Lerici Pea awarded by the Liguri nel Mondo association, and several awards from Poetry magazine. In 2004 she was awarded the degree of Doctor Philosophiae Honoris Causa by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2012, she and her longtime collaborator Susan Gubar were awarded the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Book Critics Circle. In 2017 she received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Harvard University.

Collaboration with Susan Gubar

Gilbert and Gubar met in the early 1970s at Indiana University. In 1974, they collaborated to co-teach a course on literature in English by women; their lectures led to the manuscript for Madwoman in the Attic. They have continued to co-author and co-edit, and have been jointly awarded several academic distinctions. Notably, they were jointly named Ms. magazine's "Woman of the Year" in 1986 for their work as head editors of The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English.

Because of the success of their joint publications, Gilbert and Gubar are often cited together in the fields of Feminist literary criticism and Feminist theory.

SUSAN GUBAR

Susan D. Gubar (born November 30, 1944) is an American author and distinguished Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies at Indiana University. She is best known for co-authoring, with Sandra M. Gilbert, a standard feminist text, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979) and a trilogy on women's writing in the 20th century. Her honours include the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award.

Education

Gubar received an BA from the City College of New York, an MA from the University of Michigan, and a PhD from the University of Iowa.

Career

Gubar joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1973, at a time when there were three female professors among the 70 in its English department.

Gubar and Gilbert edited the Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English, published in 1985 (ISBN 0393019403); its publication resulted in both of them being included among Ms.'s women of the year in 1986.

Her book Judas: A Biography, was published in 2009 by W.W. Norton (ISBN 9780393064834). Her other writings include essays on the relationship between Judaism and feminism, and the role of poetry in Holocaust remembrance.

In December 2009, Gubar retired from Indiana University at age 65, due to complications following a November 2008 diagnosis of advanced ovarian cancer. The "wrenching story" of her subsequent medical treatment (in which she underwent a "debulking" surgery which included the removal of her appendix, uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and part of her intestines) led her to write Memoir of a Debulked

Woman (2012, ISBN 978-0-393-07325-6). She continues her story as a blogger in "Living with Cancer" for The New York Times.

In 2012, she and her longtime collaborator Sandra M. Gilbert were awarded the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Book Critics Circle.

Bibliography with Sandra M. Gilbert

- The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the 19th-Century Literary Imagination
- Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets
- A Guide to "The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English"
- The War of the Words, Volume I of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century
- Sexchanges, Volume II of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century
- Letters from the Front, Volume III of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century
- Masterpiece Theatre: An Academic Melodrama

They also edited:

- Women Poets, Special Double Issue of Women's Studies
- The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English
- The Female Imagination and the Modernist Aesthetic , also published as a Special Double Issue of Women's Studies (Vol. 13, no. 1 & 2 (1986))
- MotherSongs: Poetry by, for, and about Mothers also with Diana O'Hehir

14.2 FEMINIST LITERARY CRTICISM AND THEORY

Gilbert's critical and theoretical works, particularly those co-authored with Susan Gubar, are generally identified as texts within the realm of second-wave feminism. As such, they represent part of a concerted effort to move beyond the simple assimilationist theories of first-wave feminism, either by rejecting entirely the given, oppressive, patriarchal, male-dominated order of society, or by seeking to reform that order. Gilbert's texts, in turn, lay themselves open to many of the criticisms levelled by third-wave feminism, or thinkers who regard patriarchy not as an integrated and foundational system, but a set of repeated practices which may vary over time and space.

Gilbert is often said to have found her theoretical roots in the earlier 1970s works of Ellen Moers and Elaine Showalter, as the basic premise of her thought is that women writers share a set of similar experiences and that male oppression or patriarchy is everywhere essentially the same.

14.3 THE ANXIETY OF AUTHORSHIP

In The Madwoman in the Attic, Gilbert and Gubar take the Oedipal model of the anxiety of influence developed by literary critic Harold Bloom, centred around writers' Oedipal fear and jealousy for their perceived literary "fore-fathers", and adapt it to their own purposes as feminist critics. According to Bloom's theory, the developing writer must struggle to break free from his most immediate, direct influences, to form his own voice, and to break away from identification to find his own imaginative space. Gilbert and Gubar extend this male-oriented model to incorporate a female "Anxiety of Authorship", whereby lack of predecessors makes the very act of writing problematic.

Where Bloom wonders how the male author can find a voice that is his own, Gilbert and Gubar – building on Virginia Woolf's analysis of the "difficulty...that they had no tradition behind them" – emphasise the problem a woman writer may have in seeing herself as possessing a literary voice at all, given the absence of a maternal precursor. Where Bloom finds aggression and competition between male literary figures in terms of self-consciously feeling influenced and desiring to be

influential, the "anxiety of authorship" identifies a "secret sisterhood" of role models within the Western tradition who show that women can write, the recuperation of the tradition of which becomes a feminist project. However, these models too may be "infected" with a lack of confidence, and with internal contradiction of ambition, hampered by the culturally induced assumption of "the patriarchal authority of art."

In later works, the pair explore "the 'double bind' of the woman poet...the contradictions between her vocation and her gender" (Shakespeare's Sisters), as well as the development (in the wake of Sylvia Plath) of a new genre of 'mother poets'.

14.4 SANDRA GILBERT'S WORKS

Critical Works

- "I, TOO, WILL BE "UNCLE SANDRA"". *Titanic Operas. Archived from* the original *on 2010-07-15.*
- Acts of Attention: The Poems of D.H. Lawrence (Cornell University Press, 1972)

Co-authored with Susan Gubar

- A Guide to The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English (W.W. Norton, 1985; revised second edition 1996)
- The War of the Words, Volume I of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (Yale University Press, 1988)
- Sexchanges, Volume II of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (Yale University Press, 1989)
- Letters from the Front, Volume III of No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (Yale University Press, 1994)
- Masterpiece Theatre: An Academic Melodrama (Rutgers University Press, 1995)
- The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (Yale University Press, 1979)

Poetry

- In the Fourth World (University of Alabama Press, 1979)
- The Summer Kitchen (Heyeck Press, 1983)
- Emily's Bread (W. W. Norton, 1984)
- Blood Pressure (W. W. Norton, 1989)
- Ghost Volcano (W. W. Norton, 1997)
- Kissing the Bread: New and Selected Poems 1969-1999 (W. W. Norton, 2000)
- The Italian Collection (Depot Books, 2003)
- Belongings (W. W. Norton, 2006)
- Aftermath: Poems (W. W. Norton, 2011)

Non- Fiction

- Wrongful Death: A Medical Tragedy (W. W. Norton, 1995)
- Death's Door: Modern Dying and The Ways We Grieve (W. W. Norton, 2006)
- Rereading Women: Thirty Years of Exploring Our Literary Traditions (W. W. Norton, 2011)
- The Culinary Imagination: From Myth to Modernity (W. W. Norton, 2014)

Other Publications

Gilbert has edited a collection of elegies:

- Inventions of Farewell (W. W. Norton, 2001)

With Susan Gubar, she has edited several collections:

- Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets (Indiana University Press, 1981)
- The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English (W.W. Norton, 1985, 1990, 1996, 2007)
- Women Poets, Special Double Issue of Women's Studies (1980)
- The Female Imagination and the Modernist Aesthetic (Gordon and Breach, 1986)

With Susan Gubar and Diana O'Hehir, she has edited a collection of poetry:

- MotherSongs: Poetry by, for, and about Mothers (W.W. Norton, 1995)
- With Wendy Barker, she has edited a collection of essays on the work of Ruth Stone:
- The House is Made of Poetry (Southern Illinois University Press, 1996)

14.5 THE MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC: THE WOMAN WRITER AND THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERARY IMAGINATION

The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination (1979) is a nonfiction scholarly text by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The book quickly became a classic of feminist literary criticism, and a second edition with an updated introduction was released in 2000.

Women have had the power of naming stolen from us.

We have not been free to use our own power to name ourselves, the world or God.

Mary Daly

For all literary artists, of course, self-definition necessarily precedes self-assertion: the creative I AM cannot be uttered if the I knows not what it is.

Gilbert and Gubar

The attempt at self-definition is itself a creative act for the feminist reader and writer. From recovering the whole truth from partial revelations, re-righting of canons, searching for a female tradition to

writing the self by challenging the distortions of identity has been a long and painful process. Culturally alienated, socially and economically subordinated and devalued, woman remained as the 'other' in all mainstream discourses and consequently silenced. Behind all patriarchal representations of woman, was the preconceived notion of the authority of the author as undisputed creator-patriarch. 'Reading against the grain'- for which Toril Moi appreciates Kate Millet (Moi 1985: 24)-became the first political act of resistance which led the way to counter hegemonic reconstructions of the self. Moi goes on to uphold Millet as a pioneer in . the deconstruction of the patriarchal text:

Millet's importance as a literary critic lies in her relentless defence of the reader's right to posit her own view point rejecting the received hierarchy of text and reader [. . .] Her approach destroys the prevailing image of the reader I critic as passive I feminine recipient of 'authoritarian discourse and as such is exactly suited to feminism's political purposes. (25)

Patriarchal ideology had succeeded in reducing woman to namelessness anonymity and selflessness by idealizing her as the 'angel in the house', trivializing her work as economically non-productive and biologically reducing her to the mere female and also distorting her identity as a feminist as monstrously deviant. The relegation of experience to the realm of the personal and the domestic and theory to the political and academic has also been a way of ensuring the 'selflessness' of woman. Women's writing had to rise from the abyss of neglect and misogynist contempt to being recognized and acknowledged as a significant body of creative writing. Every feminist text to a certain extent, is to be recognized as a counter text of the self in the context of a patriarchal ideology that excludes women from power and public life, undervalues and trivializes women's contributions to culture and uses its discourse to consign women to the private spheres of sexuality, domesticity and informal labour.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their pioneering text The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary

Imagination (1979) bring out the parallel axes of oppression in life and literature that women suffer:

Both in life and art we saw, the artists we studied were literally and figuratively confined. Enclosed in the architecture of an overwhelmingly male dominated society, these literary women were also inevitably trapped in the specifically literary constructs of what Gertrude Stein was to call 'patriarchal poetry'. (xi)

The woman reader found only patriarchal representations of herself, "constricted and restricted by the Palaces of Art and the Houses of Fiction male authors authored" (xi). The only power left to woman was "the power to refuse" to accept the image of the pathologically deviant 'other' that she was made out to be (xi). The counter discourse of the self was a manifestation of the "dynamics of female literary response to male literary assertion and coercion" (xii). It became imperative for women to write back when confronted by the "coercive or compellingly persuasive nature" of the literary text that creates and recreates the male metaphors that structure and interpret women's lives and texts (xiii). Gilbert and Gubar feel that the female literary tradition could be traced back to "the common female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinements through strategic redefinitions of self, art and society" (xii). One of their major observances was that the metaphor of literary paternity was as pervasive and pernicious as patriarchy itself in its ability to appropriate and monopolize literary creativity and the power of representation.

Gilbert and Gubar begin their thesis with a rhetorical question that startles us: "Is a pen a metaphorical penis?" (3) and go on to illustrate the instances of sexual politics that relate male sexuality to the creative gift. The underlying hierarchical structure of the western literary tradition was provided by the "patriarchal notion that the writer 'fathers' his text just as God fathered the world" (4). Theological, literary and sexual metaphors were brought together to relate literary paternity with the power to create, possess and even destroy. Gilbert and Gubar acknowledge their indebtedness to Edward Said's speculations on the tern1 'authority' and the related term 'author' where the author is seen as a person who

originates or gives existence to something, a begetter, beginner, father, ancestor or a person who also sets forth written statements (4). The author is thus compared to "an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis" (6). Literary tradition seen in the perspective of Harold Bloom's paradigm of male literary lineage is based on the Freudian notion of an Oedipal struggle between literary fathers and sons. Each son comes into his literary inheritance through the invalidation of his literary father. From this exclusive male defined literary psychohistory woman has been totally disinherited. The woman writer has no place and does not fit in as western literary history is not only overwhelmingly male but also patriarchal. Apart from the psycho-sexual and socio-sexual con-texts surrounding the literary text, even theological metaphors are appropriated to reinforce the divine right of literary patriarchy. The Gospel according to St. John has been cited as an elaboration of the word as a paradigm of divine (male) creativity. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God [...]All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 1-4).

The divine seed that originates in the mind has nothing to do with the physical processes of birth associated with the female. The author thus becomes "an aesthetic patriarch" (Mw 6) and like any patriarch, is transformed into a figure owning, possessing and controlling his creation.

For if the author / father is the owner of his text and of his reader's attention, he is also, of course, owner / possessor of the subjects of his text, that is to say, of those figures, scenes and events-those brain children, he has both incarnated in black and white and "bound" in cloth or leather. (Mw 7)

As father, master, ruler and owner, the aesthetic patriarch keeps his creation under his controlling gaze denying it an autonomous identity and powers of self expression. According to Gilbert and Gubar, the most devastating implication of the paternity / creativity metaphor is "the notion [. . .] that women exist only to be acted upon by men, both as

literary and as sensual objects" (8) and the phallogocentric hegemony that it brings into being.

The underlying metaphors of imprisonment, enclosure and immobility that constitute the representation of woman in literature are carefully traced by Gilbert and Gubar. It is seen that women are denied interiority and objectified as stereotypes. Their mobility, flexibility and growth are threatening to patriarchal stability and hence women are frozen and immobilized as images and 'killed' into art. They are fixed in binary locations as angel and monster and denied any chance of transgressing those borders. The fixity of art is a triumph over the fluidity of life and stereotypes can be evaluated as "those mythic masks the male artists have fastened over her (the woman's) human face both to lessen their dread of her "inconstancy" and-by identifying her with the "eternal types" they have themselves invented-to possess her more thoroughly" (Mw 17).

With the male-designed masks and costumes put on her, woman becomes conditioned to accept the 'vested interests' of the male and to internalize the fictions of identity that the self is made to accept in life and literature.

Lacking the pen I penis which would enable them similarly to refute one fiction by another, women in patriarchal societies have historically been reduced to mere properties, to characters and images imprisoned in male texts because generated solely [. . .] by male expectations and designs. (Mw 12)

According to Gilbert and Gubar, women are confined literally and figuratively and their imprisonment is not metaphysical or metaphorical but reflects the social and actual conditions in culture as inscribed in literature. In an incomparably brilliant passage they sum up how every male literary endeavour encloses woman in patriarchal ideology.

As a creation "penned" by man ... [ ]woman has been "penned up" or "penned in". As a sort of "sentence" man has spoken she has herself been "sentenced", fated, jailed, for he has both "indited" her and "indicted" her. As a thought he has "framed" she has been both "framed" (enclosed)

in his texts, glyphs, graphics and "framed up" (found guilty, found wanting in his cosmologies. (13)

Being imprisoned in stereotypes and in other patriarchal enclosures, woman loses her sense of autonomy, interiority and creativity. "Exorcised from public life" and from a life of activity, woman is reduced by 'angelographers' (26) to total selflessness in a life of contemplative purity which is the prescribed norm. Women are killed into art to assume the role of stereotypes and through art they are literally killed to achieve total selflessness in death. No longer vulnerable to the inconsistencies of the flesh, woman in death becomes an idealised version of her mortal self. She becomes not only an "object d' art" but "a saint" in her surrender of herself (25). It is pointed out that overt sent mentalization of dying children and child-women in Harriet Beecher Stowe or Dickens or Louisa May Alcott created "a conventionalized iconography" and a "stylized hagiography" (25). This death paradoxically becomes a trope for power which women fail to assume in life. Jane Tompkins, in her essay "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History", shows how woman, infantilized and immobilised as an embodiment of purity, is perfected in death and given access to power:

Stories like the death of little Eva are compelling for the same reason that the story of Christ's death is compelling: they enact a philosophy, as much political as religious in which the pure and the powerless die to save the powerful and the corrupt and thereby show themselves more powerful than those they save. (Showalter 1986: 85)

It is a paradox that woman unable to save herself in life through her actions can aspire to supreme heroism in the act of dying. From an object of art she is raised to an object of worship in a further attempt at dehumanizing her self. Above all we are made to realize that "to be selfless is not only to be noble, but to be dead" (Mw 25). Celestial and virginal purity of woman can only be a posthumous award like the one accorded by Milton to his "late espoused saint" who "came vested all in white" (qtd. in Mw 21)

Against these angelic and spiritualized 'self-less' selves are pitted the monstrous, freakish unnatural women who expound their energy in creativity. These "maddened doubles" who function as "asocial surrogates" for their "docile selves" break out of their patriarchal enclosures into autonomy and creativity (Mw xi). Only the mad woman can explore the resources within the attic of her interiority and assume the power of articulation and self-definition. Her expulsion from the parlour and from all the perks of femininity recreates her as the anomalous, alienated other who re-presents herself through strategies of alternative fictions. The underlying metaphor of the patriarchal family which denies woman entry into literary spaces beyond the parlour marginalizes her as a possession and property of the aesthetic patriarch. Her place within this patriarchal literary family and her creative potential are male defined and preordained. Gayle Rubin in her article "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex" (1975) has shown that anthropological studies of marriage and family based on Marxist economics and psychoanalytic definitions of identity reveal the fact that men typically "have certain rights in their female kin whereas women do not have the same rights either to themselves or to their male kin and may be used as bride wealth, trophies, gifts and even traded, bought and sold" (Rubin 1975: 175-6). Historically men have assumed a legitimate right to woman's body, her children and the product of her labour and this has been validated by culture in all patriarchal societies. Gilbert and Gubar sum up the pernicious nature of western patriarchy by maintaining that it encloses woman in "Definitions of her person and her potential, reducing her to stereotypes conflicting with her sense of self, subjectivity, autonomy and creativity" (Mw 64).

The paradigm of the patriarchal family upon which literary patriarchy is based is itself a product of the sexual division of labour. Consequently the trivialization and the exploitation of woman's labour bear relation to the materialistic nature of women's oppression. The demystification of the patriarchal family was one of the major steps towards liberating the autonomy and creativity of woman and re-covering her social self. Kate Millet in her Sexual Politics lifts the veil of sentimentality from the family showing it as a historically Specific institution of patriarchy. She

resorts to theoretical support from Friedrich Engels's Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1884). Engels demonstrated that the patriarchal family is a historical development and therefore not immutable. Engels analyses the institution of the family and woman's role in it accepting Bachofen's idea that the first family form was based on the principles of mother-right and the dominance of women in the household. Based on Marxist theories of economics, Engels's central thesis of the family is that economic developments leading to establishment of private property and surplus commodities used for exchange and profit transformed the matriarchate into a patriarchate. With the development of the ownership of private property, men in the bid to pass on private property to their biological heirs, exerted control over women's bodies and their reproductive capacity through the institution of monogamous marriage. This gives rise to the development of nuclear families where labour and its division and value are based on Marxian theories of economic value. Women are relegated to the private domestic sphere where they produce commodities of use-value which are consumed by the members of the family or group. Products or commodities that have exchange value or surplus value which will ultimately contribute to capitalist notions of profit become the monopoly of men. Engels believed that as men began to accumulate wealth, they began to hold women and the product of their labour as private property.

The domestic labour of woman no longer counted beside the acquisition of the necessities of life by the man, the latter was everything, the former an unimportant extra. The man now being actually supreme in the house, the last barrier to his absolute supremacy had fallen (Engels 1942: 147-48)

The communal nature of matriarchal families which ensured the centering of the material base of family unit in woman-controlled 'gens' or extended families became a thing of the past (43). The transition was entirely beneficial to man who exerted control over all the surplus and who eventually employed cheap labour power to perpetuate the system leading to the use ofslaves and women who 84 acquired an exchange value (48). In proportion to the increase in wealth, man became the all important father-owner-patriarch who controlled all the means of

production. Engels focuses on the development of the patriarchal family as a historical necessity-"Mother-right, therefore had to be overthrown" (49) and this led to the "world historical defeat of the female sex" (50). The male dominated nuclear family which is a transcultural phenomenon saw the consequences of economic power centred exclusively on man. Engels literally looks forward to the objectification of the female and her loss of selfhood in life and literature.

The man took command in the home [. . .] the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children (50).

Woman could no longer aspire to autonomy as she became reified into a tool of male design for male purpose. Engels however saw the sexual division of labour as 'natural' rather than ideological or political. He saw the relegation of women to the household and to domestic labour as 'primitive' rather than 'social' as elaborated in Moira Maconachie's essay "Engels, Sexual Divisions and the Family" (Sayers 1987: 104). This is based on the Marxian concept of seeing the approximation of human labour-power as a form of private property. David McLellan in his selected writings of Karl Marx highlights Marx's own view of the patriarchal assumption of authority within the family.

With the division of labour [. . .] which in its turn is based on the natural division of labour in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another, is given simultaneously [...] the unequal distribution, both quantitative and qualitative, of labour and its products, hence property: the nucleus, the first form of which lies in the family where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family [...] is the first property [that is] the power of disposing of the labour power of others. (McLellan 1977: 168)

With no role in sustaining the community, woman was employed at home to serve the needs of man and her labour was exploited and undervalued. Engels points out that "Household management lost its public character. It became a private service: the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production" (Engels 65).

Household labour which had no material base was denigrated and consequently woman's position in society was based on her potential. The sexual division of labour reinforced the power-structured relationships of the politics of gender, relegating woman to the sphere of domestic work. British materialist feminist Ann Oakley in her article "What is a Housewife?" analyses the characteristic features of the role of the housewife in the modern industrialized society-"as its exclusive allocation to women rather than to adults of both sexes, its association with economic dependence i.e. with the dependent role of the woman in modem marriage, its status as non-work or its opposition to 'real' i.e. economically productive work and its primacy to women, that is its priority over other roles" (Lovell 1993: 77). The contradictions involved in this work which is designated 'non-work' are numerous. Producing no commodities of direct value to the economy, the housewife is economically non-productive yet by her services she enables others to be economically productive. The housewife paradoxically is relegated to the status of a consumer since she acquires commodities like household articles and provisions for her home from outside. Since she does not exist as a worker, her labour is not waged and she is not insured or eligible for any benefit or financial claim. Thus housework becomes a low status work and combined with it is the low status of the persons who do it-women. Within marriage the role of the housewife is marked by economic dependence and her status as a non-entity. Oakley traces the phonetic reduction of the term housewife to 'hussy' which means a worthless woman and combines the linguistic and social meaning to prove the reduction of woman housewife to a social and economic non-entity (79). The status of a housewife is one of the patriarchal enclosures within which woman exists. Ann Oakley provides a brilliant summing up:

[...] a housewife and a woman are one and the same: one and the same they are subject to deprivation and oppression in relation to the position of the dominant group in society. Neither housewives in their work roles nor women in their social and economic roles generally are incorporated into the image and ideology of this group [. . .] if they were [. . .] they would not be set apart, different, unequal. (Lovell 1993: 79)

Women's incorporation into the dominant group in society according to Engels is possible when private property comes to be abolished and woman's labour is no longer privatised. He proclaimed that "emancipation of woman will only be possible when women take part in production on a large social scale and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time" (Engels 221). Engels has linked women's oppression in the household directly to patriarchy under the capitalist means of production which has displaced the matriarchal system of family units. But feminist critics like Gayle Rubin note that women's oppression historically predates capitalism and is transcultural.

Capitalism has taken over, and rewired, notions of male and female which predate it by centuries. No analysis of the reproduction of labour power under capitalism can explain foot binding, chastity belts or any of the incredible array of Byzantine fetishized indignities, let alone the more ordinary ones which have been inflicted upon women in various times and places (Reiter 163).

However, Engels is able to establish that man's monopoly over production for exchange is the basis for male power. Karen Sacks, an anthropologist notes that "Engels is right in seeing public or social labour as the basis for social adulthood" (Reiter 221) and "the spouse who owns the property rules the household"(222). Engels's solution that women seek employment outside the home was seen to be too simplistic by the Marxist feminist critics as they knew too well that women's subordination extends itself to the work place which the Marxists identify as the locus of capitalistic exploitation. In Marxism, class as a category of analysis is seen to subsume gender. Heidi Hartmann, an American Marxist-feminist highlights the 'unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism' by pointing out that "Marxist categories like capital itself are sex-blind" and that we are given no clues about "why women are subordinate to men inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way round" (Jackson et al 1993: 14). However she identifies a partnership between patriarchy and capitalism in the idea of paying family wages to men (the idea that an adult male should be paid enough to support his wife and children) and keeping women conformed to the

home to serve men and children and serving capital as mere consumers. Hartman identifies the family wage system as the cornerstone of the sexual division of labour (14).

The ideological subordination by a dominant group makes women unequal partners at home and also in the work place. Paid lower wages at the work place or none at all and given work that is considered low status, women pass on from subordination to exploitation in the patriarchal family and outside it. In The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy delineates how Ammu works in the family concern 'Paradise Pickles and Preserves' where she can neither assume ownership or partnership with her brother Chacko or even the status of a worker who is economically remunerated

Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my factory, my pineapples, my pickles. Legally this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter had no claim to property [...]

"Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society," Ammu said.

Chacko said, "What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine". (Roy 1997: 57)

Thus we see that patriarchy extends itself in its effects outside the family pursuing women out into waged work. Men have traditionally reserved certain kinds of highly paid work for themselves and accepted women only in those jobs that reflected and reinforced their domesticity. In this way women engaged in the public world of productive labour are also seen to be alienated.

The material oppression of woman in society can be seen to have a direct bearing on the construction of gendered identity on the basis of sexual division of labour in the family. Michele Barret in her influential work Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis (1980) identifies the foundation of women's oppression as a complex she terms 'the family household system' which combines "the material relations of the household" and the "ideological construction of familiarise and gender" (210). The ideology that maintained women's

natural connection to domesticity was naturally incorporated into the capitalist relations of production. The sexual division of labour within the wage labour system and within the household reinforced each other. The ideological construction of familiarise and gender is shown to be based on "a hegemonic definition of family life: as naturally based on close kinship, as properly organised through a male bread winner with financially dependent wife and children, and as a haven of privacy beyond the public realm of commerce and industry" (204). This bourgeois ideal of patriarchal family household has embedded within it a hierarchization of labour and an eroticisation of relations of power within the family. Here "the family provides the nexus for various themes-romantic love, feminine nurturance, mutualism, self-sacrifice" (205): all related to gendered identity for the female. Through this ideology women are confined to the patriarchal enclosures of domesticity and maternity. This being inscribed into literature creates the 'angel in the house' whose crowning achievement in life would be to sacrifice it. This ideology is both to be seen as a false intellectual system rooted in ruling class interests and as "a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced, transformed" (97). The sexual division of labour promotes at once the idealisation of the family and the demystification of gender relations. The dissociation between the public and private realms created two separate worlds based on gender identities. Eli Zaretsky in Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life (1976) shows how "work and life (feminine) were separated" (30). The family became a "utopian retreat" away from the harsh world of alienated labour (61). Consequently "the split in society between 'personal feelings' and 'economic production' was integrated with the sexual division of labour. Women were identified with emotional life, men with the struggle for existence" (64). This also leads in turn to the gender construction of "femininity" which relegates woman to the realm of the other and makes her internalize the 'feminine' virtues of passivity, immobility, physical delicacy and μmasochism. Contrary to these values are those of activity, aggressiveness, competitiveness and efficiency which are designated masculine and which belong to the world of public enterprise.

Gilbert and Gubar rightly identify Virginia Woolf's 'angel in the house' "as the most pernicious image male authors have ever imposed on literary women" (Mw 20). They point out that the angel in the house is a nineteenth century replica of the mother goddess Virgin Mary of the middle ages (20). The aspiration towards the 'eternal feminine' (the eternal principle symbolized by woman) becomes a compulsion for woman (20). These are "virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability and politeness" (23). John Ruskin's notions of "sweet orderings of domesticity" enshrine the Victorian woman within her home to become "her husband's holy refuge from the blood and sweat that inevitably accompanies a "life of significant action" (24) which belongs to the realm of the public enterprise dominated by man.

The sexual division of labour that confines woman to domesticity also relegates her potential to the physical, making her capable only of (pro)creativity while mental productivity or artistic creativity belongs to the male. According to Susan Stanford Friedman's "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse":

The structures of patriarchy have divided labour into men's production and women's reproduction. Underlying these words is the familiar dualism of mind and body, a key component of western patriarchal ideology. Creation is the act of the mind that brings something new into existence. Procreation is the act of the body that reproduces the species. A man conceives an idea in his brain, while a woman conceives a baby in her womb, a difference highlighted by the post-industrial designation of the public sphere as man's domain and the private sphere as woman's place (Showalter 1989: 75).

Friedman also traces a divine sanction for the sexual division of labour. While Adam produces goods by the 'sweat of his brow', Eve is condemned to the 'labour' of reproducing the species in subservience to Adam (76). Woman is condemned to nature and biological processes of the body and has little chance of contributing to culture. Sherry Ortner's thought provoking challenge "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" deals with how women are outlawed by culture's hegemony to

be associated with either the mysteries of nature like witches, ghosts, fiends or the feminine symbols of transcendence like the mother goddess dispensing mercy and justice. Gilbert and Gubar analyse this syndrome in this manner-"This is because a woman is denied autonomy-the subjectivity-the pen represents" (Mw 19) and subsequently relegated to the realm of the other. Ortner sees "the secondary status of woman as one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact" (Rosaldo and Lamphere 67). She sees a distinctly gendered personality in woman created by the family structure where women "experience feelings and people as concrete rather than abstract, subjectively and interpersonally rather than objectively" (82).

Women tend to enter into relations with the world that 'culture' might see as being 'more like nature'-immanent and embedded in things as given-than 'like culture '-transcending and transforming things through the superimposition of abstract categories and transpersonal values. (Ortner: 82)

Women are allied to 'nature' basically in terms of their biology which is related to natural processes of birth in the non human world and her confinement to domesticity and economic non-productivity. However this is merely a hegemonic devaluation as 'nature' itself can be viewed as a cultural construct :

the myth of nature is a system of arbitrary signs which relies on a social consensus for meaning. Neither the concept of nature nor that of culture is 'given' and they cannot be free from the biases of the culture in which the concepts were constructed. (MacCormack 1980: 6)

If we examine the two concepts of nature studied by Christine Pierce as contributing to female inferiority they are seen as contradictory and agreeing only on the innateness of female inferiority. Pierce, in her "Natural Law Language and Woman," examines nature both as "what human beings have in common with the rest of the animal world" and "what distinguishes human beings from the rest of the animal world" (qtd. in Du Bois et al 1985: 102). Both confirm the animal nature of woman and the latter only serves to highlight the rational capacities of man as opposed to the lack of those in woman (102). Gilbert and Gubar's

critique of the creative power as a male gift also serves to show the patriarchal notion of women as 'cyphers' 'nullities' who lack the generative organ for literary creativity (Mw 9). This is in conformity with the phallic criticism that suppresses woman's literary creativity. As 'literary and sensual objects' who are designed to pleasure men's pens and penises (9) women cannot trespass into literary creativity except at the cost of their femininity, and sanity. Joanna Russ in her How to Suppress Women's Writing declares that "it's important to realize that the absence of formal prohibitions against committing art does not preclude the presence of powerful informal ones" (5). The nature of these informal prohibitions may have changed over the years, but it can be seen that it is an ongoing process. Russ quotes Charlotte Bronte's letter to Robert Southey:

I carefully avoid any appearance of pre-occupation and eccentricity.

I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe the duties a woman ought to fulfil but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself. (11)

Russ points out that sexism has become so institutionalized in culture that "to act in a way that is both sexist and racist, to maintain one's class privilege, it is only necessary to act in the customary, ordinary, usual, even polite manner" (18). Denial of agency is one of the ways in which women can be put in their places. "A book writes itself' and in some instances it is said that "the man inside 'her' wrote it" (22). Mary Ellmann is seen to characterize this phenomenon as "the hermaphroditic fallacy according to which one half the person, separating from the other self, produces a book by binary fission" (qtd. in Russ 22). Gilbert and Gubar expose the same sexist strategy of the denial of agency to describe the patriarchal definition of woman. They show how women are identified as passive literary objects who are denied creative powers and to illustrate this point, the example of Makarie in "Wilhelm Meister's Travels" is highlighted. Gilbert and Gubar specially take into consideration the lack of autonomous identity of the heroine. "She is an ideal, a model of selflessness and of purity of heart" (qtd. in Mw 22). More significantly

hers is a "a life whose story cannot be told as there is no story [...] She shines like a beacon in a dark world, like a motionless lighthouse by which others, the travellers whose lives do have a story can set their course" (qtd. in Mw 22). The woman with 'no story of her own' can only be a 'woman in the text making herself useful by giving "advice and consolation to others" (22). To create a story of her own, woman has to break the patriarchal enclosure of femininity in which she gets inscribed. As Joanna Russ puts it:

Literary history is, I think familiar with the catch 22 by which women who were virtuous could not know enough about life to write well, while those who knew enough about life to write well could not be virtuous. (Russ 25)

Inscribing the norms of femininity and enclosing woman within that enclosure was also seen as man's way of dealing with the anxieties about woman's autonomy. Gilbert and Gubar identify Dorothy Dinnerstein's idea of a mother dominated infancy as part of the male dread of female creativity (Mw 28). Dubois et al. explicate Dorothy Dinnerstein's central thesis in The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (1976) in order to show how it is related to the male dread of woman's power:

Dinnerstein focuses her analysis on the mothering process during the first year of life. Using the psychoanalytic method, she speculates about possible results of the fact that both male and female infants experience frustration and satisfaction of needs good and evil-in relation to the female body. Her thesis is that this early, virtually universal experience instils in all adults an extremely powerful and unconscious expectation that females will be the source of all satisfaction and also an extra ordinary fear of the power of the female to frustrate. This produces a strong and constant tendency [. . .] to hold women as scapegoats for all misfortune. Because these associations are absorbed at a preverbal age, they do not form conscious ideas that can be unlearned by subsequent experience." (Dubois et al. 1985: 110)

This image of woman as an autonomous being that denies and frustrates male expectations and designs is inherent in the female recreation of the

self. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that "for every glowing portrait of submissive women enshrined in domesticity, there exists an equally important negative image that embodies the sacrilegious fiendishness of what William Blake called 'the Female Will' (Mw 28). Having no literary precursors embodying a female tradition, the woman writer undergoes an anxiety of authorship. Deprived of the phallic pen which is the instrument of creativity, the woman writer is a eunuch who lacks the generative organ. She can neither create images of her authentic self nor find them in the writings of men. As Adrienne Rich puts it in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision":

all those poems about women, written by men, it seemed to be given that men wrote poems and women inhabited them These women were almost always beautiful [. . .] or cruel and the poem reproached her because she had refused to become a luxury for the poet [. . .]The girl or woman who tries to write [. . .] is looking eagerly for maps, possibilities: but precisely what she does not find is [...] herself. (Rich 1979: 39)

Joanna Russ also points out the discouraging effects of lack of models which women writers confront and elaborates on the "false categorizing of artists into whores, sad spinsters, devoted submissive wives and tragic suicides" (87). To escape this categorization woman has to choose again between two devastating alternatives-to create "the kind of non-threatening female art which is beautifully mandarin or minor-"a mental hysterectomy" (qtd. in Russ: 99) or to a accept the denial of femininity in "the idea that women make themselves ridiculous by creating art or that [...] writing [...] is immodest" (Russ. 25). Russ goes on to clarify that "creating art shows a woman up as abnormal, neurotic, unpleasant and hence unlovable. She wrote it but she shouldn't have" (25). Russ quotes Stendal-"a woman must never write anything but posthumous works" (31) and agrees with Helene Deutsh:

Women's intellectuality is to a large extent paid for by the loss of valuable feminine qualities [...]it feeds on the sap of the affective life [...]the intellectual woman is masculinized: her warm intuitive knowledge has yielded to cold unproductive thinking. (36)

The woman writer is physiologically and sociologically found unfit to generate or create texts. Gilbert and Gubar come to the conclusion that woman, denied a position of authority within the social order and denied the author-ity the pen represents, inevitably assumes a position of symbolic ambiguity. She is outlawed from culture and because of her consequent difference. She becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing. As ghost, fiend and angel, fairy, witch and sprite, she mediates between the male artist and the unknown. (Mw 19-20)

"Whether passive angel or active monster, the woman writer [. . .] feels herself crippled by these debilitating alternatives her culture offers her" (57). She would be less than a woman if she chooses to be an artist and less than an artist if she chooses to be a woman. Snow-white has to choose between her good and virtuous mother who is the object of male authored texts and her wicked stepmother who weaves her wicked plots and stratagems and creates her own texts. The choice of creativity that is left to 'the woman-angel' is to accept the compromise of creating art that is trivial. She has to choose "the apparently miniature over the assuredly major, the domestic over the dramatic, the private over the public, obscurity over glory" (Mw 64).

Through this trivialization of woman's contribution to culture, patriarchal ideology suppresses woman's creativity. Rayna R. Reiter in her introduction to "Toward An Anthropology of Women" points out how this is related to the sexual division of labour:

What women do is perceived as household work and what they talk about is gossip while men's work is viewed as the economic base of society and their information is seen as important social information. (Reiter 1975: 12)

In A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf focuses on this same aspect with regard to literature:

The values of women differ very often from the values of men. Naturally this is so. Yet it is the masculine values that prevail [...] and these values

are inevitably transferred from life to fiction. This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing room. (80)

One of the ways in which women writers tried to move away from "lesser lives" and "lesser subjects" was through accepting male pseudonyms and through travestism (Mw 65). But this denial of gender was seen only to lead to more severe identity crisis. Wearing the 'working outfit' of the borrowed male costume does not 'unsex' the writer (Mw 66). This would at the most lead her to retelling male stories and coming to a stage of psychological self-denial, assuming not a healthy androgyny but an unhealthy hermaphroditism (Mw 69). Engaging in angelic male mimicry or freakish and monstrous creativity filled the woman writer with profound 'dis-ease' from which she had to emerge (Mw 57)

Gilbert and Gubar however assert that in spite of the double bind in which women find themselves, finding means to talk back through alternative fictions in order to come into their own as writers. Gilbert and Gubar outline the struggle of a female artist:

the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from her male predecessors, coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention-all these phenomena of inferiorization mark the woman writer's struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart. (Mw 50)

Through this struggle the women writers emerge relating themselves to a different literary subculture to become pioneers. The twentieth century woman writer now writes with energy and confidence derived from her foremothers, only because the eighteenth and nineteenth century writers "struggled with isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis" (Mw 51).

According to Gilbert and Gubar, women writers employ their duplicity and inconstancy to resist being fixed or killed into art. They hold up the example of Lilith, Adam's first wife by apocryphal Jewish lore, as the first woman monster who is expelled as an outcast for her presumption, for the act of naming which has always been a patriarchal privilege (Mw 35). She is one who pays the price for attempting to define herself (35). It is clear that "no human creature can be completely silenced by a text or an image [. . .] human beings since Eden have had a habit of defying authority both divine and literary" (Mw 16). Woman's "inconstancy," her refusal to be fixed or "killed" by an author / owner, "her stubborn insistence on her own way" (Mw 16) go towards creating a woman's text. The images on the surface of the male inscribed text are part of the mythic mask of the perfect image of woman but if she looks long enough and hard enough she recognizes herself deep within as an enraged prisoner (Mw 15). Thus the dead self of the 'male opus' is deconstructed to discover a living 'inconstant' self (19). The image of the angel and the monster are now seen to be complementary as the angel-woman is found to have a repressed capacity for explosive rage (Mw 26). Lilith's life of female rebellion is a life of significant action that must be silenced-"a life whose monstrous pen tells a terrible story" (Mw 16), while a life of feminine submission or contemplative purity is a life of silence which has no pen and no story.

The creation of the counter text, according to Gilbert and Gubar is accomplished through the creative use and misuse of male literary traditions (Mw 80). Working within a patriarchal tradition of male literary creativity, yet trying to subvert it, "women enact a uniquely female process of revision and redefinition that necessarily caused them to seem 'odd'." (Mw 73) In "the quest for self-definition" (76) the literary woman finds that she "must shatter the mirror that has so long reflected what every woman was supposed to be" (Mw 76). The process of self-definition is by "assaulting, revising, deconstructing and reconstructing those images of women inherited from male literature-especially the paradigmatic polarities of angel and monster" (76). In the process of self-creation, the woman writer expresses her covert authorial anger by creating her own double as a character, a madwoman that has the power

of self-articulation and who breaks the angelic silence imposed on her by the patriarchal tradition (78). The female freak thus becomes a powerful monitory image for the woman writer (Mw 78). The counter text of the self is the hidden story which is the product of this artist's "private and dangerous visions" concealed behind more socially accepted levels of meaning (Mw 73). There is a radical revision of meaning and equation in the counter text:

All the nineteenth and twentieth century literary women who evoke the female monster in their novels and poems alter her meaning by virtue of their own identification with her [. . .] Imbued with interiority the witch-monster-mad-woman becomes so crucial an avatar of the writer's own self. (79)

This shows the woman writer's resistance to being fixed in binary locations as angel and monster and her duplicity in breaking through either-or isms. She uses her own standpoint to liberate her power of self-articulation through the creation of her own text.

Gilbert and Gubar's radical revision and deconstruction of patriarchal images through the female artist can be viewed in relation to Mary Daly's views in her Beyond God the Father (1973). Influenced by her existentialist views, she talks about "the creative refusal of victimization by sexual stereotypes." (39) She suggests the need to have the courage to refuse woman's status of otherness and the false naming she is subjected to. New naming and attribution of new symbolic meanings create for women an opportunity to participate in naming by articulating new words and new meanings. In Daly's Gyn / Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (1978) she focuses on the idea of the recovery of the authentic self of woman. Like Gilbert and Gubar, Daly asserts that the public reality that surrounds and veils the truth must be negated in order to arrive at the authentic female self. Only by breaking into the veiled and false realm of public reality which is a lie perpetrated by the patriarchal ideology, can woman's true being be discovered. Daly proceeds through a radical deconstruction of language which constitutes reality on her voyage of "women becoming" (Daly 1990: 1). Daly succeeds through the construction of a 'gynomorphic' language which

inverts the traditional definition of words which constitute the negative images of women-hag, crone, spinster, lesbian, harpies and fury. The traditional negative images of otherness for women now become positive prototypes for the woman identified woman who does not capitulate to masculine hegemony (26). Daly sees the reversal of traditional definitions "as a process of alchemy" (Daly 34). She reveals the process- "we transmute base metals of man-made myth by becoming unmute, calling forth from ourselves and each other the courage to name the unnameable."(34) The lies, mystifications and false naming of patriarchy are exposed to reveal the authenticity of female self.

Gilbert and Gubar's powerful thesis on "the female writer's battle for self-creation" involves the woman writer in a revisionary process. Her battle which however is not against her (male) precursor's reading of the world but against his reading of her (Mw 49) is taken up by the American feminist critic Judith Fetterley who in her thought-provoking text The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction (1978) analyses the politics of reading that underlies the male / universal reading of texts and how the woman reader has to resist her victimization brought about through stereotyping. The resisting reader, through her strategies of reading, has to initiate within the patriarchal text the counter text of the self. Fetterley points out that feminist criticism 'resists codification and refuses to have its parameters prematurely set' (viii) and hence it is a transforming phenomenon. Fetterley calls her book "a self-defence survival manual for the woman-reader lost in the wilderness of the American novel" (viii). She identifies woman as "bereft, disinherited, cast out as the other, the outsider, superhuman, subhuman but never simply human" (ix). She shows us that "the patriarchal predication is that to be human is to be male" (x). Fetterley goes on to identify American literature as male and declares that to read the canon of American literature is to identify as male"(xii). Fetterley's reading of American tales shows us the exclusion of woman from the national identity. Washington Irving's 'Rip Van Winkle' is taken as a paradigmatic tale. Rip is seen as representatively human, wishing to avoid work, authority and responsibility and his romantic escape is a fleeing from his shrewish wife. What is idealised is the life in the mountains with congenial

companions and the magic keg of beer. Henry Miller's An American Dream shows that all ills are finally eliminated through the ritual scapegoating of woman / wife (xii). The female reader is here too required to identify against herself. In the 'Great Gatsby' Daisy represents betrayal by woman and this according to Fetterley is supposed to be the quintessential American tale (xii). Sherwood Anderson's story 'I Want to Know Why' is seen as a young boy's traumatic discovery of "what it means to be male in a culture that gives white men power over women, horses and niggers"(xiv). Fetterley accuses that even though this text is "infused with the perspective it abhors" it does not provide any alternative vision" (xiv). According to her, "feeling bad without responsibility of change"(xiv) is merely a luxury. Fetterly sees Hawthorne's 'The Birthmark' as clouding the issue of sexual politics behind a haze of "universals" and "clothing the murder of wife by husband in the language of idealism."(xv) Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is seen as depicting overtly the power of men over women. The use of the grotesque is seen to marginalize and make Emily powerless by making her eccentric rather than central (xv). Finally Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms is read by Fetterley as a romantic love story where the hero Frederick is seen as a "heroic victim of cosmic antagonism". He is freed from "the intolerable burdens of marriage, family and fatherhood" by the death of his wife Catherine in childbirth. While Catherine's death is a tragedy of biology, the tragedy of mourning Frederic is seen to be of heroic and cosmic proportions.

Fetterley indicates that power is the basic issue in the politics of literature. "The powerlessness of not being able to see one's experience articulated, clarified and legitimized in art" is viewed as less painful than the powerlessness of "the division of self against self' (xiii). There is in all American fiction "an invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male, to be universal to be American - is to be not female" (xiii). The powerlessness is not only associated with the act of reading but also the content of what is read (xiii). The powerlessness involved in reading as a woman can be illustrated from Irving Howe's comment on the opening paragraph of Thomas Hardy's Mayor of

Casterbridge. Michael Henchard's drunken act of the sale of his wife and female child for a sum of five guineas is seen by Howe as a heroic act:

To shake loose from one's wife, to discard that drooping rag of a woman with her mute complaints and maddening passivity: to escape not by slinking abandonment but through the public sale of her body to a stranger as horses are sold at a fair: and thus to wrest through sheer amoral wilfulness, a second chance out of life-it is with this stroke, so insidiously attractive to male fantasy that the Mayor of Casterbridge begins (Howe 1968: 84).

Elaine Showalter shows us that in the Anglo-American critical appraisal of woman as reader and consumer of male-produced literature, woman is eternally confronted with "the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism and the fissures in male constructed literary history." (Showalter 1986: 128) The woman reader's / viewer's position as objective / male / universal is a challenge to feminist thinking

To quote Janet Woolf: [...] theories of reception have been mobilized to expose the denial to women of a subject position as reader. Jonathan Culler asks what it would be like to read the opening of Thomas Hardy's Mayor of Casterbridge (which deals with a wife-sale) as a woman. [...] [There] is the need for women if they are to be competent readers in our culture to take on the point of view of men. (Woolf 1990: 67)

Judith Fetterley puts forward the term 'immasculation' by which women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny" (RR xx). Intellectual neutrality is equated with masculine point of view and perspective and women are estranged from their own experience which does not count as intellectual or human. "Intellectually male, sexually female, one is in effect no one, nowhere, immasculated" (RR xxii). Thus women discover that inclusion in a single human voice is a kind of capitulation. The woman reader has to be a resisting reader in order to perceive that what is codified as knowledge is only based on the perspective and experience of half the human race and lacks in neutral unbiased objectivity. In their co-edited philosophical

work Discovering Reality, Harding and Hintikka comment on the knowledge-experience equation:

What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience [...] women's experience systematically differs from the male experience upon which knowledge claims have been grounded. [. . .] However when experience is presumed to be gender free, when the male experience is taken to be the human experience-resulting theories, concepts, methodologies enquiry goals and knowledge claims distort human social life and human thought. (x)

Though feminist critiques of patriarchal texts have always pointed out the need to avoid colluding in patriarchal ideology, Fetterley is a pioneer in recognizing the need for an active dialogue within the text by assaulting the male mind with a feminist counter text.

The first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and by the refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcising the male mind that has been implanted in us.[...] books will no longer be read as they have been read and thus will lose their power to bind us unknowingly to their designs. (RR xii-xiii)

Just as the metaphorical equation of artistic and literary creativity with the male generative organ has to be challenged, the male mind as the all-knowing entity has to be exorcised. Any theory of human nature is a theory of the male in disguise which conceives of the female as a deviation from the norm and excludes her from all that is human. Judith Fetterley elsewhere in her criticism analyses this phenomenon:

When I look at a poem like 'The Solitary Reaper' [...] I do not find my experience in it at all. Rather I find that the drama of the poem depends upon a contrast between the male subject as creative conscious knower and the unknowing female object of his contemplation, it is my wordless, artless, natural and utterly unselfconscious song which has provided the male the opportunity to define himself as knower.

She goes on to ask:

What happens to one's definition of aesthetic criteria when one is confronted by a literature which does not support the self but assaults it? (Fetterley qtd. in Russ. 113)

Fetterley's analysis of the story 'Rip Van Winkle' shows that Dame Van Winkle "is not a person: she is a scapegoat, an enemy, the other [...] without name or identity." She is summarized, explained and dismissed through the convention of stereotypes as a "termagant wife, a shrew, a virago" (RR 9). Her death is a convenient release for the hero who is free to resume his life of carefree adventure away from the responsibilities of civilization, adulthood, marriage and work. Dame Winkle's problems and dilemmas and burdens of responsibility are over looked and trivialized. As Cynthia Griffin Wolff puts it in "A Mirror for Men: Stereotypes of Women in Literature":

The definition [in literature] of woman's most serious problems and the proposed solutions [...] are covertly tailored to meet the needs of fundamentally masculine problems [...] women appear in literature [...] as conveniences to the resolution of masculine dilemmas. (Edwards et al. 217)

The critical debate about woman reading as a woman which has not yet got its parameters set, began in the early days of feminist critiques of patriarchal texts. Carolyn Heilburn in her "Millet's Sexual Politics a Year Later" had praised Millet for her pioneering efforts: "For the first time we have been asked to look at literature as women. We, men, women and Ph.D.'s have always read it as men" (1971: 39).

Check your Progress-1

1. When was Susan D. Gubar born?

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_____

2. When was Sandra M. Gilbert born?

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3. At what age Sandra Gubar retired from Indiana University?

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4. What award did Susan Gubar receive?

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14.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we learned about Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar; Feminist Literary Criticism And Theory; Sandra Gilbert's Works and The Anxiety Of Authorship and The Madwoman In The Attic: The Woman Writer And The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination.

14.7 KEYWORDS

- **Contemplation**: the action of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time.
- **Aesthetic**: concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty.
- **Masculine:** having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men.
- **Patriarchal:** relating to or denoting a system of society or government controlled by men.
- **Ideology**: a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.

14.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write about Sandra Gilbert's life.

- Write about Susan Gubar's life.

- Write about Feminist Literary Criticism And Theory.

- Mention the list of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

14.9 SUGGESTED READIG AND REFERENCES

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- ^ Wilson, Robert. "A Feminist Professor's Closing Chapters". Retrieved 25 August 2014.

- ^ Gubar, Susan (October 24, 2013). "Living With Cancer: Brains on Chemo". The New York Times.

- ^ John Williams (January 14, 2012). "National Book Critics Circle Names 2012 Award Finalists". New York Times. Retrieved January 15, 2013.

- ^ "Susan Gubar". Indiana University: Jewish Studies Program.

- The Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 120, ed. R.S. Gwynn (1992)

- UCDavis Academic Profile

- The Norton Anthology of Literary Criticism, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001)

- Making Feminist History: The Literary Scholarship of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, ed. William E. Cain (1994)

- Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics (1985)

- "Interview with Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar", Critical Texts 6.1, Elizabeth Rosdeitcher (1989)

- "Literary critic Sandra Gilbert named M.H. Abrams Distinguished Visiting Professor", Cornell Chronicle (17 October 2006)

14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Susan D. Gubar born was born on November 30, 1944.**(answer to check your progress – 1Q1)**
- Sandra M. Gilbert was born on December 27, 1936. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q2)**
- Gubar retired from Indiana University at the age of 65. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q3)**
- Susan was awarded with Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award. **(answer to check your progress – 1Q4)**