Introduction

We would argue ... that critical theories are just beginning to recognize and reckon with the kinds of complexity inherent in the culturally constructed nature of ethnic identities, and the implications this has for the analysis of representational practices.

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This question, What is literature? must be a central one for any body committed to literary studies. The same question has been asked repeatedly since Plato and Aristotle within the Western tradition of philosophy. To define something is to limit its scope and functionality. Literature in this sense cannot be defined, for it is the most articulated expression of human experience that encompasses the whole domain of our existence. Young says, "Literature: a licentious and vagrant category, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint: a melange of poetry, novels, plays, sermons, political tracts, diaries, letters, books of philosophy and science once thought to be true but now read as fiction". I can't but agree with Young's notion of literature for it is hard to defend literature as a stable category: its sameness is made up entirely of difference. What is wrong with it is also what is apparently right with it: literature is flagrantly hybrid. Literature takes the reader beyond itself: discussion of books about the world quickly turns into deliberations about the world, which the reader represents. Critics perpetually
find themselves looking through and beyond their windows of understanding of this world. We need not be surprised as Jacques Derrida finds this question from Derek Attridge haunting him. As a product of a given place and time, literature as a body of knowledge entails the conflicts, patterns of convention, codes and modes of thinking. It thus makes sense when Terry Eagleton says, that it is more useful to see literature as a name which people give from time to time for different reasons for certain kinds of writing within a whole field of what Michel Foucault called “discursive practices” and that if anything is to be an object of study, it is this whole field of practices rather than just those sometimes obscurely labeled as “literature”. By invoking the ontological significance of literature, Eagleton has proposed a reading strategy that would study the whole field of discursive practices where a literary text does not stand independently, but acquires significance only in relation to socio-cultural practices.

If we assume that the reader is the sole producer of meaning, we cease to be surprised by the fact of disagreement and/or by the plurality of interpretations. The immediate question that strikes us about ‘reading’ is Does the text or the reader determine the process of interpretation? New critics have attempted to preserve the distinction between ‘original meaning’ and the ‘anachronistic meaning’ by advocating the use of biographical or historical information for restricting textual meaning to original historical or biographical circumstances. Hans Robert Jauss has argued that literary work exists as the collective interpretation of successive generations of readers.
Every audience or readership responds to a literary work through the lenses of a particular 'horizon of expectations' (set of conventions or rules). According to Marxist tradition, our reading is based on prejudices, which are linked to our position in the power relations of a society, a position that is partially known to us. If we take the notion of Iser that the relation between a text and its reader(s) as a kind of self-regulatory system, we can define the text itself as an array of sign impulses (signifiers) which are received by the reader. Therefore, the reading process becomes a constant 'feedback' of 'information' already received where the reader inserts his own ideas into the process of communication. On the other hand, Holland and Bleich feel that reading is processing the text in terms of 'identity theme' where we 'use the literary work to symbolize and finally replicate ourselves.' These points suggest to us that reading of a text take into account the reader’s contribution to it.

We write because others read them. To Derrida, writing is a dangerous activity. According to deconstructive theory everything is 'always already written.' The idea of a writer living on the edge of the society and writing for himself is now a myth because reading or evaluation of a literary work binds the author, the text and the society. Critical reading is no more an innocent activity as it never was. Certainly any critical reading cannot escape the questions of – under what conditions, and for what ends.

While talking about literary theories that help us comprehend a literary text it is encouraging to keep in mind the theory of 'Mimetic adequacy.' This
theory premises itself on the notion that ‘life’ or ‘reality’ exists anterior to any language which purports to describe or define ‘life’ or ‘reality’. In other words, fiction, which is mimaetically adequate to reality, merely echoes, repeats or represents that reality in some way. Reality itself is not thought of as language, and language constitutes a separate category from the anterior real world, which at best, it hopes to ‘capture’ in a different (linguistic) form. New writers took this to mean that writing is always derivative of something else, the reality that always precedes it. Further this reality is thought of as having full ontological presence; it is self-sufficient and therefore, language or writing is totally unnecessary to it. We need not write about a character that is really present to us in his or her complete being. To describe such a character is to duplicate mimaetically the character, but in an inferior manner, as a ‘reflection’ or image of the real character. The writing is a poor substitute of the character’s real presence. A written character then is mimaetically adequate or ‘life like’ not when it totally replaces a real person, but rather when it works like a real reflection, to imply the presence of a real person somewhere else. In other words, it is mimaetically adequate to reality to point out from itself to an implied reality. And finally, integral to such a theory is the notion that fiction constitutes no part of reality, analogous to it, but not part of it. This theory however is criticized for the fact that uniqueness or singularity of the character will condition our understanding of the fiction in which he or she appears. As a result, individuality is valorized. As a consequence we try to understand characters in terms of their unity, and completeness or self-
sufficiency. This results in sedentary meaning of characters in the world of fiction.

However, this kind of reading is appropriate in allegory, in which, for instance, what Obstinate means as character in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. But if we apply the same theory in reading Madam Bovary of Flaubert, we will be led to accept that she ‘means’ or ‘represents’ some unitary essence or value, however complex that essence may be. But, perhaps, she is many things, and perhaps some of them lead to an understanding of her character being incoherent, lacking in unity and so on.

What is, then, necessary in reading a text is not one particular theory but an amalgamation of different theories, which will not translate characters into their singular unproblematic essences. Further, since a ‘meaningful’ character is the focus of critical attention in this mode of reading, we are guaranteed of a fixed or essential meaning of the fiction as a whole, which we comprehend through the characters and their relations to the fictive environment. In this approach to reading, we make a leap from understanding of the meanings of a singular character to the truth of the message being expressed by the author. With this leap, the activity of the reader is actually erased, in a sense; for once the text is read and the authorial message understood, then the actual process of reading the text, of discovering that meaning can be legitimately forgotten. In other words, the reader’s activity of creating the character and meaning is elided and with that elision goes any
notion of real interaction in a dialogic form or common production of meaning by the writer and reader working together.

In 1960s Roland Barthes, Jean Ricardou, Phillippe Sollers and the Tel Quel group all in one way or the other attacked readability in favour of what Barthes called the ‘writerly text.’ Finnigan’s Wake, for example, was read again, paradoxically for the reason that the French theorists pronounced it illisible. These critics felt the need for a different approach to autoreferential and self-conscious compositions, which will take into account the linguistic interplay between the writer and the reader that goes on in the production of the text as it is read. It is in the interaction of the writer’s language with the positions it affords to the readers that an element of the text which we call ‘character’ is produced. By concentrating on the process of characterization in the activity of reading and writing, rather than on the established product of character, the theory will allow for the possibility of change or mobility in the meaning of character (and equally the writer and the reader) as the text is reproduced in the reading. This process, we may call as re-reading. It is necessary to read the text again, but that re-reading is not a simple repetition of an anterior reading. To read again, we have to realize that every reading is a first reading, that any meaning we construct for a text on a primary reading is incomplete and inexhaustive awaiting a subsequent reading for its completion. This subsequent reading will again be a first reading and so on. Postmodern characterization on the theory of reading grants the reader the
possibility of escape from fixed selfhood into an existence as a series of subjectivities, always in first-personal experience of the environment.

According to established criticism, character in a fiction comes to exist at the level of character's property or properties. Such a character comes to live as split being between a private realm of self and an outer or 'uttered' realm. The novelistic dilemma is seen as that between a character's being for and from the self and his or her utterance or appearance to and for others. In Civilizations and Discontents Hoy argues that "there is a sense in which the whole effort of civilization is an effort at imposing from one unruly matter." Matter can be anything like fleshly dresses, lusts of humankind or ideological dispositions of human beings, sometimes also the various obsessions, habitual, impulsive or compulsive, etc.) He poses this question and tries to explain it: "How is one to satisfy one's natural instincts and remain within the pale of the society in which one lives? According to him, the answer is 'hypocrisy.' Sartre identifies this as 'inauthenticity.' However, Foucault's analysis of the discourse formations of society throws a different light to classify this problematic. He explains that if we work on the assumption that life (vivre) is formed by the prevalence of certain discourses (ranconter), then the possibility of choosing to 'live' is effectively eradicated - all one can do to establish a different discursive formation of life. However, applying Sartrean dialectic to writing enables the reader in pretending to understand the knowledge of the 'lived Self' of a character through the 'Self narrated;' in other words, the reality of the character depends upon the reader disposing of the utterance of the character by displacing it onto a schematic construction of
the 'inner Self' (or meaning) of the character. Thus we have the position demonstrated by Sartrean existentialism, in which a human is constituted by what he or she does and no more – where the mind is seen through its manifestations as body.

In the prevalent anthropocentric criticism of the first half of the 20th century, the character in literature, then, is seen as embodying a dialectic of ‘inner’ and ‘outer,’ or in larger terms, the relation which obtains between Self and Other. Culler has outlined one effect of this organization for description:

Whenever the time of the story is momentarily arrested and the narration lingers over a given scene, character or event, the reader is allowed an elementary presumption: that these details are in some way necessary and that he or she must do something with them. And to do something with them is to give them a meaning in terms of their functions in the text... If, for example, a character’s appearance is described, we may give meaning to these details either by calling on the social theories of personality, which, in their cliched way, tell us that if some one is elegantly dressed it is because he is dandy or that if she is beautiful she will, as a result, be admired and pursued; or we may in the absence of casual connections, establish a sign relation between the details and the meanings our symbolic codes permit us to give them: we would be unwilling to assume a casual connection between perfect or blemished complexions and perfect or blemished moral character, but the symbolic codes permit such associative operations. To process description is to collect details and perform such semantic transformations on them.11
Taking cue from this argument, Docharty says, “description, then is a primary vehicle of meaning and one way or another casual links between the outer and what it means, the inner, are established. Therefore, description as an epistemological carrier of information serves to inform the reader emotively.” That is, rather than an examination of descriptions of supposed reality beyond the words on the page which leads the critics to pronounce on mimetic adequacy or to speak impressionistically of a character, we can turn to description as a reading process of characterization. Further details and elaboration of description will serve to outline the boundaries within which we should consider the possible variables of development. It thus becomes a valid move to think in terms of a phenemenological approach to meaning in characterorological description. In other words, a literary character is never laid open to our dissecting critical sharpness, it is rather the case that descriptions of a character establish certain positions or inter-relations between character and reader. Any meaning thus conferred upon a character is not static. That is, if the character’s meaning and being were static, if he or she were immune to change, we would have a ‘dead’ character or there would be no character at all, and no reader, for such a state of affairs would demand the unchanging reader or reader fixated at one point of text. Obviously, if the text is to be read at all, then this is impossible. Meaning is a dynamic process, the configurations produced through the series of positional inter-relations between character and reader.

Kavanagh points out that “description itself when considered in terms of relationship between the text as signified and the meaning as signifye, is
among the most paradoxical components of literary work.” The descriptive passage serves to prepare or reinforce a certain semantic content, but once this meaning has been properly conveyed the description itself loses its reason for being. It no longer has any function. He says, then, “description would no longer have any function. What was conceived as means is abolished in accomplishing its ends.” But Booth points to the fact that “description as an operation in the act of characterization, is primarily concerned with evaluations, with the value judgements the reader is constantly making under the manipulating hands of the author.”

Therefore, in the act of reading, a reader can assume different positions including the author determined position. Thus, the reader leaves the passive state of silence and enters into a kind of dialogue with the text. In the entry into discourse, the reader is entering society, for he or she breaks the monologic authorial voice and collaborates with the text to produce meaning. Such communal creations become analogous to the creation of any linguistic artifact, if we subscribe to the notion that the linguistic artifact is made up of some kind of original discourse resultant from the multifarious play of many fragmented discourses. And it is here, in the language, which is central to the civilization and society that men and women exist. The idea is that a personal self is created in the articulation or reading of a text, its phenomenological existence. This self is rather a surface with no depth; it is that which is constituted in a language.
The argument I offer here is that any knowledge formation need to look at seriously the nature of the text, the conditions in which it is produced and in what manner it should be read or evaluated. We need to consider the rewriting of certain texts, for they may not be in exacting sense but carrying out traces of an earlier text. The practice of literary knowledge, therefore, needs to be conscious of the complexity of the social conditions and relations under which it is produced and read admitting conflicts/plurality of interpretations. As resistance literature, 'Dalit Literature' in India certainly invokes for reconsidering our understanding of reading, writing and rewriting. These three concepts need to be placed in the larger context of discourse formations.

The whole system of literary activity is interwoven with and partly dependent on other discourses for example, political, economic, religious, etc. All activities take place in what R. Escarpit called the 'literary milieu' in which certain opinions, values and interests on what the literature is or should be are exchanged in a dynamic discourse. Escarpit studied the influence of different external factors on patterns in the literary system – the effects of important historical events, the effects of economic fluctuations, differences in literary behaviour in the cities and in the country, effects of moral and political constrains, effects of sociological alienation, oppression and subjection, etc. This line of research was continued by Pierre Bourdieu.
Cultural constructions of an ideal state of existence of a circumscribed past necessarily praise one group and devalue, denigrate or demonize the others, for instance, the Indian juxtaposition of Brahmanism and ‘Dalitism’. When this idealized state is concretized in some realized entity, we are confronted with many conditions of being – the Gramscian arena of struggle over the material conditions of social existence. It is in these struggles that identities arise. Identity arises in the exercise of power. It has no singular construction; there must always be two, usually more, identities to be defined against each other. For example, a group may be identified if there are ‘others/outsiders’ and if it exists within a wider discursive field (like political, religious, etc.). We may reiterate keeping in view the extensive literature on ‘Identity’ that identity consciousness is a product of contradictions embodied in relations of structured inequality. This leads us to the claim that ‘identification’ is the politics of marginality. Indeed, identity appears to come into being most frequently in just such instances when individuals are persuaded of a need to confirm a collective sense in the face of threatening economic, political, and religious or other social forces. Therefore, identity formations are attributes of marginality and relative weakness in which the dominant are able to define the subordinate. But the dialectic nature of identity is also evident, for those who are subordinated are able to adopt the terms of their definition as the basis for mobilization and collective assertion. As Mudimbe has remarked concerning the European invention of Africa, “Identity and alterity are always given to others, assumed by an I-or a We-subject, structured in multiple individual histories.” Isn’t it true in the
context of dalit representation? To Lyotard, “a self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young and old, man and woman, rich and poor, a person is always located at ‘nodal points’ of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be.” According to many, from newspaper commentators to academic theorists, our era is one of radical transition. Changes in social organization that have occurred in recent decades are said to be incomprehensible within existing general theories and conceptual frameworks. A dazzling variety of social, political and cultural frameworks are highlighted in this regard. Globalization, transnational communication systems, new information technologies, the industrialization of war, the collapse of soviet style socialism, universal consumerism, breaking old loyalties, forging new alliances: these are the core dimensions of modern institutions and social affairs. Yet what are the connections between changes at the levels of social institutions and those in everyday life, the margins and the core, the individual and the collective? How do contemporary social processes affect the personal and cultural domains? There are two different ways of thinking about the relations between contemporary institutional transformations on the one hand and personal and cultural experience on the other. Elliott says that ideas of modernity and post-modernity offer us powerful and compelling frameworks for social and cultural analysis and diagnosis of the contemporary epoch. The modernist argument is that personal and cultural experience in the contemporary world involves various tensions and ambiguities, the distinctive characteristics of which involve
contradiction, fluidity and fragmentation. These instabilities are directly connected to process of modernization. To him modernity is a 'post-traditional social order,' involving the continual overturning of previous collective assumptions, traditions and customs. Postmodernism, on the other hand, recognizes something different in contemporary cultural experience. It reacts against the tiredness of the modernist negotiation of risk and uncertainty by attempting to dissolve the problem altogether. According to him, postmodernism suggests that “cultural ambivalence cannot be overcome, that ambiguity and discontinuity cannot be straightened out, that social and cultural organization cannot be rationally ordered and controlled.” Postmodernism denies that there is any repressed truth to the paths of modernity, and as such recasts history as ‘decentered; there are only ‘images of the past framed from different points of view’. From this perspective, the multidimensional, chaotic world of global communications ushers in a plurality of local rationalities and identities – ethnic, religious, sexual, cultural and aesthetic. Elliott feels that a postmodern frame helps us to identify the proliferation of discourses by opening individuals and collectivities to other possibilities and ways of experiencing the world.

Social theorists, in general, view contemporary cultural and personal life as increasingly marked by dislocation, dispersal and fragmentation. Thus current social theories raise important discursive issues about the nature of personal and social experience, issues that are usually neglected, sidestepped or displaced in traditional literary discourse. It is important to understand the
experience of ‘identity’, which people recognize as something central to the
texture of their day-to-day lives, in the context of fragmentation and
dislocation of subjectivity. It can be said that the social structures in which the
contemporary selves are constituted are profoundly different to cultural forms
of the pre-modern world. In traditional type of social organization, tradition
and custom and status held a legitimizing force while in modernity a rejection
of certainties of tradition and custom are involved. Economic capitalism,
industrialization, urbanization, parliamentary democratic creation, mass
movements, etc. have widened the human experience by blurring the fixed
traditional boundaries. Despite this, Habermas says that modern social life has
become increasingly subject to administrative and bureaucratic control, and
this has led to a crushing of individual creativity and autonomy.\textsuperscript{20} Modernity,
according to Berman, is a double edged phenomenon. He says, instead of
assigning persons to preordained social roles, as in pre-modern cultures,
modernity succeeds in leading human subjects into a creative and dynamic
making of self-identity and the fashioning of life styles according to personal
preferences.\textsuperscript{21} In the context of modernity, there is the suggestion that
individuals have within themselves an authentic capacity for self-definition
and the subjective organization of meanings. In each person there is the
struggle to negotiate the opportunities and dangers of modernity in terms of
ongoing, enduring sense of self: to respond to the continuities and
discontinuities of contemporary social processes in terms of one’s own
distinctive subjectivity, for example, Dalit identity and articulation where the
excess of overloading of cultural meanings impacts upon the psychic space of
the subject as disorientation, discontinuity and fragmentation. The dalit life is increasingly bound up with dislocation and dispersal of postmodern social space. We can appropriate Jameson’s concept of mapping of social space between self and other to the dalit subject which “has lost its capacity actively to extend its pretensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into coherent experience. It becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural production of such a subject could result in anything but ‘heaps of fragments’ and in practice of the randomly heterogeneous and fragmentary and the aleatory.”

Lacanian concept of ‘mirror stage,’ with its claim that the ego is a ‘fiction’ because it is frozen as an image of something, which does not exist, is seen as producing a fragmentation of the individual self. The secret of selfhood is commonly seen to lie in authenticity and individuality, and its history is present as a biography of progress towards that goal, overcoming great obstacles in the process. Achieving autonomy implies inner-character building, typically through emancipation from external constraints like religious and political persecution, social ostracisation, or the fetters of hidebound or by-birth convention.

The introduction of democracy made the individual as the autonomous bearer of rights as (s)he became the basic building bloc in political liberalism that rebutted old Divine Right and absolutist theories with the declaration that the individual was prior to the state. Society was began to be regarded as the product of free individuals contracting together in the state of nature to set up
a political society to protect fundamental rights to life, liberty and property. But continuing inequality and deprivation of fundamental rights to certain groups within the society paved way to social-neurosis. What truly counted for the deprived was the status of their existence and identity. About 'the self', Clifford Geertz has claimed that "the Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment and action, organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures." And Michel Foucault, in his 'archaeology' of human sciences, concluded that 'man', as a subject and object of knowledge, 'is an invention of recent date' dependent upon a particular modern configuration of thought: if that were to crumble 'then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.' Of course, there are myriad interpretations of 'self'. It is convenient for us to assume that we are 'assembled' selves, in which all the 'private' effects of psychological interiority are constituted by our linkage into 'public' languages, practices, techniques and artifacts.

'Castism' that is peculiar to India has allowed for consolidation several marginalized heterogeneous individuals to forge a homogenous alliance in search of their identity. The marginalization here is an ideology of social, political and economic domination based on beliefs that a(some) designated
caste(s) is(are) either biologically, culturally, intellectually, professionally, etc. inferior. And this belief is used almost in all aspects of everyday life to justify, rationalize or prescribe the marginalized caste(s) in the society as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment. Here one is tempted to compare or liken castism in India to racism in most of the Western world. They are not one and the same, but there is a striking similarity. Both caste and race are natal concepts—one is born into a caste just as someone is born into a race. The relation between the two also exists as that of a macrocosm to a microcosm. That is to say castism is a macro sphere which includes racism as one of the several essential micro spheres. Racism, many argue that, has its foundations in the Enlightenment and religious revival of the eighteenth century West. Castism also encloses within it concepts of class, once again, not as the West views it, but with unique Indian-ness attributed to it. It may be presumed that cast had its origins prior to the time when class might have originated. In short, we can amuse that castism in India is like English language which has borrowed and continues to borrow extensively various concepts to grow into a mighty language without disturbing the basic syntax typical to the language. We shall return to a detailed discussion of caste in later chapters.

The theories of discourse that help us comprehend and analyse Dalit Literature are discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 attempts to trace the Dalit Ideology and the development of Dalit Consciousness. Dalit Literature in the form of Telugu short stories are analyzed in Chapter 4 with the help of insights
from Chapters 2 and 3. A brief summary of the research is presented in Chapter 5 as possible conclusions.
Endnotes


4  Jauss Robert Hans. 1982. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Harvester Press: Brighton; pp. 20-36. A literary work is not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period of time. It is not a monument that monologically reveals in timeless essence. It is much more like an orchestration that strikes ever new resonance among its readers and that frees the text from the material of the word and brings it to a contemporary existence. This dialogical character of the literary work also establishes why philological understanding can exist only in perpetual confrontation with the text, and cannot be allowed to be reduced to a knowledge of facts.

5  Habermas stresses for a necessary dialogue between hermeneutics and the theory of ideology.

6  Iser Wolfgang. 1976. *The Act of Reading*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London & Henley; pg. 67. Iser is the most eclectic of the ‘reception’ theorists, borrowing concepts not only from phenomenology, but also from formalism, semiotics, and gestalt psychology, and so on. He concentrates rigorously on the act of reading itself – on the gradually unfolding process by which a reader assimilates and incorporates the various facets and levels of a text.

Bleich David. 1978. *Subjective Criticism.* Johns Hopkins UP: Baltimore & London; pp. 65-6. Holland and Bleich use psychology as their starting point. Bleich believes that all knowledge is made by people and not found, because the objects of our knowledge serve the needs of the community. Faced with creative works, he says that we should ask, 'What are the individual and communal occasions for these symbolic rendering of experience?' Subjective criticism assumes that our main motivation in reading is to understand ourselves.

Derrida Jacques. 1967. *Of Grammatology.* Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Johns Hopkins UP: Baltimore; pg. 44. According to Derrida, all 'signs', including those usually thought of as 'phonic' (that is, spoken), are literally 'unthinkable' outside the institutionalization of writing. Writing is not to be perceived as a belated or parasitic supplement to speech. The 'proto-writing' that underlies both speech and writing always precedes any specific act of writing, and thus interrogates the agency of the individual author, since all texts refer back to an infinite play of precursor texts that are 'always already written.' "If 'writing' signifies inscription and especially the durable institution of a sign (and that is the only irreducible kernel of the concept of writing), writing in general covers the entire field of linguistic signs. In that field of a certain sort of instituted signifiers may then appear, 'graphic' in the narrow and derivative sense of the word, ordered by a certain relationship with other instituted—hence 'written', even if they are 'phonic'—signifiers. The very idea of institution—hence of the arbitrariness of the sign—is unthinkable before the possibility of writing and outside of its horizon." Barthes uses a similar concept to describe writing. In *S/Z* pg. 21, he says,
“[E]ach code is one of the forces that can take over the text (of which the text is the network), one of the voices out of which the text is woven. Alongside each utterance, one might say that off-stage voices can be heard: they are the codes: in their interweaving, these voices (whose origin is ‘lost’ in the vast perspective of the already-written) degenerate the utterance; the convergence of the voices (of the codes) becomes writing.”


Cyrus Hoy. 1930. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Chatto and Windus. Pp. 147, 148 & 174. He says, comedy at its most satiric, as in Jonson or Moliere, Wycherely or Etherege, points viciously, drollly, wittily, to a set of more or less sleazy make-shifts calculated to assist the Volpones, the Subtles and the Faces, the Tartuffes and the Don Juans, the Dorimants and the Hirners in getting along in the world, or in getting ahead in it. Their sundry efforts can all be subsumed under one word, hypocrisy.


Escarpit, R. 1971. *Sociology of Literature*. 2nd edition. Cassel: London. Literature is embedded in the whole system of activities, performed by people in different roles: the author creating the texts, the publisher producing and multiplying the texts materially, distributors, booksellers, libraries distributing them, reviewers reviewing them, readers reading, teachers teaching, critics analyzing, etc. Most of these roles are organized in rather fixed patterns within an institutional setting, publishing houses, literary criticism at universities, libraries, literary education at schools, colleges and in the family, reviews and interviews in the media, etc.


Cited from Elliott’s *Subject to Ourselves*, p. 11. Berman theorizes the ambivalence of modernity as: ‘To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish.’ According to him modernity is the abandonment of any fixed social status and rigid hierarchy of power relations. This process accelerates the multiplication of possibilities the self on one hand, and self-dislocation by global social processes on the other. Construction and deconstruction, assembly and disassembly: these processes interweave in contemporary societies in a manner that has become self-propelling.

Fredric Jameson. 1991. *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, p.25. He argues that the social and economic world in which the postmodern subject is constituted is the world of late, multinational capitalism. The immense communicational potentialities of late capitalism, with its plurality of surplus-generating forms, derail the symbolic framing of reality, the grasping of psychic experience, the mapping of social space between self and other. In this view, post modernity is defined entirely by absences, the dissolution of inner experience and received social
meanings. It is possible to make sense out of this apparent disorientation, however, provided that we grasp the irreducibility of the plurality of human worlds.

23 Cited from Elliott, *Subject to Ourselves*, p. 16

For Lacan, the ego represents an imaginary world of wholeness and plentitude; it is a psychic defence aimed at masking the painful contradictions of desire itself. Significantly, Lacan’s theory provides an account of how something outside and other – a mirror image – is taken inside subjectivity. Lacan elucidates the self as a copied distortion, a filter which is played off against disfiguring perspectives of reality. Reality in Lacanian perspective is that which derails the self in imaginary and symbolic terms, generating in turn further distortion and misrecognition.
