Chapter-I
Introduction

Literary criticism in the modern times is marked by a number of trends and movements, which make it multi-dimensional; interdisciplinary; experimental and also debatable. Literary criticism, which started at an early stage as an activity simultaneous and dependent on literary creation, has traversed a long way. In the twenty-first century, criticism has gained a new literary consciousness and an independent status, whereby the old and traditional, survives along with the new and experimental. The modern literary age is an age of critical expansion. The activities of literary criticism, the general character of its theories and concepts, have changed one's perception of this stream of literature altogether. The gradual and continuous developments in science and technology have also held an impact on modern critical scenario. Criticism is a disinterested application of the free play of mind on its subject to understand and interpret it entirely. Intellectual freedom is necessary for critical understanding and analysis and modern day's world provides an atmosphere in which questioning and enquiry are permissible and encouraged. Thus, modern literary criticism has an altogether new face and many assets attached to it. It has risen above the theoretical plane by incorporating in it the practical dimension of the modern age.
When, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), opined in the nineteenth century that the job of a critic was not merely to give judgement in literature but his task was "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas"\(^1\), the critical faculty was perceived as lower to the creative faculty. His threefold function of criticism marked a sea-change in the perception of literary criticism in the nineteenth century. Literary criticism is not restricted to the evaluation and analysis of a work of art but it goes beyond this structural analysis. The trinity of life, literature and literary criticism was thus established. The function of a critic is thus as applaudable as that of a creative writer. T.S Eliot (1888-1965) defined literary criticism as an act concerned with the elucidation of works of art and the refinement of taste. He expected an ideal critic to have a highly developed sense of fact and work.

For this transformation and rapid growth in the critical arena there may be any amount of reasons - a rising intellectual population, an uncertainty about the received traditions in literature and an intense ferment within the literary arts themselves. The change

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has taken place everywhere, in the west as well as in the east. To say something of the literary traditions of the west and the east, individually, one has to talk about a series of developments, that have taken place. The first striking feature is, the growth of a healthy cross-fertilization of the different national traditions or in other words, the emergence of comparative aesthetics. The second striking feature in the row, is, the development of theory of reading. The traditions coming up with theories, are an essential aid to the readers in their understanding. The theory acts as an instrument for imposing an order on the act of interpretation. John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), a noted formal critic of the early twentieth century, viewed that the good critic cannot stop with studying poetry. The study of poetics and theory is also significant. Thus the two C's, comparison and conceptualization, dominate the post-modern critical tradition, making it more apt, analytical and universal. At the same time, the involvement of the comparative studies and theories have made criticism more complex. The modern reader's heightened responsiveness is thus a necessary part of the modern critical tradition.

Comparative literature is one of the important dimensions of post-modern literature. Its independent status in the critical activity has broadened the idea of criticism. Talking about the
origin of the term, Matthew Arnold, translating Ampere's use of *histoire comparative*, was the first to use the term in English in 1848. Villemain, the French writer had spoken of term as *literature comparee*, in 1829, after the analogy of Cuvier's *Anatomic Compare* of 1800. The Germans also spoke about *Vergleichende Literaturegeschichte*. The terms ever since they were coined, remained terms only. Comparative literature cannot be understood or envisaged terminologically. In practice, it has various implications. Henry Remak, a noted critic brings out the essentials of comparative literature as the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country. He further adds that the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge like Philosophy, History, the Social Science, Science, Religion etc., is also an aspect of comparative studies. In brief it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. Comparative literature is called by other names as cross-cultural studies, multi-ethnic studies and cultural studies. The scope of comparative studies is wide. The comparison helps to illuminate certain aspects in literature which are otherwise viewed in a narrow sense. The holistic approach of comparative literature reveals the interrelatedness not only between two literary traditions but also between other
disciplines like Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics and others. Comparison facilitates the growth of an interdisciplinary approach which liberates literature from the rigid rhetoric and expands the scope of creation as well as criticism. To call comparative studies a post-modern concept, would be a narrow vision in itself because the truth is that comparativism has been a recurrent dimension of critical studies since the time of Aristotle and other early critics. They compared two genres of literature, two branches of knowledge; creation and criticism, and also two artists to probably define the wide scope of criticism and also of literature.

Modern literary tendencies look upon literature as a universal phenomena, pertaining to the interest of the whole human community and their whole gamut of emotions and feelings. The search for universality and the discovery of the uniqueness of each culture are the historic motivations of comparative literature. One can deduce the cultural transmigration made by an author in the text, through the mode of comparison. The emergence of several cross-border theories in literature, irrespective of the countries in which they are propounded, are the result of cross-cultural studies only. George Steiner, in his book Language and Silence strongly feels that literature should be taught and interpreted in a comparative way. Knowledge beyond one's national literature
and one's native language is essential for a reader in the present jet and the super-sonic age. If literature is expected to have a universal appeal, it means that such a literature is beyond the terms like genre, gender, national or regional. For instance, Feminism, as a theory in criticism, includes just not an English or an African writer or their ideas, but it is a whole race of writers and concepts coming from various parts of the world. Renewellek believes that comparative literature studies literature from an international perspective and has a consciousness of the unity of all literary creations and experiences. This approach in literature, is a social justification of the study of literature. Literature will lose its validity, if it creates awareness only in Europe, or in Asia, or only in North America. Geoffery Chaucer's (1340-1400) Canterbury Tales are not only a reflection of the fourteenth century English society but there is something more to be comprehended in it. A competent reader's endeavour should be to ponder over these questions and realize that literature manifests itself differently in different ages and societies and circumstances. Comparative literature answers the questions related to the similarities between these manifestations and how they differ from one another.

Comparison helps in removing the era gaps found in literature. In criticism, several cross-border theories are emerging, irrespective
of the countries in which they are propounded. For instance, the German phenomenological approach, the French deconstruction theory or the English romanticism, now all form a common whole in criticism and have culminated into strong movements of the world literature. The English writers being influenced by French Symbolists or the Structuralists being influenced by German philosophers, are amongst several such instances in literature in the recent decades. The common belief that goes with comparative studies is that they are merely related to extrinsic studies and external probing of sources and influences in a work of art. But the recent post-modern ideology has risen beyond external comparison. Even an intrinsic study of concepts, thoughts, philosophies in a work of art, form a part of comparative aesthetics today. The comparison and contrast at the level of content (the subject matter) and the central idea of a work of art, can take place, exploring the dimensions, which are otherwise not perceived by an extrinsic approach. Today the scope of comparative aesthetics is not confined to the study of mere facts, influences and sources.

The second area being explored under the comparative criticism of the recent years is the interaction between the individual writers. Every writer is a creative genius and the domain of creativity
extends up to a selected few only. The study of the minds of these selected few sounds interesting because great minds think alike. Here, the study revolves round their sources of inspiration, their presentations, the concepts they propound, the stylistic devices they employ, their influences and their interpretation and judgement of human life. The areas are unlimited and the comparison of these aspects yields a universal vision. A comparative analysis looks upon literature in totality and traces the origin and development without any geographical, historical or linguistic inhibitions. The fusion of Greek and Roman literature; English and French criticism; East and West culmination, is the outcome of comparison. Renewellek's concept of "world literature"\(^2\) gives impetus to comparative aesthetics. Renewellek rightly believes that the term comparative literature has covered and still covers rather distinct fields of study and several groups of problems.

Another dimension of comparative criticism is of the interaction and communion between literature and other fine arts, which is a recent development. The issue finds its roots in the Aristotelian mimetic theory, where he said that poetry and all forms of fine art are similar in their modes of imitation. The difference lies

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in the medium, the object and the manner of imitation. It is the harmony and the imitation of the human world, which make creativity and criticism, painting and music, architecture and media stand on a common platform. The nineteenth century Pre-Raphaelite movement in literature was influenced by the genre of painting. The whole concept of art for arts sake gained prominence with this movement. The notion of comedy emerged from the Dithyrambic choral song (an ancient form of music). Apart from drawing such parallels in literature, comparative aesthetics has brought the interdisciplinary spirit in literary criticism, whereby literature is being compared to other branches of knowledge as Psychology, Anthropology and History. The psychological researches of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) are successfully being applied to study a work of art with special focus on the inner workings of an author's mind, while he is creating a work of art. The anthropological studies of researchers are being applied to study the social and cultural influences.

Comparative aesthetics investigates the relationship between literature and ideas. Ideas reflect the presence of some eternal philosophy in a work of art. The philosophers like Kant, Neitzsche, Heidegger, Goethe and the philosophies of Existentialism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Symbolism, Marxism, Feminism, Transcendentalism, all find
a word in literature and literary criticism. The Theatre of Absurd has the existential philosophy in its backdrop; the Modernist movement has the Kantian philosophy in its centre; the Reader-Response criticism has the Nietzschean and the Kantian philosophy in its background; Emerson's poetry had French Symbolism in it. Ideas and philosophies, bear a long thread of connection with literature and literary criticism. This investigation reveals the significance of literature and creative process as an institution, where several ideologies culminate, in order to benefit mankind, society and the readers. It has its own practices and norms, its own structure, and centre.

A work of art has plethora of meanings and contexts. A study of an individual writer or an individual work of art is of help in gaining some insight into the process of creation and criticism, but this is limited. Individuality is certainly important but a state of amalgamation can enrich one's knowledge, by orienting one with not only an individual work or writer but also of other works and writers, who are engaged in similar creative and critical processes. Creativity and criticism crave for enlightenment and universalism and through comparison both these tasks are fulfilled. The elucidation of a work of art and pronouncement of correct judgement, are possible if a critic chooses to have
a broader vision. Comparative aesthetics helps in dealing with the multi-faceted relation between a work of art and human life. John Fletcher (1579-1625) views that comparative literature which is the branch of literary study concerns itself with the basic structures underlying all literary manifestations, irrespective of time and place.

Creativity and criticism are the two inseparable dimensions of literature. If creation follows the principles of synthesis and exposition, criticism works on the principles of analysis, rationalism and detached evaluation. It is an acknowledged fact that literature develops and grows with time but the basic four art co-ordinates always remain the same. Literary artists have always acknowledged the relevance of these twin tendencies, in providing literature its universal worth. M.H. Abrams, in his essay "Orientation of Critical Theories" gives the following framework:

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UNIVERSE
  ↓
  WORK
  ↓
 ARTIST  AUDIENCE³
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In all works of art, these co-ordinates are present. The art co-ordinates are not constant but are variables. One co-ordinate always remains prominent, which decides the focus of the critic, but this prominence does not eliminate other three co-ordinates. The significance of these art co-ordinates varies according to the age and according to the theory in criticism. M.H. Abrams further places these variables in certain theories, so as to clarify their meaning and presence. He evaluates their worth in relation to some great critics, the world has witnessed. The first category given by M.H. Abrams is the "Mimetic Theories". This theory keeps the universe in the centre and believes that the works of art are an imitation of the universe. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle had based their critical thoughts on this view. Of course the objects of imitation, the medium of imitation and the presentation had varied. The second category is the "Pragmatic Theories", where the audiences or the spectators are kept in the centre and the effect of a work of art on their minds is analysed. The two fold purpose of pleasing and teaching, can be successfully achieved when the readers read and appreciate the creative endeavour of an artist. Horace in his Ars Poetica started this tradition,

5 Ibid., 14.
which is still vibrant in the present critical scenario. "Expressive Theories"\(^6\), come next and they treat the artist as the focal point in a work of art. A work of art is the product of an artist's imagination, his actions and feeling. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) also adheres to this viewpoint in his theory of poetry. The artist is the creator, the reader and the critic of his own text. The artist is the chosen one and his genius prevails throughout the text. The last category given by M.H. Abrams is the "Objective Theories"\(^7\), where the work of art is in the centre. A work of art is a complete entity in itself and the other art co-ordinates are subsidiary to it. Literary criticism which has traversed a long path since the time of Plato can be very well understood with reference to the four co-ordinates of art criticism. They are fixed as well as free. They are fixed as they are parts of the basic framework of any literary theory, yet anyone co-ordinate can take the central position whereas others remain as marginal elements.

**Early Literary Criticism:**

A study of earlier literary criticism brings out Homer, Pindar, Plato, Socrates as great creative artists as well as critics.

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\(^7\) Ibid., 26.
Both the genres were appealing, instructive of natural genius and both required sincerity of thought, purpose and study. Plato's Ion is an early instance of literary criticism, which was philosophical and written in a dramatic mode. The work dealt with the explanation of Socratic thought that the poet's creative ability had to be combined with the critical perception of the world, since literature is the criticism of human life. Plato's Republic was an assessment of the fact that the literary world was an imitation of the ideal world, i.e. twice removed from reality. His mimetic mode believed that the tragic poet is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitations, he is thrice removed from the truth. Plato through Ion, presented two extremely real facts which distinguished creation from criticism and established the significance of a critic. Plato's views have relevance even today that composing poetry is not the same as being able to give a rationale of it. Thus criticism provides a logical argument for the issues raised in a work of art and it is scientific because the arguments, the views and the critical thoughts are presented in a systematic manner. For a critic and a reader, these functions act as a guiding force.

Plato and Socrates were followed by Aristotle, whose theory of poetry and fine arts, markes the formal beginning of literary
theory. He too believed poetry to be an art, an instrument and reflection of human life. In his *Poetics*, he gave the theory of form and structure of tragedy and comedy. All forms of fine arts as music, dancing, painting and poetry were imitations for him. He believed that poetic imitation was an imitation of inner human behaviour and an imaginative recreation of the reality. His concept of *mimesis* keeps the universe and the men residing in it in the central place, but he also does not forget to mention that the beauty of any creation depends on its "magnitude and order" and without a spectator, beauty cannot be realized. The presence of a unity, the sense of entirety can be comprehended only through the eyes of a spectator or a reader. He gave six elements of a tragedy viz., Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle and Song. Spectacle reflects the manner of the presentation, it is the medium of emotional attraction in a work of art. This cannot be experienced without the presence of a reader and a spectator. Music and spectacular effects produce vividness of impression in reading and for a writer, creation of this effect is important.

In the row of literary theorists, the next name that emerges

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is that of Horace, who wrote in an age marked for its formalism (reading the poem as it is) and technical excellencies. Horace's *Ars Poetica* stood differently from the works of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates in the sense that it was more of Aristotelian criticism rather than a self-analysis. His work criticized Aristotle's theory of poetry and perhaps it was the beginning of a new trend in criticism. Apart from this, his work professed the technical aspects involved in creative writing and their objective descriptions. He despises the writer's dependence on the spectator's verdict. The secondary place which readers get in Horace's criticism is due to his displeasure over the superficial understanding of the reading public in his days. He distinguished the technically skilled writer from a born poet. He also differentiates the innate genius from acquired talent, but ultimately gives equal significance to both in his conclusion as both the factors are complementary to each other. When he talks of the appeal of a work of art, he certainly takes the reader's position into consideration. Horace viewed that a poet either tries to give good advice, or tries to amuse or attempts to do both. It is the mixture of pleasure and profit which appeals to every reader.

The criticism of Longinus has been motivating. If Horace looked upon the classical models for their technical proficiency,
Longinus looked upon them as powerful illuminations and sources of inspiration. His critical treatise "On the Sublime", defined a truly excellent work as one which catered to the emotions and thoughts of the readers. His five sources to attain sublimity were emotions, thoughts and the rhetorical features (diction, figures, composition). After Longinus, the medieval ages witnessed the derth of significant criticism. The models of Horace and Longinus echoed in those dark ages. In 1595, Sir Philip Sidney's (1554-1586) "An Apology for Poetry" appeared and the darkness vanished. His treatise was an eloquent plea for the social values of imaginative fiction. It was the first work to introduce the critical ideas of Renaissance theorists into England. His work was a defence against the accusation laid by Stephen Gosson (1554-1624) against the genre of poetry. Sidney presented his high conception of poetry and considered it as the first light giver to ignorance. Poetry, in his view, had the ability to comprehend even the most complex aspect of knowledge. His mode of criticism was argumentative but his aim was to remove the confusion prevailing in the last quarter of the sixteenth century against the nature and functions of poetry. His critical treatise was an expressive one, where he brought out his own conception of poetry. For him, poetry was an art of imitation, with a purpose to teach and delight. It
moves the readers, for whose satisfaction and curiosity, the writer works.

John Dryden (1631-1700), the father of English criticism was the founder of Comparative Criticism, in the history of criticism. His work, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" presented the contemporary critical scenario where the writers were like ravens and birds of prey, who were capable of writing on anything any issue, even if it was of least significance. The four characters of his dramatic presentation represent the ancients, the contemporary, the English and the French. Through them Dryden presented the superiority of the ancients over moderns and believed that the reputation of the dead cannot enliven the modern. Though his critical treatise was a political satire on the contemporary age, yet he also incorporated the psychological element in his criticism by bringing out the temperamental differences between the English and the French writers. His approach was also mimetic, for he believed in the imitation of life governed by the laws of change and improvement.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) added a new dimension to literary studies. He collaborated with Coleridge to publish his Lyrical Ballads in 1798, which soon became an epoch making
document. In order to make his intentions through the collection clear, Wordsworth gave his theory of poetry in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", in 1800. The following lines throw light on his new concept of poetry:

The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout as far as possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect. His poetry and his theory followed these principles. He wanted the understanding of the reader to be "in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified". Every thought of Wordsworth was guided by the judgement and appreciation of the reader, who is the soul inmate of the poet, the one to whom and for whom the poet writes. His preface was the

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10 Ibid., 25.
first ever systematic defence of the theory. His theory helps the readers to understand his poetry better and also to read with unbiased eyes and real understanding.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) threw light on the profound educational function of criticism. He was a socio-ethical critic, who believed that every branch of knowledge should help in the analysis of an object as in itself it really exists. For him criticism and creation are important but criticism holds a higher place as it creates an atmosphere conducive for creation. Criticism for Arnold was the way of propagating the best and current ideas which also become the material required for creation. The critic can achieve his goal by remaining collected and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man. For Arnold literary criticism is reformative as it promotes cultural and moral values. He established criticism in England for the first time as a humanist discipline and brought criticism close to theology. If modern literary criticism goes back to nineteenth century to find its origin, the most preferred critic would certainly be Arnold who used criticism to bring about a new self consciousness. Here his critics and his readers were drawing on values which transcended the literary arena. He and Eliot thus set the trend of treating criticism as an independent stream, an area with its own laws,
a field in its entirety. T.S. Eliot remarked in the essay, "The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, that "the development of criticism is a symptom of the development, or change, of poetry; and the development of poetry is itself a symptom of social change. The important moment for the appearance of criticism seems to be the time when poetry ceases to be the expression of the mind of a whole people." Before them criticism seemed to be existing only in relation to creation of a work of art, never did it have its own entity but Arnold and Eliot laid the foundation of a new, separate genre in literature, i.e. criticism and the twentieth century saw the development of criticism not as subordinate to literary creation.

With T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), criticism and the activities of the critic were highlighted in an objective manner. For him criticism meant, the elucidation of work of art and the refinement of taste. His criticism was independent from the aspects of the universe, the author and the audience. He recommended the idea of reading a poem, with no external co-ordinates influencing it. He removed the authors from the text and paved the way for the formal approach in criticism. His criticism was away from the author's

biography or psychological background; from the intellectual, social or historical context but just the text, the words on the page, the common centre of all the creative processes. He also broke the expressive norms of the Wordsworthian criticism. He defined poetry as "not turning loose of emotions, but an escape from emotion"\(^{12}\), and also not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. T.S. Eliot in his critical treatises mentioned the qualification of an ideal critic, which may be well applied to all the readers of literature. He postulated the view that a good critic must be entirely impersonal and objective and regards Aristotle as an ideal critic for avoiding these shortcomings. Objectivity and exclusion of personal prejudices, restrained sensibilities, a highly developed sense of facts and knowledge of traditions are some other qualities essential for a good critic. A good critic should primarily be a good poet, so that he can transfer his experiences to his reader, with perfection. A thorough knowledge of the structure and stylistic devices may polish his intellect more. The elucidation of a work of art is possible if a critic or a reader has these basic qualities. Eliot's criticism established him as a practical critic and paved way for the future criticism.

Trends in Modern and Post-Modern Literary Criticism:

The twentieth century critical scenario is marked for its innovative, experimental and inter-disciplinary spirit. Today the evolution of various methods and the vast variety of theories for the better evaluation of literature have revolutionized the world of literary criticism. At the same time, new discoveries in various fields of knowledge have brought about a great change in the critical tools and methods. Today there is an abundance of several type of approaches to study literature viz., Legislative criticism, Judicial criticism, Comparative criticism, Descriptive criticism, Impressionistic criticism, Textual criticism, Psychological criticism, Sociological and Marxist criticism, Archetypal criticism and more will emerge in the coming days. Talking of modern criticism, Malcolm Bradbury, in his essay "Introduction: The State of Criticism Today" views that criticism today witnesses not only growth in the interpretations but it also focusses on the understanding and interpretation of the different rational traditions. The early years of the twentieth century saw the extension of the Eliotic custom that, when one is considering poetry one must consider it primarily as poetry and not as any other thing. The view acted as the basic rule for the generation of New critics like Cleanth Brooks (1906-1994), John Crow Ransom (1888-1974), W.K. Wimsatt (1907-1975),
I.A. Richards (1893-1979) and many more. In the past, criticism occurred in an environment created by the creation of a work of art. Today, literary criticism is a discipline, equal to all the other branches of knowledge. It has gained the status of being meta-literature, which means now literature originates from criticism and not vice-versa.

The twentieth century criticism adheres to certain philosophical and aesthetic foundations. The most eminent of these principles is the Kantian ideology which has remained an important influence upon all the theorists and critics. Sir Immanual Kant (1724-1804), was a German philosopher, who meditated the idea that art and the beautiful cannot be defined by conceptual means. This referred to the open-ended character of interpretation, the responsive and the receptive process. He founded the notion of autonomy of the artist and the critic (the reader), by denying the presence of a concept, an abstract idea. He associated the notion of the beautiful with nature, which is away from any concept and logic. By an aesthetic idea he meant a presentation of an imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought or concept can be adequate. So no language can express it completely and allow the reader to grasp it. For him aesthetic and literary judgements are universally valid, without a determinate
or explicit conceptualisation. His criterion of judgement is the observer's correct attitude towards aesthetic phenomena. He expected a competent or ideal observer to regard works of beauty with disinterested pleasure (irrespective of economic, political or personal interests). This philosophy has remained common to all the theories of criticism in the twentieth century.

The first set of critics, who were influenced by this philosophy were the New Critics, who propounded the formal or the ontological approach in criticism. I.A. Richards (1893-1979) emphasized on the close study of text; on the sound analysis of language; words; metaphor and imagery. He explained the two dimensions of the language of a text, namely scientific and emotive. For him, language had the scientific use and the emotive use. The scientific use refers to the surface or the denotative meaning and the emotive use refers to the symbolic or the connotative meaning. His essay 'Science and Poetry' uses this thought to bring out the fact that the emotive use of language distorts the thought because it is never in an independent state. The thoughts are guided by the individual's interest. Poetry was a pseudostatement for him. The scientific use is thus superior because here, the thoughts remain intact. He discards the presence of any concept or barometer
that could bind a text into a certain limit. Richards's criticism primarily focussed on the work, which emerged as the central co-ordinate, yet in his critical framework reader or the audience also enjoyed an important position. Richards, like Kant had his own definition of beauty. He believed that beauty is a state of contemplation in the reader or beholder. In "Science and Poetry", his theory evaluates the poem in terms of reader's reaction, giving a detailed account of the content of the poem as well as the reader's mind. The poem of Wordsworth, "Upon Westminster Bridge" thus emerges as a work of art having an existence of its own in the reader's mind. Although Richards was a pioneer of the Formal approach yet he established his authority in the sphere of psychological criticism.

The next influential critic is Cleanth Brooks (1906-1994), who concentrated solely on the language of poetry and the layers of meaning embodied in a word. In his essay "The Language of Paradox", he views that the language of poetry is the language of paradox. He praised a scientist's objective and the direct use of language. Even a simple poet is forced to use paradoxes in his poem that reduce the authenticity of his work. The words in a poem, do not lead the reader anywhere close to the
real meaning because the meaning itself is hidden behind different and ambiguous layers of paradoxes and remain dormant forever. Apparently, he also frees the text from the author and the reader. He believed that the science makes use of apt and direct words, whereas art always gives importance to indirect expression. John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974) is yet another New critic, to discuss a work of art as a thing in itself. He viewed that a critic should be concerned with both, the structure (the determinate meaning) and the texture (the indeterminate meaning) and only then the complete meaning of a poem can be revealed. This is termed as the Ontological criticism of Ransom. Structure is the form of the poem and texture is the basic metrical pattern of the poem. He expressed his views in "Poetry: A Note on Ontology". Being influenced by science, he proceeded in a logical manner in his essay, by categorizing poetry into physical poetry, platonic poetry and metaphysical poetry. He preferred metaphysical poetry the most because it combined within it the virtues of physical poetry (the poetry of images and things) and platonic poetry (the poetry of ideas). The metaphysical poetry appealed to him because of its scientific temperament. These New critics did not bother about the heteronomous factors and their influence on the poem nor did they relate it to any classical tradition.
Their presence further paved the way for the arrival of Structuralism and Deconstruction of the 1960s and further.

It is a well known fact that what an artist searches in the universe and in himself, is the presence of the truth. Truth value lies in religion, in philosophy. The works of the philosophers like Plato, Aristotle contain ideas which are eternal and transcend time and place. Later theorists claim that language is not a unified system and propagate the fact that no human discourse can claim to find truth value because no language can convey it. Language which is the source of expression for all writers, is in itself figurative and polysemus. The movements in criticism of the twentieth century refer to altogether different traditions. One such movement was Structuralism, propounded by Swiss linguist Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913). His theory did not trace the historical development of language, instead it considered language as a system of differentiated and varied signs which could have meanings, varying according to the system in which they exist. Human memory could be structured as language and for Saussure language is a system of signs. A sign gives meaning in relation to other signs. A sign has a signifier and signified and both these aspects share an arbitrary relationship. Here the individuality
of the text disappears in favour of looking at patterns and systems. In this attitude, the author is excluded from the interpretive process, since the text is in the centre of systems and not individuals. Structuralism argues that any piece of creative writing, is a signifying system that has no origin and that the authors merely inherit pre-existing structures that form the themes of their works. Man does not write language but language writes man, the idea of language speaks and the text is created. The pre-existing set of structures is langue and the execution of this structure is parole. Saussure discarded all creative literature of the past as the product of artist's vision. He said that what the artists perceive as their own creation, is something that is taken from an already existing system of language.

In the 1960s, Structuralism that had dominated the critical scene since 1950s, was replaced by the Post-Structuralist tendencies, thus giving birth to an era of Post-Modernism. These movements were a continuation of the structuralist idea, reflecting and denying the old beliefs. Literary criticism was now set to face a profound intellectual change. The simplicity had vanished. Literary criticism was as complex as the modern life, the faith in old systems had vanished, the new was in the process of evolution and the studies became more interdisciplinary. The structuralist's desire
to describe the structures and their validity in literature, was led forward by the Post-Structuralists, who emphasised on intuition and experience in the process of their quest for meaning. The expression of indeterminacy of language and the uncertainty of meaning, was their motives. Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction represent the dismantling of some really important assumptions of the western aesthetics and philosophy. The Post-Structuralism denied the assumption of a real world, which could be comprehended by the rational human mind. Language is the product of an individual writer's mind and it expresses the essence of an individual being. The self is the subject of the sentence and the individual is in centre of the meaning and truth. The structuralists instead placed the structure in the centre. The Post-Structuralist's theory and practise are based on the views of the nineteenth century German philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who anticipated the post-structural and post-modern thought. His concept of 'nihilism' was based on the assumption that the existence of concept could not be denied, yet all concepts are pseudo-concepts as they depend on the rhetorical figures. He propagated the fact that one can no longer be sure of anything because all morality is a lie and truth a fiction. There is nothing like truth and error, they are mere delusions.
The Nietzshean theory of language is closely adopted by the deconstructionists. Both eliminated the metaphysical, conceptual ideologies of Plato, Aristotle and celebrated the event of liberation from the traditions of the past. The term Deconstruction originated in the writings of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). He opined that the western philosophers who insist upon reason, knowledge, truth and other high profiled concepts actually insist upon the concept of hierarchization and opposition of negative value judgements. They valued the terms of truth, reason, nationality and meanings, because they helped them in projecting their knowledge. Derrida also believed in the indeterminacy and inadequacy of language and also thought it to be difficult to escape from the clutches of language. Derrida was essentially a philosopher. He viewed the Post-Structuralist movement as a moment when people began to think about the structurality of structure. Derrida's concept was a departure from western logocentrism. The presence of something, in the centre of universe, which explains the various concepts in the universe, had always been the central nucleus in western metaphysical vision. But Derrida denying any such centre, opened a whole gamut of literary theories based on gender, colonialism and sexuality. He denied the autonomy of the centre and said that the presence of centre compels one to come back
to it again and again, thus restraining the individual's freedom. Derrida's concept of centre states that the centre is, paradoxically within the structure as well as outside it. The structure is controlled by the centre, the centre is a part of the structure, yet it escapes structurality. There can be no possible substitute for a centre. This is similar to the puritan analogy, where God is the centre of everything that happens in the world. Every event can be referred back to God as the central cause of that event, yet God does not exist in this world as He is above the physical ordinary world. There is nothing in this world as equivalent to the presence of God, nothing can replace God at the centre as the cause of all things. God creates the world, reigns it but He is not a part of it. The centre limits the play of events in a system but only upto a limit till that system exists. The moment a system undergoes a change, a new centre is to be created. Deconstruction destructured several systems existing in the world, questioning the identity and engaging itself in a constant quest for meaning. It tended to go beyond the existing interpretations because nothing in the world is stable for them.

The term like Post-Modernism, reaches beyond the cultural, social, national and geographical boundaries. It describes the artistic processes, refers to art and culture and several other aspects
of modern society. Post-Modernism begins where modernism ends. Modernism witnessed conflicts against the ingrained repressions of the past and it studied the essence lying within all walks of human life and their presentation. The purpose of post-modernism remains similar to modernism, but it tends to go beyond this also. In the process of going beyond modernism, post-modernism reflected the limitations of the modern tradition. Post-Modernism took writers and theorists of 1950s and 1960s into its strides but it had far reaching impact on several disciplines and branches of knowledge after 1970s. This tradition emphasised on the universal aspects (beyond a country or nation), and on differences. Non-conformity against every existing trend was also one of its principles. Seeing the disorderliness and the chaos of the modern world, the post-modern thinkers emphasized on the temporal rather than the permanent; change rather than stability. Post-Modernism influenced the literary studies, films, media, architecture and philosophy and also brought out the notion that each discipline bears some resemblance to the other discipline. It broke the notion of compartmentalization of knowledge which resulted in interdisciplinary studies. Post-Modernism also encouraged comparative studies in literary and cultural theories.

The change in the position of the four art-coordinates had
always taken place, with either one of them dominating the text. post-modernism, broke the formalist notion of treating literary text as a stable entity. It destabilized the autonomy of a literary text and denounced the notion which treated creative process as a coherent act. The complexities of the modern life have an impact on all forms of human knowledge, because they all imitate human life only. The post-modern thinkers aim at questioning every existing trend, at times also go beyond the existing frame of knowledge to produce new dimensions. At the same time, this trend views all the social and political issues with an aesthetic vision. The idea of beauty clubed with innovation lies in the root of each issue undertaken by post-modernism. Michael Foucault (1926-1984) and Jean-Francis Lyotard (1924-1998)) initiators of the post-modern tradition, emphasized on the equation of reason with progress, knowledge with emancipation. They discarded the view that only science enhances human knowledge. According to them the forces of art and philosophy along with aesthetic beauty, emancipate the mankind. In the backdrop of the post-modern tradition, lies the philosophies of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Frederic Nietzshe (1844-1900) who revolted against any sort of foundationalism and conceptualization and professed the view that no concept could be foundational. In the world
of situations, where everything exists in a state of flux, no knowledge can be absolute. The object of knowledge always remains the quest for the unexplored. They questioned the concept of objectivity. All forms of human life could be comprehended, only when individuals (or readers in literature) engage in the process of meditation and self-analysis. Thus it can be rightly said that post-modernism is a celebration of the freedom from the traditions, nothing like truth value exists in the creative process, nothing like the ultimate exists. Meanings are ambiguous in a work of art and the human mind is in the state of constant search. David Lyon rightly says:

The concept of post-modernity is worth pursuing because it alerts us to a series of highly important questions. It raises our sensitivities and helps us see certain issues as problems to be explained. It obliges us to light our eyes above technical and discrete issues and to grapple with historical change on a grand scale.13

The post-modern notion encourages an individual to discover

some sort of truth, the realization of which can benefit him and all the others around him. He thus gets freedom to reconcile knowledge with power, and this is the idea of progress in post-modernism. For instance, feminist writings have recently witnessed the emergence of gynocritics which seeks to formulate a female framework for the analysis of women's literature. The idea of progress for them is to develop new models based on the study of female experience in modern society.

**Reader-Response Criticism: Its various positions:**

Reader-Response criticism is also buttressed by post-modernist thought. Both the trends advocate no universality in the creative process. For them their audience is engaged in the process of contemplation. Subject-object dichotomy lays the base for this. Both the trends call for fundamentals which are common and which belong to all and thus safeguard individuality. For the post-modern thinkers the universe is in evolution and for the reader-response critics, the meaning is in evolution. Knowledge, truth, reading experience and information have only immediate relevance and the meanings are multiple and indeterminate. An individual or a community is independent of either totally accepting a system or rejecting it. The meaning radically changes with
the context in which it is used. Herein lies the idea of progress and dynamism in Post-Modernism and reader-response criticism.

The roots of reader-response criticism lie in the great classics of Cicero, Horace and other great orators. The exponents of this criticism have been David Bleich, Jonathan Culler, Norman H. Holland, Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser et al. The striking feature of their criticism is their interdisciplinary nature. Norman H. Holland (b-1927), an American critic studied reader's response in the light of psychoanalytical approach. He demonstrated the vital role of the reader in providing meaning to the text. A work of art is a cumulative of the unconscious fantasies of a writer and the reader makes them meaningful through his study. Being widely read in Psychology, Holland could use the insights of various psychologists in his study. Herbert Read defined a work of art as a sudden illumination of an unconscious mind, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) believed that perceptions, fantasies, and thoughts, all have their place in the poet's unconscious mind. A reader studies the fantasies, which are otherwise latent and provides sense to it. Holland's approach described the reading process at four levels. The reader's interpretations are viewed by the situations in which he is placed. He recreates the structure
of a text in a way which can help him in moving away from the impulses and anxieties of his own unconscious mind. This act helps him in turning his reading experience into a memorable one and helps him in providing a sense, an identity to a literary text. Thus critical activity is made highly creative. If Wordsworth in the nineteenth century provided certain stages valuable in the creation of a work (selection, omission, interpretation and idealisation). Jonathan Culler (b-1944) in the twentieth century provided the reading process a systematic and intellectual framework. He considered reader's response as subjective, because of the conscious workings of his mind and also objective because of the transformation of the writers unconscious experience into conscious experience. He relates himself to the literary text, which he reads.

Jonathan D. Culler (b-1944), a leading reader-response critic, defined the approach from a structuralist's point of view. He termed a reader's response as an objective one. The prevalent structuralism influenced his mind. The text is a stable entity and the meaning hidden in it is a dynamic entity. The structure of the text is fixed and no generation of readers can play with it. The interpretations for him were objective because instead of analysing a text on the basis of personal experience, readers
judge it in accordance to literary conventions. His notion is similar to the structuralist's notion which considered various cultural, social and literary forms as part of a fixed structure of signs, governed by certain linguistic patterns and conventions. The flow of meaning in the reader's mind is channelized by these conventions, which differ from time to time and so does the interpretations. Perhaps the concept of naturalization mentioned in Culler's book: On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism, refers to the fact that in order to make the interpretation look spontaneous, natural and schematic, one requires a coherent structure of signs. This made his reader-response theory an objective one. It has been argued that in his discussion, he perhaps puts the identity and the freedom of the reader at stake as a spontaneous art cannot be intentionally coherent. Sign and structure may be fixed but not the reader's mind.

The Americans were propounding their own set of theories but simultaneously a similar activity was being performed in Germany also. Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997) and Wolfgang Iser (b-1926) were the propounders of the German reader-response criticism and the Constance School of Germany that dedicated itself in exploring this approach. The conflicting theories of Kant and Hegel laid
the foundation of the ultimate theory which was based on the Kantian philosophy of deconceptualisation. The contradictory process of reading is an open-ended process, not an ultimate truth formed once and for all. The polysemic value of a text was what they emphasised on. While Jauss developed a Hermeneutical reader-response theory, Iser developed a Phenomenological reader-oriented approach. Both the approaches ultimately asserted the significance of the reader in providing life to the text. Hans Robert Jauss's theory highlights the philosophy of Hermeneutics, a philosophy which finds its origin in the Greek word *Hermenerein* which means to intercept. The word later expanded into phrases like-to say, to explain, to mean. Martin Heidegger, the German Philosopher's views are important. He viewed that when thinking attempts to pursue something that has claimed its attention, it may happen that on the way it undergoes a change. Thus, he strongly opines to pay attention to the path of thought and not the context. The thought itself and the transformation of thought can be understood in relation to something that exists beyond one's mind. The meaning, the word could be taken as related to Hermes the messenger of the Gods. Human tendency is the tendency of questioning, which is the leading factor in the act of interpretation. The existence itself is hermeneutical in nature. The acts of understanding
are temporal, international, cultural, historical and structural. It is the critic or the reader who decides the mode of understanding and interpretation. Although the philosophy of Heidegger, was opposed, yet one praiseworthy aspect of his philosophy was the link which he established between literature and the historical search. But Jauss denounced any such concept like the history of literature. It is the point of view of the reader that makes literature. It lies in the hands of the readers to either reject a work of art or to term it invaluable and worthy of appreciation. A reader may exclude all external factors incorporated in a work of art and judge it according to his own expectations. Some may go beyond these acts and judge the innovative nature of literature, which is time transcending. The expectations of the reader are coloured by aesthetic, psychological or social forces. Jauss denounced the psychological and the sociological impact and viewed aesthetic effect as an extremely important one. The changes that occur in the reader's mind (his consciousness) after reading a text, decide the aesthetic value of text. Jauss's rejection of the social factor while interpreting a literary text, was opposed by the Marxists, who believed his views to be incomplete, as the relationship which a text shares with the society and the reader can never be neglected.
Roman Ingarden (1893-1970) and Wolfgang Iser believed that a literary text is an object. Objects may be classified into the real objects and the autonomous objects. The real objects are the objects of the universe, static and determinate while the autonomous objects are ideal objects which are made by man and imagined. The object used in a work of art is an intentional object, which is fulfilled by the intentions of the reader. This object is indeterminate and varies from reader to reader. This makes a text an open ended entity. He realised the aesthetic value of the text also. The realisation of these twin forces leads to the concretization of meaning in a text. The very first reading of a text causes some sort of confusion in a reader's mind, which may help in providing an emotive dimension to the text along with an aesthetic one. Roman Ingarden views that an ideal reader removes or fills all the gaps existing in a work of art. Perhaps he means to say that the truth value can be judged in a work of art through this process. But in the context of post-modern scenario which believes in the non-existence of truth value in literature, Ingarden's approach appears inadequate and needs to be revised. Ingarden's disciple Wolfgang Iser realized this and gave much realistic assumption in comparison to Ingarden. He viewed a literary text as no man's land, but the hidden
implication probably in a literary text is every man's land. He defined the reader-oriented approach as the genre in which reader's involvement coincides with the production of meaning. His theory keeps in the centre, a certain role for a reader, of filling in the gaps and blanks that exist in a work of art.

The phenomenological approach of Iser, follows the philosophy which focusses on the individual's need to know his conscious understanding of life and also his metaphysical and intentional powers. These capabilities help him in understanding the ever changing ideologies of the world and also the fact that the realities of the world originate from a system, which is fixed. It is an intrinsic approach which raises the possibility of critical enquiry (an independent enquiry) into one's knowledge of the world, the physical attributes and processes of survival in the world. The critical probing may also require the sacrifice of one's knowledge and perceptions as they may hinder one's experience of the world. Iser's approach is very close to phenomenological view which views a work of art as a reaction against the prevalent social scenario. The conscious workings of one's mind successfully find the unconscious impact of society, history, in the process of its search for meaning in a literary text. The most spontaneous
and unconditioned interpretations are also motivated by the external factors.

The influence of Marx on Iser is clear, but at the same time he also seeks inspiration from Ingarden's idea that a work of art is an integration of various structural and schematic patterns, which once formed, could never be re-formed. Ingarden talked of transference of properties from text to the reader, but Iser's theory highlighted the interrelation of the text and reader. According to Iser, reader fills in the gaps in the text and also actively participates in the construction of meaning in the text. Ingarden's concept of concretization crushed the creative genius of the reader, while Iser attributed the status of almost co-creator to his reader. The reader either adds an unexplored dimension to a literary text or understands the implied dimension of the text via his internal power.

Iser's studies seem to provide an external framework to the reader-oriented criticism. He seems to have belief in the concept of self-awakening of a reader rather than imposing his own point of view on him. He does so, as he wants to bring out the response of an actual reader and not of an artificial or imposed reader. His reader has to have sound temperament,
a reader who could be called contemporary, real, historical, hypothetical, knowledgeable and the one having faith in himself. A balance of all these traits generates reception. Reception is the result of reader's reading of a text, governed by the conventions and his outlook. His two-way approach reflects the text as an important source of information, which is transformed into knowledge and aesthetic experience by the reader. The reception is of course diverse because each reader has his own frame of reference and experience. Iser consolidates the position of his reader by exposing the two dimensions of the reading act. His "implied reader" on one hand performs the role prescribed by the text for him (i.e. understanding only what the writer wants him to understand) and on other hand relates the text to his own situation and experiences rather than submitting himself to the author's intention completely.

The approach of Stanley Fish (b-1938) is a reaction against the phenomenological criticism developed by Iser. He revolted against the concept of "Affective Fallacy" and emerged with his

concept of "interpretive communities"\(^{16}\). In 1946, W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley came out with terms like affective fallacy and "Intentional Fallacy"\(^{17}\). Perhaps Iser while terming the text as an intentional object had their concepts in mind. They excluded the presence of the reader from the text and announced the self-sufficiency of a literary text. A text bears a strong psychological and emotional impact on the reader, as a result the reader submits himself to these notions. Out of the four co-ordinates of art criticism, one co-ordinate that is the reader, almost became a non-entity in the hands of New Critics. This denial of reader's position raised Stanley Fish's theory. For Fish, the self-sufficiency of a literary text is not practically possible. A reader is an equal contributory in giving life to the text as the reader's experience is more varied and visible than the text, which is a static whole.

For Fish, the production of a meaning from a text is an event rather than an entity. His view of an event is quite similar to Derrida's view of an event which is a moment of rupture or a break from past traditions and the moment of forming new centres for the new structures. Event is a dynamic phase,

\(^{16}\) Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum", Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980) 171.

while entity is a static one. The event of interpretation cannot occur without a reader, who does not approach a text as a static entity, but keeps on adjusting and reshaping his interpretation. In saying so, Fish also attacks the Formalist notion which states that only the formal patterns in the text are to be discerned in reader's response. According to Fish, meaning is not objective and predetermined as it develops in the course of reading. Response cannot be a structured one. A holistic approach has to be adopted as the meaning of a sentence may be wider and deeper than the individual meanings of the words present in it. But the actual meaning can be given by the reader alone. A competent and an ideal reader alter the flow of meaning to attain a wise reading experience. Meaning and its evolution thus remain in a state of constant flux. The term "intentional fallacy" meant that a reader is always at fault because he says and believes in what the author wants him to. The meaning is thus predetermined by the author's intentions. The presence of a reader is not significant because whatever would emerge from his interpretations, is something that has already been discussed in a text. His response is thus non contributory to a text. Fish rejects such notions because he firmly believes that as a text does not contain complete discussion and interpretation, it becomes necessary to involve the
Stanley Fish, a revolutionary critic and theorist, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on April 19, 1938 and brought up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Getting a B.A. degree in 1959, he further attended graduate school at Yale, and obtained his Ph.D., with a thesis on the English poet, John Skelton, in 1962. He taught English at the University of California at Berkeley and John Hopkins University. He was appointed as Professor of English and Professor of Law at Duke University from 1986 to 1998. From 1999 to 2004 he was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago. After spending a year, teaching in the Department of English, he accepted the position of Davidson-Kahn Distinguished University Professor of Humanities and Law at Florida International University, teaching in the FIU College of Law.

Fish is among the most influential critics writing in English, for the past several years. There are several factors which contribute to Fish's wide appraisal. He is known and held in esteem for rescuing criticism from the strictures of William. K. Wimsatt and Monroe. E. Beardsley. His endeavour to form a theory of reader-response with concept of interpretive communities, is always commended.
He is also known for his lucid, forceful and dialectical style. Fish has written enormously and some of his important works are: Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth Century Literature (criticism), 1972; Is There a Text in This Class?; The Authority of Interpretive Communities (essays), 1980; Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies (essays), 1989; There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing, Too (essays), 1994.

The rich critical legacy inherited by Fish nurtured his literary sensibility and nourished his critical thought. His conception of art and literature is Kantian because it follows Kant's tenet "without concept". Under this influence Fish has taken the literary text beyond the text-author equation. He does not perceive the meaning as a metaphysical entity which can be defined and established once and for all, but it is an open-ended evolution. A text for him is only a material symbol which functions as a catalyst. This view of Stanley Fish challenges and opposes the Hegelian idea that the works of art can be identified with conceptual systems. Deconstructionists like Derrida enabled Fish to perceive

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the indeterminacy of language, thus giving ample scope to the
notion of quest for meaning. He looks upon a text as a polysemic
signifier rather than as a system of signifieds which gives birth
to the notion of polysemic text. Structuralists and semioticians
strengthened his theory by preventing it from collapsing into sheer
subjectivism. Almost simultaneously with Fish, the two German
critics Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, founders of Constance
School and German reader–response criticism challenged the influential
doctrine which emphasised on discovering the actual meaning of
the text.

As a literary theorist, Fish is best known for his analysis
of interpretive communities, an offshoot of reader-response criticism.
Fish's work in this field examines how the interpretation of a
text is dependent upon each reader's own subjective experience
in one or more communities. Each interpretive community is defined
by a distinct epistemology. Fish's Reader-Response criticism, propagates
that more than the text itself, the reader's response creates the
meaning of a text.