**UNIT FOUR: LITERARY TRENDS WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON**

 **THOSE USEFUL FOR ANALYZING NOVELS**

**4.1. LITERARY TRENDS**

* + 1. **GREEK CLASSICAL LITERATURE**

Because the Greeks loved myths and stories, it is no surprise that they created great works of literature. Early Greek writers produced long epic poems, romantic poetry and some of the world’s most famous stories. The beginning of Greek literature stands on two great epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* written by Homer. The heroes in Homer’s poems fought in Trojan War. This Homer’s poems influenced later writers. They copied his writing style and borrowed some of the stories and ideas he wrote about his works. Like Hellen of Troy, Song of Troy and Son of Achilles are some of the books written based on the poems of Homer.

* + 1. **MEDIEVAL LITERATURE: CHURCH AND LITERATURE**

The Middle Age is a thousand-year period in the European history. Scholars mention the beginning and the end of this period as 5th and late of the 15th centuries AD, respectively. The end of this period is coincident with the renaissance age. In Middle Age, literacy was mainly restricted to the most powerful men of society such as servants of the church.

The most important philosophical influence of the Middle Ages was the Church, which dominated life and literature. In medieval Britain, “the Church” referred to the Roman Catholic Church. Because the Church and the concept of chivalry were dominant factors in the philosophy of the Middle Ages, these two ideas also figure prominently in medieval literature.

**Religious literature**

Religious literature appeared in several genres:

**Devotional books**

* books of hours [collections of prayers and devotionals, often illuminated]
* sermons
* psalters [books containing psalms and other devotional material, often illuminated]
* missals [books containing the prayers and other texts read during the celebration of mass throughout the year]
* breviaries [books containing prayers and instructions for celebrating mass]
* hagiographies [stories of the lives of saints]

**Medieval drama**

* mystery plays4 [plays depicting events from the Bible]
* morality plays5 [plays, often allegories, intended to teach a moral lesson]
	+ 1. **RENAISSANCE**

("rebirth") is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is usually said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued, both in Italy and other countries of western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In this period the European arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age. The development came late to England in the sixteenth century, and did not have its flowering until the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; sometimes, in fact, John Milton (1608-74) is described as the last great Renaissance poet. *(See periods* *of English literature.)*

Many attempts have been made to define "the Renaissance" in a briefstatement, as though a single essence underlay the complex features of the intellectualand cultural life of numerous European countries over several hundredyears. It has, for example, been described as the birth of the modernworld out of the ashes of the Dark Ages; as the discovery of the world and the discovery of man; and as the era of the emergence of untrammeled individualismin life, thought, religion, and art. Recently some historians, finding thatattributes similar to these were present in various people and places in theMiddle Ages, and also that many elements long held to be medieval survivedinto the Renaissance, have denied that the Renaissance ever existed. Thisskeptical opinion serves as a reminder that history is a continuous process,and that "periods" are not given by history but invented by historians.Nonetheless, the division of the temporal continuum into named segments isan all but indispensable convenience in discussing history. Furthermore, duringthe span of time called "the Renaissance," it is possible to identify a numberof events and discoveries which, beginning approximately in the fifteenthcentury, clearly effected radical and distinctive changes in the beliefs, productions,and manner of life of many people, especially in the upper and the intellectualclasses.

Beginning in the 1940s, a number of historians have replaced (or else supplemented) the term "Renaissance" with **early modern** to designate the span from the end of the middle ages until late in the seventeenth century. The latter term looks forward rather than back, emphasizing the degree to which the time, instead of being mainly a rebirth of the classical past, can be viewed, in its innovations and intellectual concerns, as a precursor of our present century. The innovations during this period may be regarded as putting a strain on the relatively closed and stable world of the great civilization of the later Middle Ages, when most of the essential and permanent truths about God, man, and the universe were considered to be adequately known. The full impact of many developments in the Renaissance did not make itself felt until the Enlightenment in the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, but the fact that they occurred in this period indicates the vitality, the restless curiosity, and the imaginative audacity of many men of the era, whether scholars, thinkers, artists, or adventurers. Prominent among these developments were: The new learning. Renaissance scholars of the classics, called *humanists,* revived the knowledge of the Greek language, discovered and disseminated a great number of Greek manuscripts, and added considerably to the number of Roman authors and works which had been known during the Middle Ages. The result was to open out the sense of the vastness of the historical past, as well as to enlarge immensely the stock of ideas, materials, literary forms, and styles available to Renaissance writers. In the mid-fifteenth century the invention of **printing** on paper from movable type (for which Johann Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, is usually given credit, although the Chinese had developed a similar mode of printing several centuries earlier) made books for the first time cheap and plentiful, and floods of publications, ancient and modern, poured from the presses of Europe to satisfy the demands of the expanding population who had learned to read. The rapidity of the spread of ideas, discoveries, and types of literature in the Renaissance was made possible by this new technology of printing. The technology reached England in 1476, when William Caxton set up a press at Westminster, where he published, among many other books, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Malory's *Le Morte* *D'Arthur.*

The humanistic revival sometimes resulted in pedantic scholarship, sterile imitations of ancient works and styles, and a rigidly authoritarian rhetoric and literary criticism. It also bred, however, the gracious and tolerant humanity of an Erasmus, and the high concept of a cultivated Renaissance aristocracy expressed in Baldassare Castiglione's *II Cortegiano* ("The Courtier"), published in 1528. This was the most admired and widely translated of the many Renaissance

**courtesy books,** or books on the character, obligations, and training of the man of the court. It sets up the ideal of the completely rounded or "universal" man, developed in all his faculties and skills, physical, intellectual, and artistic. He is especially trained to be a warrior and statesman, but is capable also as athlete, philosopher, artist, conversationalist, and man of society. The courtier's relations to women, and of women to men, are represented in accordance with the quasireligious code of *Platonic love,* and his activities and productions are crowned by the grace of sprezzatura—the Italian term for what seems the spontaneity and casual ease with which someone has been trained to meet the demands of very complex and exacting rules. Leonardo da Vinci in Italy and Sir Philip Sidney in England are often represented as embodying the many aspects of the courtly ideal.

The new world, in 1492 Christopher Columbus, acting on the persisting and widespread belief in the old Greek idea that the world is a globe, sailed west to find a new commercial route to the East, only to be frustrated by the unexpected barrier of a new continent. The succeeding explorations of this continent and its native populations, and its settlement by Europeans, gave new materials to the literary imagination. The magic world of Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* for example, as well as the treatment of its native inhabitants by Prospero and others, is based on a contemporary account of a shipwreck on Bermuda and other writings about voyages to the New World. More important for English literature, however, was the fact that economic exploitation of the new world—often cruel, oppressive and devastating to the native peoples—put England at the center, rather than as heretofore at the edge, of the chief trade routes, and so helped establish the commercial prosperity that in England, as in Italy earlier, was a necessary though not sufficient condition for the development of a vigorous intellectual and artistic life.

Much more important, in the long run, was the effect on men's opinions of the general principles and methods of the **new science** developed by the great successors of Copernicus in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, such as the physicists Johannes Kepler and Galileo and the English physician and physiologist William Harvey. Even after Copernicus, the cosmos of many writers in the Elizabethan era (as exemplified in a number of Shakespeare's plays) remained not only Ptolemaic, it remained also an animate cosmos that was invested with occult powers and inhabited by demons and spirits, and was widely believed to control men's lives by stellar influences and to be itself subject to control by the powers of witchcraft and of magic. The cosmos that emerged in the course of the seventeenth century, as a product of the scientific procedure of constructing hypotheses capable of being tested by precisely measured observations, was the physical cosmos of René Descartes (1596-1650). "Give me extension and motion," Descartes wrote, "and I will construct the universe." The universe of Descartes and the new science consisted of extended particles of matter which moved in space according to fixed mathematical laws, free from interference by angels, demons, human prayer, or occult magical powers. This universe was, however, subject to the limited manipulations of experimental scientists who set out in this way to discover the laws of nature, and who, in Francis Bacon's phrase, had learned to obey nature in order to be her master. In Descartes and other thinkers, the working hypotheses of the scientists about the physical world were converted into a philosophical worldview, which was made current by popular expositions, and—together with the methodological principle that controlled observation is the criterion of truth in many areas of knowledge—helped constitute the climate of eighteenth-century opinion known as the *Enlightenment.*

Joan Kelly inaugurated a spirited debate among *feminist* and other scholars with her essay, published in 1977, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" (in *Women, History and Theory,* 1984). Her own answer to the question, based primarily on evidence from central Italy, was that women did not. For a book by a feminist scholar who counters this claim, by reference to women's changing roles in the family, in the church, and in positions of political and cultural power, see Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (1991

* + 1. **ENLIGHTENMENT**

The name applied to an intellectual movement and cultural ambiance which developed in Western Europe during the seventeenth century and reached its height in the eighteenth. The common element was a trust in human reason as adequate to solve the crucial problems and to establish the essential norms in life, together with the belief that the application of reason was rapidly dissipating the darkness of superstition, prejudice, and barbarity, was freeing humanity from its earlier reliance on mere authority and unexamined tradition, and had opened the prospect of progress toward a life in this world of universal peace and happiness. For some thinkers the model for "reason" was the inductive procedure of science, proceeds by reasoning from the facts of experience to general laws; for others, the model for "reason" was primarily geometrical—the deduction of particular truths from clear and distinct ideas which are known intuitively, by "the light of reason." Many thinkers relied on reason in both these senses.

In England the thought and the world outlook of the Enlightenment are usually traced from Francis Bacon (1561-1626) through John Locke (1632-1704) to late-eighteenth-century thinkers such as William Godwin; in France, from Descartes (1596-1650) through Voltaire (1694-1778) to Diderot and other editors of the great twenty-volume *Encyclopédie* (1751-72); in Germany, from Leibniz (1646-1716) to what is often said to be the highest product of the Enlightenment, the "critical philosophy" of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant's famous essay "What Is Enlightenment?" written in 1784, defines it as "the liberation of mankind from his self-caused state of minority" and the achievement of a state of maturity which is exemplified in his "determination and courage to use [his understanding] without the assistance of another." In America, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson represented the principles of the French and English Enlightenment, which also helped shape the founding documents of the United States, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

* + 1. **ROMANTICISM**

The confusion surrounding the term ‘Romanticism’ seems only to be deepened by further attempts at definition. A. O. Lovejoy’s famous essay ‘On the discrimination of romanticisms’ insisted on the need for discrimination between the meanings of the term at various times and in various countries. The danger perceived by Lovejoy was that the word loses *all* meaning unless we insist on defining our references. Other critics, Rene Wellek and Northrop Frye, argued that Romanticism is not essentially an idea but ‘an historic center of gravity, which falls somewhere around the 1790–1830 period’ (Frye). They accused Lovejoy of attempting to break this historic characteristic into its component parts and of trying to insist on a romantic period or character wherever any of these components appear. This ‘fallacy of timeless characterization’ of Romanticism they saw as destructive of the specific quality of the historic romantic period. They attempted to define the romantic event from a more isolated critical context. Whereas Lovejoy saw Romanticism as the general term for a range of related ideas, poetic, philosophic and social, his refuters lay more stress on the characteristic images which haunt the romantic imagination. The central distinctive feature of the romantic mode was said to be the search for a reconciliation between the inner vision and the outer experience expressed through ‘a creative power greater than his own because it includes his own’ (Frye); or the synthetic IMAGINATION which performs this reconciliation and the vision it produces of a life drawing upon ‘a sense of the continuity between man and nature and the presence of God’ (Wellek). The central feature of these attempts to define a Romantic entity is the development of romantic theories of the imagination.

M. H. Abrams provided an indispensable account of the origin and development of romantic theories of perception and imagination in *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953). Underlying these theories, from the end of the eighteenth century and for the next hundred years or more, is the sense that humanity has become separated from nature, which leads to a false characterization of external nature as ‘fixed and dead’. The romantic poet seeks a way to reactivate the world by discovering the creative perceptiveness which will allow the writer to draw aside the veils which modern living has laid across the senses and seek a perception where the false separation of Nature (fixed, external objects) and nature (the living being of the perceiver) can be reconciled: a new synthesizing vision. The romantic thinker often feels that such a faculty is not an invention, but a rediscovery of the truth about the way we perceive and create which has been lost in the development of more complicated social forms and the growth of rational and self-conscious theories of human thought. This belief leads to a marked historicism, to an increased interest in primitives theories of culture: to a persistent strain of historical reconstruction in romantic writing, a medieval element in poetry and the novel, and an idealized resurrection of ballad and folk-song.

This attempt to revitalize the perceptive process is also bound up with the desire to rediscover a ‘living language’. The search in ballads and in everyday language (Wordsworth) is only a side-issue. At root the romantic is trying to find a way back – or forward – to the Word, the Logos which is the act it describes. The romantic thinkers are finally baffled by their loyalty to the traditional concept of art as an embodiment or vitalized representation of a separate perceptive act in the ‘real’ world. But their struggles with this problem prepare the way for the more total concepts of the post-romantic artists, the SYMBOLISTS and IMAGISTS who force romantic aesthetics to its logical conclusion by identifying a desire for complete reconciliation between perception and art: ‘How can we know the dancer from the dance?’ (Yeats) Romantic artists suffer an agonizing struggle to grasp and express what they perceive; they are continually aware that they cannot objectively ‘trust’ what they see since they are involved in *creating* what they see. They are barred from the convenient symbolic systems available in existing mythic patterns because such public symbols falsify the truth of personal feeling. On the one hand lays the quagmire of personal mythology with its resulting lack of communicative power (Blake), on the other the terrible isolation of the specific and actual: ‘the weary weight of this entire unintelligible world’ (Wordsworth).

The artist feels isolated, unable to discover what must exist, some objective form or Form to embody the sense of continuity between the imagination and the visible world, and is drawn towards those experiences which offer a blurred version of the separation of ego and event, drug

hallucination or the radical innocence of childhood perceptions. But such experiences are special and not typical, and they are also transient, Thus Wordsworth, looking back at the apparent directness of childhood, sees it slipping away as ‘shades of the prison house’ close round him.

Coleridge argued that ‘we receive but what we give’ (‘Dejection Ode’), but his poem celebrates this realization in the context of the inevitable pressures of time and decay. At the heart of the romantic dilemma is the agony of the disappearing dream. Life in nature is life in *our* nature, and that is subject to decay. With the romantic thinkers and poets, with Wordsworth’s lost ‘splendour in the grass’, Keats’s and Coleridge’s ‘fragments’ (‘The Fall of Hyperion’, ‘Kubla Khan’) we have begun the artistic dilemma which leads to Yeats’s desire for the immutable permanence of the golden bird of Byzantium and the modern, post- Symbolist search for unchanging form in the heart of chaos itself. During the 1970s Harold Bloom, Paul de Man and other Yale critics, all distinguished Romantic scholars, concerned themselves with Romanticism in the light of the work of Derrida, initiating a major reformulation of Romantic writing through deconstruction. Paul de Man, for example, argued that the romantic historical consciousness had been a powerful

influence on the modern development of a historical identity. Their work has been enormously influential on subsequent studies of the subject.

* + 1. **REALISM AND NATURALISM**

Realism is applied by literary critics in two diverse ways: (1) to identify a movement in the writing of novels during the nineteenth century that included Honoré de Balzac in France, George Eliot in England, and William Dean Howells in America (see *realistic novel,* under *novel),* and (2) to designate a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature. Realistic fiction is often opposed to romantic fiction. The *romance* is said to present life as we would have it be—more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous,

or heroic than actuality; realism, on the other hand, is said to represent life as it really is. This distinction in terms solely of subject matter, while relevant, is clearly inadequate. Casanova, T. E. Lawrence, and Winston Churchill were people in real life, but their biographies demonstrate that truth can be stranger than literary realism. It is more useful to identify realism in terms of the effect on the reader: realistic fiction is written to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its characters might in fact exist, and that such things might well happen. To achieve such effects, the novelists we identify as realists may or may not be selective in subject matter—although most of them prefer the commonplace and the everyday, represented in minute detail, over rarer aspects of life—but they must render their materials in ways that make them seem to their readers the very stuff of ordinary experience. For example, Daniel Defoe in the early eighteenth century dealt with the extraordinary adventures of a shipwrecked mariner named Robinson Crusoe and with the extraordinary misadventures of a woman named Moll Flanders; but he made his novels seem to readers a mirror held up to reality by his reportorial manner of rendering all the events, whether ordinary or extraordinary, in the same circumstantial, matter-of-fact, and seemingly unselective way. Both the fictions of Franz Kafka and the present-day novels of *magic realism* achieve their effects in large part by exploiting a realistic manner in rendering events that are in themselves fantastic, absurd, or flatly impossible. Russian *formalists,* followed more systematically by *structuralist critics,* proposed that both the selection of subject matter and the techniques of rendering in a realistic novel depend on their accordance with literary *convention* and codes which the reader has learned to interpret, or *naturalize,* in a way that makes the text seem a reflection of everyday reality. (See Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *French Literary Theory Today,* ed. Tzvetan Todorov, 1982, and Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics, 1975,* chapter 7, "Convention and Naturalization.") Some theorists draw the conclusion that, since all literary representations are constituted by arbitrary conventions, there is no valid ground for holding any one kind of fiction to be more realistic than any other. It is a matter of common experience, however, that some novels indeed produce on the reader the effect of representing the ordinary course of events. Skepticism about the possibility of fictional realism is not an empirical doctrine which is based on the widespread experience of readers of literature, but a metaphysical doctrine that denies the existence of any objective reality that is independent

of altering human conventions and cultural formations. (For philosophical discussions of conventionality and reality, see the essays by Hilary Putnam, Nelson Goodman, and Menachem Brinker in *New Literary History,* Vol. 13, 1981, and Vol. 14, 1983.

* + 1. **NATURALISM**

Naturalism is sometimes claimed to give an even more accurate depiction of life than realism. But naturalism is not only, like realism, a special selection of subject matter and a special way of rendering those materials; it is a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a particular philosophical thesis. This thesis, a product of post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century, held that a human being exists entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul nor any mode of participating in a religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world; and therefore, that such a being is merely a higher-order animal whose character and behavior are entirely determined by two kinds of forces, heredity and environment. A person inherits compulsive instincts—especially hunger, the drive to accumulate possessions, and sexuality—and is then subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class, and the setting into which that person is born. The French novelist Émile Zola, beginning in the 1870s, did much to develop this theory in what he called "le roman expérimental" (that is, the novel organized in the mode of a scientific experiment on the behavior of the characters it depicts). Zola and later naturalistic writers, such as the Americans Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser, try to present their subjects with scientific objectivity and with elaborate documentation, sometimes including an almost medical frankness about activities and bodily functions usually unmentioned in earlier literature. They tend to choose characters who exhibit strong animal drives such as greed and sexual desire, and who are helpless victims both of glandular secretions within and of sociological pressures without. The end of the naturalistic novel is usually "tragic," but not, as in classical and Elizabethan *tragedy,* because of a heroic but losing struggle of the individual mind and will against gods, enemies, and circumstances. Instead

the protagonist of the naturalistic plot, a pawn to multiple compulsions, usually disintegrates, or is wiped out. Aspects of the naturalistic selection and management of subject matter and its austere or harsh manner of rendering its materials are apparent in many modern novels and dramas, such as Hardy's *Jude the Obscure,* 1895 (although Hardy largely substituted a cosmic determinism for biological and environmental determinism), various plays by Eugene O'Neill in the 1920s, and Norman Mailer's novel of World War II, *The Naked and the Dead.* An enlightening exercise is to distinguish how the relation between the sexes is represented in a romance (Richard Blackmore's *Loma Doone,* 1869), an ironic comedy of manners Qane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* 1813), a realistic novel (William Dean Howells' *A Modern Instance,* 1882), and a naturalistic novel (Émile Zola's *Nana,* 1880, or Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy,* 1925). Movements originally opposed both to nineteenth-century realism and naturalism (though some modern works, such as Joyce's *Ulysses,* 1922, combine aspects of all these novelistic modes) are *expressionism* and *symbolism* (see *Symbolist Movement).*

* + 1. **MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM**

The term modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I (1914-18). The specific features signified by "modernism" (or by the adjective modernist) vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality, and also traditional ways of conceiving the human self—thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and James G. Frazer, whose *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) stressed the correspondence between central Christian tenets and pagan, often barbaric, myths and rituals.

Literary historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far back as the 1890s, but most agree that what is called high modernism, marked by an unexampled range and rapidity of change, came after the First World War. The year 1922 alone was signalized by the simultaneous appearance of such monuments of modernist innovation as James Joyce's *Ulysses,* T. S. Eliot's *The* *Waste Land,* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room,* as well as many other experimental works of literature. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in the moral basis, coherence, and durability of Western civilization and raised doubts about the adequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the postwar world. T. S. Eliot wrote in a review of Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1923 that the inherited mode of ordering a literary work, which assumed a relatively coherent and stable social order, could not accord with "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Like Joyce and like Ezra Pound in his *Cantos,* Eliot experimented with new forms and a new style that would render contemporary disorder, often contrasting it to a lost order and integration that had been based on the religion and myths of the cultural past. In *The Waste Land* (1922), for example, Eliot replaced the standard syntactic flow of poetic language by fragmented utterances, and substituted for the traditional coherence of poetic structure a deliberate dislocation of parts, in which very diverse components are related by connections that are left to the reader to discover, or invent. Major works of modernist fiction, following Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and his even more radical

*Finnegans Wake* (1939), subvert the basic conventions of earlier prose fiction by breaking up the narrative continuity, departing from the standard ways of representing characters, and violating the traditional syntax and coherence of narrative language by the use of stream of consciousness and other innovative modes of narration. Gertrude Stein—often linked with Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Woolf as a trail-blazing modernist—experimented with automatic writing (writing that has been freed from control by the conscious, purposive mind) and other modes that achieved their effects by violating the norms of standard English syntax and sentence structure. Among other European and American writers who are central representatives of modernism are the novelists Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, André Gide, Franz Kafka, Dorothy Richardson, and William Faulkner; the poets Stéphane Mallarmé, William Butler Yeats, Rainier Maria Rilke, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens; and the dramatists August Strindberg, Luigi Pirandello, Eugene O'Neill, and Bertolt Brecht. Their new forms of literary construction and rendering had obvious parallels in the violation of representational conventions in the artistic movements of *expressionism* and *surrealism,* in the modernist paintings and sculpture of Cubism, Futurism, and Abstract Expressionism, and in the violations of standard conventions of melody, harmony, and rhythm by the modernist musical composers Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and their radical followers.

A prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon called the **avant-garde** (a military metaphor: "advance-guard"); that is, a small, self-consciousgroup of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound'sphrase, to "make it new." By violating the accepted conventions and proprieties,not only of art but of social discourse, they set out to create ever-newartistic forms and styles and to introduce hitherto neglected, and sometimesforbidden, subject matter. Frequently, avant-garde artists represent themselvesas "alienated" from the established order, against which they asserttheir own autonomy; a prominent aim is to shock the sensibilities of the conventionalreader and to challenge the norms and pieties of the dominantbourgeois culture. See Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968).Peter Burger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984) is a neo-Marxist analysis bothof modernism and of its distinctive cultural formation, the avant-garde.

The term **postmodernism** is often applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of overpopulation. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Many of the works of postmodern literature—by Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes, and many others—so blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. And these literary anomalies are paralleled in other arts by phenomena like pop art, op art, the musical compositions of John Cage, and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and other directors.

An undertaking in some postmodernist writings—prominently in Samuel Beckett and other authors of the literature of the *absurd*—is to subvert the foundations of our accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the meaninglessness of existence and the underlying "abyss," or "void," or "nothingness" on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended. Postmodernism in literature and the arts has parallels with the movement known as post structuralism in linguistic and literary theory; poststructuralists undertake to subvert the foundations of language in order to show that its seeming meaningfulness dissipates, for a rigorous inquirer, into a play of conflicting indeterminacies, or else to show that all forms of cultural discourse are manifestations of the ideology, or of the relations and constructions of power, in contemporary society.

* 1. **LITERARY CRITICISM**

In our world it has become more important than ever that we learn to read critically. Our English word “criticism” derives from the ancient Greek term krites, meaning “judge.”

* + 1. **RUSSIAN FORMALISM**

Along with movements in futurism and symbolism, the Russian Formalists were a group of writers who flourished during the period of the Russian Revolution of 1917. It is a literary movement started in Russia by Roman Jacobson, Victor Shklovsky and Baris Elechembaum. The attacked the earlier historical, sociological and geographical approaches to literary study. They gave stress on the form of text and not on its moralistic content. They said that a text is an artifact governed by its own laws of existence and not by the author or the external world. According to them the subject of art is not the realistic presentation of life and natural which is familiar to us. In literature the author is only a craftsman who defamiliarizes the familiar things by using artistic devices. Thus a text attains literariness which distinguishes literature from non- literature. In fact, formalism was a technical or scientific approach to art and, so Julia Kristeva calls it ‘mechanical idealism’. It simply dehumanized art from everyday life or from the ordinary life. Formalism was limited to language and not to any other fields. The Marxist theories Mikhail Bakhtin opposed the formalist by pointing out that language is sociological and ideological.

* + 1. **STRUCTURALISM**

Beginning in the late 1940s anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, critic Roland Barthes, and other mid-century thinkers and scholars initiated French structuralism by applying linguistically inspired formal methods to literature and related phenomena. Structuralists were heavily influenced by linguistics, especially by the pioneering work of Ferdinand de Saussure.

One of the leading principles of Structuralism is that the form defines the content ("form is content"). That is the underlying structure of a text or system, which presents and organizes the content, determines the nature of that content as well as its message or communicated information. Thus Structuralists analyze how meaning is possible and how it is transmitted - regardless of the actual meaning.

The limitations of structuralism arise from its focus on form, albeit structural form, at the expense of content, and abstracting from materiality, and its deliberate blindness to the historical origins of a system. A dialectical view differs from Structuralism because for dialectics form and content bear a definite relation which analysis is bound to explore, whereas structuralism regards form as indifferent. Materialism differs from structuralism by recognizing the necessary interconnection between the multiplicity of interconnected structural forms within any complex and the need to study the development of structures in relation to underlying social developments

* + 1. **PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY CRITICISM**

Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism is based on the argument that if literature is the expression of the author’s persona, human behavior must be analyzed to find the interaction of the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind in it. There are three phases in the development of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism. The first one is psychoanalysis of the author. According to Ernest Jones, the author’s psychological condition affects his work because the purpose of the art is the secret gratification of forbidden infantile wish. The second phase is the psychoanalysis of the reader. Norman Holland pointed out that reading recreates the reader’s identity and, therefore, his defenses, expectations, frustrations and transformations are recreated during the activity of reading. The third phase focused on the language and text. According to Jacques Laccan, the father of modern psychoanalytic Theory and Criticism, the unconscious is structured like a language and literature is a product of language. These are the three phases in the development of the Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism

* + 1. **POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE**

As a domain within literary studies, postcolonial criticism is both a subject matter and a theoretical framework. As a subject matter, postcolonial criticism analyzes literature produced by cultures that developed in response to colonial domination, from the first point of colonial contact to the present. Some of this literature was written by the colonizers. Much more of it was written, and is being written, by colonized and formerly colonized peoples. As a subject matter, any analysis of a postcolonial literary work, regardless of the theoretical framework used, might be called postcolonial criticism. For English majors, of course, postcolonial criticism focuses on the literature of cultures that developed in response to British colonial domination because English departments study, for the most part, literatures written in English.

Every reader of post-colonial literature must have an awareness of the key issues like the use of indigenous cultural traditions, the appropriation of English, and the cultural, political or psychological impact of colonization. A writer’s complete rejection of the culture of the colonizer and his relationship to indigenous traditions depend on his personal experience. It is also important to note how the English language has been adapted by post-colonial writer’s, without reflecting the culture and experiences of the colonizer. Though indigenous traditions have played an extreme important part in the development of post-colonial literature, the role of English literature also needs to be kept in mind when approaching to post-colonial texts. An awareness of gender is important when approaching post-colonial texts because women have had experiences very different from those of men in the colonial and post-colonial world.

* + 1. **FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM**

Feminist literary criticism properly begins in the aftermath of ‘second wave’ feminism, the term usually given to the emergence of women’s movements in the United States and Europe during the Civil Rights campaigns of the 1960s. Broadly defined, feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women.

As a distinctive and concerted approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until late in the 1960s. Behind it, however, lie two centuries of struggle for the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements, and for women's social and political rights.

An important precursor in feminist criticism was Virginia Woolf, who, in addition to her fiction, wrote A Room of One's Own (1929) and numerous other essays on women authors and on the cultural, economic, and educational disabilities within what she called a "patriarchal" society that have hindered or prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities.

The various feminisms, share certain assumptions and concepts that underlie the diverse ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception, and the critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature:

(1) The basic view is that Western civilization is pervasively patriarchal (ruled by the father)—that is, it is male-centered and controlled, and is organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal, and artistic. From the Hebrew Bible and Greek philosophic writings to the present, the female tends to be defined by negative reference to the male as the human norm, hence as an Other, or kind of non-man, by her lack of the identifying male organ, of male powers, and of the male character traits that are presumed, in the patriarchal view, to have achieved the most important scientific and technical inventions and the major works of civilization and culture. Women themselves are taught, in the process of being socialized, to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology (that is, the conscious and unconscious presuppositions about male superiority), and so are conditioned to derogate their own sex and to cooperate in their own subordination.

(2) It is widely held that while one's sex is determined by anatomy, the prevailing concepts of gender—of the traits that are conceived to constitute what is masculine and what is feminine in identity and behavior— are largely, if not entirely, cultural constructs that were generated by the pervasive patriarchal biases of our civilization. As Simone de Beauvoir put it, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. . . . It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine." By this cultural process, the masculine in our culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, and creative; the feminine, by systematic opposition to such traits, has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional, and conventional.

(3) The further claim is that this patriarchal (or "masculinist or “androcentric”) ideology pervades those writings which have been traditionally considered great literature and which until recently have been written mainly by men for men. Typically, the most highly regarded.

* + 1. **MARXIST LITERARY CRITICISM**

Marxist literary criticism developed from the communist Manifesto written by German philosopher Karl Marx and German sociologist Friedrich Engels. Marxist criticism is not interested in solving individual’s problem but viewed things on the background of society. Marxist is a materialist philosophy which believes that economic power is behind all institutions. Therefore, it rejects the idealist philosophy which has faith in the existence of a spiritual world. It argues that society has a definite shape in history and any theory which treats literature in isolation, divorcing it from society and history, will be deficient in explaining what literature is. Economic conditions are the material circumstances which generates historical circumstances human affairs cannot be understand without references to these circumstances. History is ac class struggle and there is an eternal struggle for power between the social classes. Marxist believe that ideology is a set of beliefs and values that prevent them from a fuller and truer understanding of the world they inhabit. With the help of this system of beliefs, human beings try to make sense of the world they live in. It is not correct to think that all ideologies are beneficial, or productive, or desirable for society. For example, representative ideology is put in circulation by the ruling class to establish consensus in society, and people deceive themselves by this set of beliefs. Michail Bakhtin, Louis Althusser, Georg Lucaks, Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton etc gave a lot contribution in field of Marxist Literary Criticism.

**THE FIVE MODELS RELATED THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF MARXIST LITERARY CRITICISM**

The basic concepts of Marxist Literary Criticism can be divided under five headings. The first one is called the Reflection Model. According to Georg Lucaks, the form of the literary work reflects the form of reality. Literature creates a fictional world which is a reflection of the real world. He gave importance for the form and said that language is only a vehicle for shaping the form. The second one called the Productive Model. According to Pierre Mecherey, literary composition is productive labor in which materials are turned into end-product. The third one is called the Genetic Model. Lucien Goldman argued that literary works arise out of social consciousness and they are not the expression of authors’s self or individual genius but the expression of the social class. The fourth one is known as the Frankfert School Model. According to Theodore Adorno, the world of art is different from the world society reality and it is the negative knowledge of actual world with which the real world can be corrected. The fifth model is known as the Language-center Model. According to Michail Bakhtin, literature is a manifestation of ideological condition of the tome and it is a social produce and not from of Knowledge. These are the five models related to the basic concepts of Marxist Literary Criticism.