Lecture 1

- Because European and Western literature and cultures were produced as a recreation, a revival of the classical cultures of Greece and Rome.
- education, politics, fashion, architecture, painting,Sculptures were ALL produced in imitation of classical antiquity (Greece and Rome).
- Roman poet Horace writes: "Captive Greece took its wild conqueror captive"
- Horace expresses a sense of inferiority and ambivalence because Rome conquered Greece politically and militarily but Rome could never produce a refined culture
- find this sense of ambivalence and inferiority everywhere in Roman
- The Romans conquered Greece militarily, but they always felt that the culture of Greece remained infinitely more sophisticated and refined in poetry, in philosophy, in rhetoric, in medicine, in architecture, in painting, in manners and in refinement
- Education in Rome consisted simply in IMITATING Greek masterpieces in literature, rhetoric, painting, etc. Horace, for example, advised his readers to simply imitate the Greeks and never try to invent anything themselves because their inventions will be weak and unattractive
- Imitation cannot produce originality. As Seneca puts it with bitterness, "**a man who follows another not only finds nothing; he is not even looking by Seneca.**
- The Romans were a simple rural and uncultivated people who became successful warriors

Lecture 2

- The only written language was Latin and people who could read Greek, like Erasmus
- The logic was this: Great empires needed great literature, just like the Romans and the Greeks had.
- the study of classical learning, literature and criticism all emerged with the purpose of giving the emerging European states written and "civilized" languages comparable to those of Rome and Greece.
- Europeans saw poems and plays and books and stories like they were national monuments
- European writers called for the "imitation of the classics.
  Imitation doesn't lead to Originality :
- In Rome, imitation led to frustration and produced a plagiaristic culture. Europeans simply ignored these complications. The desire to produce poetic monuments to go with their political and military power was more important.
- As long as imitation produced "textual monuments" in the form of books, poems and plays, European writers were happy with it.
- Europeans thought that they were imitating the classical cultures of Greece and Rome. In reality they imitated mostly the Romans. Very few Greek texts were available in Europe before the 19th century . European classicism, for example, always claimed to be based on the ideas of Aristotle
- European classicism, for example, always claimed to be based on the ideas of Aristotle, but research shows that they knew very little of Aristotle's work.
- "A first hand knowledge of Aristotle, even in translation, seem to have been exceptional: Walpole mentions him five times in his letters – usually coupled with Bossu and the 'Rules'; and Cowper, at the age of fifty-three, had 'never in his life perused a page of Aristotle.' The Poetics were mush reverenced, but little read."
- European writers knew Greek works "only… through the praise of (Roman) Latin authors."

Lecture 3

- Greek thought influenced, in one way or another, every single literary form that developed in Europe and the West, but the differences between the two cultures remain significant.
- Plato's most important contributions to criticism appear in his famous dialogue the Republic. Two main ideas appear in this dialogue that have had a lasting influence
- Plato makes the very important distinction between Mimesis and Diagesis, two concepts that remain very important to analyse literature even today
- Drama with characters is usually a mimesis; stories in the third person are usually a diegesis

Mimesis-Diegesis (imitation-narration)

- Plato was the first to explain that narration or story telling (in Arabic al-sard) can proceed by narration or by imitation

Book X of the Republic

- This is Plato's famous decision in Book X of the Republic to ban poets and poetry from the city
- Western cultures have always claimed that their practice of literature and art are based on Greek antiquity

Oral Society

- "The Greek term for Art and its Latin equivalent (ars) do not specifically denote the "fine arts" in the modern sense, but were applied to all kinds of human activities which we would call crafts or sciences."
- The Western institution of "Fine Arts" or "les Beaux Arts" or Aesthetics", as a system that includes on the basis of common characteristics those human activities [painting, architecture, sculpture, music and poetry] and separates them from the crafts and the sciences, are all products of the mid eighteenth century:

Arts is an 18th Century Invention

- The basic notion that the five "major arts" [painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry]
- that Plato does not use the words "literature" or "art." He uses the word "poetry."
- They poet could be a tragedian like Sophocles or Euripides
- The poet that Plato describes in the Republic, as Eric Havelock shows, is a poet, a performer and an educator. The poetry that Plato talks about was main source of knowledge in the society.
- It is only in an oral society that poetry becomes the most principal source of knowledge and education
- Because poetry uses rhyme, meter and harmony and those make language easy to remember (like proverbs are easy to remember)

Poetry Cripples the Mind >>>

- Plato accuses the poetic experience of his time of conditioning the citizens to imitate and repeat, uncritically, the values of a tradition without grasping it.
- The citizens, Plato says, are trained to imitate passively the already poor imitations provided by the discourse of poetry.
- The poet is only good at song-making. His knowledge of the things he sings about like courage, honour, war, peace, government, education, etc., is superficial. He only knows enough about them to make his song.
- The poet produces only a poor copy of the things he sings about, and those who listen to him and believe him acquire a poor education.
- Poetry excites the senses and neutralizes the brain and the thinking faculties. It produces docile and passive imitators.
- Plato blames the traditional education given to the youth. It does not meet the standards of justice and virtue. Then he blames the parents and teachers as accomplices. If parents and tutors tell their children to be just, it is "for the sake of character and reputation, in the hope of obtaining for him who is reputed just some of those offices, marriages and the like"
- People are encourage to 'seem' just rather than 'be' just. And the authorities to whom people appeal for these views are, of course, the poets. Homer, Masaeus and Orpheus are all cited for illustration.

- It would be fine, he says, if people just laughed at these tales and stories, but the problem is that they take them seriously as a source of education and law.
- How are people's minds going to be affected, he asks, by the poetic discourse to which they are exposed night and day, in private and in public, in weddings and funerals, in war and in peace?
- What is the impact especially on those who are young, "quick-witted, and, like bees on the wing, light on every flower?"
- How are they going to deal with this dubious educational material poured into their minds? They are "prone to draw conclusions,

_____

- Plato saw the poet as a big danger to his society.

The Colors of Poetry: Rhythm, Harmony and Measures

- Plato analyses two aspects of poetry to prove his point: style and content.
- **Style**: Plato observes that the charm of poetry and its power reside in its rhythm, harmony, and measures. These are what he calls the 'colours' of poetry.

Seeming Vs. Being

Poetry creates a culture of superficiality. People want only to "seem" just rather than "be" just

Lecture 4

- Aristotle on Tragedy
- Western scholars who dislike Plato's discussion of poetry or disagree with it are usually full of praise for Aristotle.
- One must keep in mind Plato's devaluation of mimesis
- Plato is known to have had shifting opinions on art depending on whether he thought art was useful for or detrimental to his ideal state. Aristotle's was also an aesthetics of effect, but a more enlightened and dehumanised one

The Czar and the Bible of Literary Criticism

- Aristotle has, for centuries, been considered in Western cultures as the unchallenged authority on poetry and literature
- Tragedy, is **an imitation of an action** that is serious
- Every Tragedy, therefore, must have **six parts**, which parts determine its quality—namely, **Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Melody**."
- Tragedy is the "imitation of an action (*mimesis*) according to the law of probability or necessity."
- Aristotle says that tragedy is an imitation of action, not a narration. Tragedy **"shows"** you an action rather than **"tells"** you about it.
- Tragedy arouses **pity and fear**, because the audience can envision themselves within the cause-and-effect chain of the action. **The audience identifies with the characters, feels their pain and their grief and rejoices at their happiness.**

Plot: The First Principle

- Aristotle defines plot as "the arrangement of the incidents." He is not talking about the story itself but the way the incidents are presented to the audience, the structure of the play.
- Plot is the order and the arrangement of these incidents in a cause-effect sequence of events.
- According to Aristotle, tragedies where the outcome depends on a tightly constructed cause-and-effect chain of actions are superior to those that depend primarily on the character and personality of the hero/protagonist.

Qualities of Good plots:

- The beginning, called by modern critics the incentive moment, must start the cause-and-effect chain.
- The middle, climax, must be caused by earlier incidents and itself causes the incidents that follow it
- The end, or **resolution**, must be caused by the preceding events but not lead to other incidents. **The end should therefore solve or resolve the problem created during the incentive moment.**
- Aristotle calls the cause-and-effect chain leading from the incentive moment to the climax **the "tying up"**, it's called the **complication**.
- He calls the cause-and-effect chain from the climax to the resolution the **"unravelling"**

The plot: "complete" and should have "unity of action."

- By this Aristotle means that the plot must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by internal necessity, each action leading inevitably to the next with no outside intervention
- According to Aristotle, the worst kinds of plots are "'episodic
- The plot must be "of a certain magnitude," both quantitatively (length, complexity) and qualitatively ("seriousness" and universal significance).
- Aristotle argues that plots should not be too brief

Character

- Character should support the plot

Characters in tragedy should have the following qualities :
• "good or fine" - the hero should be an aristocrat

• "true to life" - he/she should be realistic and believable.

• "consistency" - Once a character's personality and motivations are established, these should continue throughout the play.

• "necessary or probable" - must be logically constructed according to "the law of probability or necessity" that govern the actions of the play.

• "true to life and yet more beautiful," - idealized, ennobled.

- Aristotle says little about thought, and most of what he has to say is associated with how speeches should reveal character

Song and Spectacle

Song, or melody is the musical element of the chorus:
- Aristotle argues that the Chorus should be fully integrated into the play like an actor; choral odes should not be "mere interludes," but should contribute to the unity of the plot.
- Aristotle argues that superior poets rely on the inner structure of the play rather than spectacle to arouse pity and fear; those who rely heavily on spectacle "create a sense, not of the terrible, but only of the monstrous."

Lecture 5

In Ancient Greece:

- Homer's poetry was not a book that readers read; it was an oral culture that people
- The great Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were not plays that people read in books
- Greek culture was a "living culture"

In Ancient Rome

- Greek culture became books that had no connection to everyday life and to average people
- Greek books were written in a language (Greek) that most of the Romans didn't speak and belonged to an era in the past that Romans had no knowledge of.
- In Rome, Greek culture was not a living culture anymore. It was a "museum" culture. Some aristocrats used it to show off,
- Roman literature and criticism emerged as an attempt to imitate that Greek culture that was now preserved in books.
- The Romans did not engage the culture of Greece to make it inform and inspire their resent; they reproduced the books.
- Florence Dupont makes a useful distinction between "Living Culture" (in Greece) and "Monument culture"

Horace : Ars Poetica

- Very influential in shaping European literary and artistic tastes
- Horace, though, was not a philosopher-critic like Plato or Aristotle. He was a poet writing advice in the form of poems with the hope of improving the artistic effort of his contemporaries.
- In Ars Poetica
- He tells writers of plays that a comic subject should not be written in a tragic tone, and vice versa.
- He advises them not to present anything excessively violent or monstrous on stage, and that the deus ex machina should not be used unless absolutely necessary (192-5).
- He tells writers that a play should not be shorter or longer than five acts (190), and that the chorus "should not sing between the acts anything which has no relevance to or cohesion with the plot" (195).
- He advises, further, that poetry should teach and please and that the poem should be conceived as a form of static beauty similar to a painting: ut pictora poesis. (133-5).
- **Each one of these principles would become central in shaping European literary taste.**
- Ars Poetica, in Classical Literary Criticism. Reference to line numbers

"Sensibility"

- At the centre of Horace's ideas is the notion of "sensibility."
- A poet, according to Horace, who has "neither the ability nor the knowledge to keep the duly assigned functions and tones" of poetry should not be "hailed as a poet."
- Horace talks about the laws of composition and style, his model of excellence that he wants Roman poets to imitate are the Greeks.
- The notion of "sensibility" that he asks writers to have is a tool that allows him to separate what he calls "sophisticated" tastes (which he associates with Greek books) from the "vulgar," which Horace always associates with the rustic and popular: hate the profane crowd and keep it at a distance," he says in his Odes.
- In the Satires, he refers to "the college of flute-players, quacks, beggars, mimic actresses, parasites, and all their kinds."
- Horace's hatred of the popular culture of his day is apparent in his "Letter to Augustus" where he writes
- Horace, "A Letter to Augustus," in *Classical Literary Criticism*

This passage how Horace saw the contact between the Greek heritage and his Roman world:

- It was a relationship of force and conquest that brought the Romans to Greece. As soon as Greece was captive, however, it held its conqueror captive, charming him with her nicely preserved culture (books).
- Horace shows prejudice to the culture of everyday people, but he does not know that the culture of Greece that he sees in books now was itself a popular culture.
- Horace equates the preserved Greek culture (books) with "elegance" and he equates the popular culture of his own time with "venom."
- Horace's hatred of the popular culture of his day was widespread among Latin authors.
- Poetry for Horace and his contemporaries meant written monuments that would land the lucky poet's name on a library shelf next to the great Greek names. It would grant the poet fame, a nationalistic sense of glory and a presence in the pedagogical curriculum.
- Horace's poetic practice was not rooted in everyday life, as Greek poetry was. He read and reread the Iliad in search of, as he put it, what was bad, what was good, what was useful, and what was not.
- In the scorn he felt towards the popular culture of his day, the symptoms were already clear of the rift between "official" and "popular" culture that would divide future European societies.
- The "duly assigned functions and tones" of poetry that Horace spent his life trying to make poets adhere to were a mould for an artificial poetry with intolerant overtone.
- Horace's ideas on poetry are based on an artificial distinction between a "civilized" text-based culture and a "vulgar" oral one.

Imitating the Greeks

- In all his writing, Horace urges Roman writers to imitate the Greeks and follow in their footsteps. "Study Greek models night and day," was his legendary advice in the Ars Poetica (270).
- This idea, though, has an underlying contradiction. Horace wants Roman authors to imitate the Greeks night and day and follow in their footsteps, but he does not want them to be mere imitators.
- In the process of following and imitating the Greeks, Horace differentiates himself from those who "mimic" the ancients and slavishly attempt to reproduce them. Obviously, he does not have much esteem for this kind of imitation and saw his own practice to be different
- In imitating the Greeks, Horace claims originality, but the bold claim he makes of walking on virgin soil strongly contradicts the implied detail that the soil was not virgin, since Greek predecessors had already walked it.
- In addition, as **Thomas Greene** notes, the precise nature of what Horace claims to have brought back from his "walk" is not clear.

Horace and Stylistic Imitation

- Horace also advises the aspirant poet to make his tale believable
- This use of imitation denotes a simple reality effect idea. Horace simply asks the writer to make the tale believable, according to fairly common standards. His use of the term and the idea of imitation are casual and conventional. If you depict a coward, Horace advises, make the depiction close to a real person who is a coward.
- But Horace only had a stylistic feature in mind. As Craig La Drière notes, Horace could not even think of poetry, all poetry, as an imitation, the way the idea is expressed in Book X of the Republic, or in Aristotle's Poetics.
- Horace's ideas about imitating the Greeks and about poetry imitating real life models were both imprecise, but they will become VERY influential in shaping European art and literature

- the principles of taste and "sensibility" (decorum) he elaborates to distinguish what he thought was "civilized" from "uncivilized" poetry will be instrumental in shaping the European distinction between official high culture and popular low one.

- Poetry in Horace's text was subordinated to oratory and the perfection of self-expression. Homer and Sophocles are reduced to classroom examples of correct speaking for rhetoricians to practice with.
- The idea of following the Greeks, as Thomas Greene notes, only magnified the temporal and cultural distance with them.
  Quintilian advocates two contradictory positions
- First that progress could be achieved only by those who refuse to follow, hence the undesirability of imitating the Greeks.
- At the same time, Quintilian continues to advocate imitation, and goes on to elaborate a list of precepts to guide writers to produce "accurate" imitations
- *Seneca*
- Seneca singles out the process of transformation that takes place when bees produce honey or when food, after it is eaten, turns into blood and tissue. He, then, explores the process of mellification and its chemistry
- Latin authors never discuss poetry or literature as an imitation (mimesis); they only discuss them as an imitation of the Greeks.
- Latin authors are not familiar with Plato's and Aristotle's analysis of poetry. The Poetics or Republic III and X do not seem to have been available to the Romans:
- "Unfortunately, Aristotle's Poetics exerted no observable influence in the classical period. It appears likely that the treatise was unavailable to subsequent critics."
- **Latin authors used poetry and literature for two things only :**
- - To improve eloquence
- - To sing the national glories of Rome and show off its culture.

Lecture 6

Language as a Historical Phenomenon

- Renaissance humanists realised that the Latin they spoke and inherited from the Middle Ages was different from classical Latin. In this realisation, language was practically established as a historical phenomenon. This is obvious when comparing, for example, Dante's conception of language to that of Italian humanists of the fifteenth century, like Lorenzo Valla. For Dante, language was divinely instituted, and the connection of words and things **and the rules of grammar were not arbitrary**:
- By the 1440s, Italian humanists established the fact that meaning in language is created by humans and shaped by history, not given by God and nature. Lorenzo Valla could not be more specific , utterances are produced naturally, their meanings come from the institutions of men. Still, even these utterances men contrive by will as they impose names on perceived things

Neo-Latin Imitation

- The realisation of the difference between medieval and classical Latin created a short era of intense neo-Latin imitation. For ancient thought to be revived, for the lessons of Rome to be properly grasped, humanists advocated the revival of ancient Latin. It was felt among some humanists that Latin had to become, again, the natural and familiar mode of organising experience for that experience to equal that of the ancients.
- To that end, the imitation of Cicero in prose and Virgil in poetry was advocated. This textual practice of imitation reached its peak, as will be shown, in the controversy over whether Cicero should be the only model for imitation, or whether multiple models should be selected.

The Rise of the Vernaculars

- The new conceptions of language led in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century to the undermining of Latin as the privileged language of learning. The central tactic in the attack on the monopoly of Latin was the production of **grammar books** for the vernacular. These demonstrated that vernaculars could be reduced to the same kind of rules as Latin.

Cultural Decolonization

- The monopoly of classical reality as the sole subject of written knowledge came to be highlighted, and the exclusion of contemporary reality as a subject of knowledge began to be felt, acknowledged, and resisted.
- Joachim du Bellay says that the Romans' labelling of the French as barbarians "had neither right nor privilege to legitimate thus their nation and to bastardise others." (in Defense)
- A form of "cultural decolonisation." It was an attack, he says on what was conceived to be a foreign domination, and its implicit concept of culture that assumed it to be the property of the small minority of Latin speakers.

To Speak With One's Mouth

To have learned to speak with one's own mouth means to value that speech as both an object of knowledge and the embodiment of a culture worth having, It is to declare that the materials and processes of daily life are as fully 'cultural' as the ruined monuments and dead languages of the ancient world

Vernacular Imitation of Latin

- The campaign to defend and promote the vernacular dislodged Latin's monopoly on all forms of written or printed enquiry by the early seventeenth century.
- developed the new European Language in imitation of Latin, by appropriating the vocabulary, grammar rules and stylistic features of Latin into the vernaculars.
- **Petrarch** was the champion of Latin imitation. He advised his contemporaries to heed Seneca's advice and "imitate the bees which through an astonishing process produce wax and honey from the flowers they leave behind."

French Humanism

- If the terms of the imitation discussions in Italy were almost a carbon copy of Roman discussions, the terms of the French debate, with minor variations, were also almost a carbon copy of the Italian debate.
- There is no doubt that the greatest part of invention lies in imitation: and just as it was most praiseworthy for the ancients to invent well, so is it most useful [for the moderns] to imitate well, even for those whose tongue is still not well copious and rich.
- Bembo, du Bellay also wanted to invent a language and a poetic tradition in his vernacular to vie with Latin as a language of culture and civilisation.
- Like Petrarch, he enjoined the reader not to be "ashamed" to write in his native tongue in imitation of the ancients.
- Like Petrarch, he enjoined the reader not to be "ashamed" to write in his native tongue in imitation of the ancients. The Romans themselves, he impressed on his contemporaries, enriched their language by the imitation of the Greek masterpieces they inherited. And using Seneca's transformative metaphor (again without acknowledgement), du Bellay described the process through which the Romans enriched their language as consisting in:

Dutch Humanism

- Naturally, Europeans could not just imitate the Romans freely. After all, the latter were pagans, and Renaissance Europe was fervently Christian. European authors frequently stressed that imitation should not undermine the Christian character of their world.
- This issue was settled early on by Erasmus's dramatic intervention into the Ciceronian controversy through his dialogue Ciceronianus
- **Conclusion**
- du Bellay ideas on imitation, as well as their imitative poetry merely rehearse the arguments of Italian humanists. And both the Italians and the French merely repeat the major precepts of the Roman imitatio discussion.

- Aristotle's mimesis, as illustrated earlier, was simply made synonymous with imitatio, and the Poetics was assimilated to a Horatian and essentially Roman conception of creative writing.
- The humanists were not philosophers. They were a class of professional teachers, chancellors and secretaries, who were connected to European courts through a patronage system. They composed documents, letters and orations, and they included princes, politicians, businessmen, artists, jurists, theologians, and physicians.
- European humanists recuperated Roman Latin theories of imitation and Roman pedagogies of composition and style. They were clearly not familiar with Greek discussions and analyses of poetry, especially Plato's and Aristotle.

Lecture 7 Russian Formalism

- A school of literary scholarship that originated and flourished in Russia in the second decade of the 20th century, flourished in the 1920's and was suppressed in the 30s.
- It was championed by unorthodox philologists and literary historians
- the Petrograd Society for the Study of Poetic Language (Opoyaz)
- Their project was stated in Poetics: Studies in the Theory of Poetic Language (1919), and in Modern Russian Poetry (1921) by Roman Jakobson.

A Product of the Russian Revolution

- The Bolshevik Revolution
- viewed literature from a religious perspective
- literature began to be observed and analyzed. The formalist perspective encouraged the study of literature from an objective and scientific lens.
- The "formalist" label was given to the Opoyaz group by its opponents rather than chosen by its adherents.
- The latter favored such self-definitions as the "morphological" approach or "specifiers."

Most Important Formalist Critics : Viktor Shklovsky

Formalist Project

- The emphasis on the literary work and its component parts
- The autonomy of literary scholarship
- Formalism wanted to solve the methodological confusion which prevailed in traditional literary studies

- ## Formalist Principles:Formalists are not interested in :
- The psychology and biography of the author.
- The religious, moral, or political value of literature.
- The symbolism in literature.
- Formalism strives to force literary or artwork to stand on its own
- people (i.e., author, reader) are not important
- the Formalists rejected traditional definitions of literature. They had a deep-seated distrust of psychology.
- They rejected the theories that locate literary meaning in the poet rather than the poem – the theories that invoke a "faculty of mind" conducive to poetic creation.
- They had little use for all the talk about "intuition," "imagination," "genius," and the like.

The Subject of Literature

- To the Formalists, it was necessary to narrow down the definition of literature .
- "The subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality but literariness" **Roman Jakobson**"

Poetic vs. Ordinary Language

- Russian Formalists argued that Literature was a specialized mode of language and proposed a fundamental opposition between the literary (or poetic) use of language and the ordinary (practical) use of language.
- Ordinary language aims at communicating a message by reference to the world outside the message

- Literature was a specialized mode of language. It does not aim at communicating a message and its reference is not to the world but to itself.

Literariness

- Literariness, according to Jan Mukarovsky, consists in "**the maximum of foregrounding of the utterance**," that is the foregrounding of "the act of expression, the act of speech itself." To foreground is to bring into high prominence.
- By backgrounding the referential aspect of language, poetry makes the words themselves palpable as phonic sounds.
- By foreground its linguistic medium, the primary aim of literature, as Victor Shklovsky famously put it, is to estrange or defamiliarize or make strange

Defamiliarization – Making Strange

- Literature "makes strange" ordinary perception and ordinary language and invites the reader to explore new forms of perceptions and sensations, and new ways of relating to language.
- Shklovsky's key terms, "making strange," "dis-automatization," received currency in of the Russian Formalists.
- Jakobson claimed that in poetry "the communicative function **is reduced to a minimum**."
- Shklovsky spoke of poetry as a "dance of articulatory organs."

Form vs. Content

- Formalism also rejected the traditional dichotomy of form vs. content which, as Wellek and Warren have put it, "cuts a work of art into two halves: a crude content and a superimposed, purely external form."
- To the Formalist, verse is not merely a matter of external embellishment such as meter, rhyme, alliteration, superimposed upon ordinary speech. **It is an integrated type of discourse**, qualitatively different from prose, with a hierarchy of elements and internal laws of its own

Plot vs. Story

plot/story is a Formalist concept that distinguishes between:
- The events the work relates (the story) from
- The sequence in which those events are presented in the work (the plot).
- For the Russian Formalists as a whole, form is what makes something art to begin with, so in order to understand a work of art as a work of art

V. Propp: The Morphology of the Folktale

- most Formalist of fiction was the study in comparative folklore, Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale
- He developed a theory of character and established 7 broad character types,
- Propp studied fairy-tale stories and established character types and events associated with them.

Lecture 8

- It continues the work of Russian Formalism ; it seeks rather to investigate its structures.
- The most common names associated with structuralism are Roland Barthes,

<u>Narrative Discourse</u>: **Gennette analyzes three main aspects of the narrative discourse :**
- Time : Order, Duration, Frequency
- Mood : Distance (Mimesis vs. Diegesis), Perspective (the question who sees?)
- Voice : Levels of narration (the question who speaks?)
- **Narrative Order**
- **The time of the story** : The time in which the story happens
- **The time of the narrative** : The time in which the story is told/narrated
- **Narrative Order**" is the relation between the sequencing of events in the story and their arrangement in the narrative.

- A narrator may choose to present the events in the order they occurred, that is, chronologically, or he can recount them out of order.
- **Time Zeros** : is the point in time in which the narrator is telling his/her story. This is the narrator's present, the moment in which a narrator is sitting and telling his/her story to an audience or to a reader, etc. Time Zero is the tome of the narration

- Anachronies

- Gennette calls all irregularities in the time of narration: Anachrobies.
- Anachronies happen whenever a narrative stops the chronological order in order to bring events or information from the past (of the time zero) or from the future (of the time zero).
- **Analepsis** : The narrator recounts after the fact an event that took place earlier than the moment in which the narrative is stopped
- **Prolepsis** : The narrator anticipates events that will occur after the point in time in which the story has stops.

- The Function of Anachronies

- Analepses often take on an explanatory role, developing a character's psychology by relating events from his past
- prolepses can arouse the reader's curiosity by partially revealing facts that will surface later.
- These breaks in chronology may also be used to disrupt the classical novel's linear narrative.

- Narrative Mood: Mimesis vs. Diegesis

- Traditional criticism studied, under the category of mood, the question whether literature uses mimesis (showing) or diegesis (telling).
- Since the function of narrative is not to give an order, express a wish, state a condition, etc., but simply to tell a story and therefore to "report" facts (real or fictive), the indicative is its only mood.
- In that sense, Genette says, all narrative is necessarily diegesis (telling). It can only achieve an illusion of mimesis (showing) by making the story real, alive and vivid.
- No narrative can show or imitate the story it tells. All it can do is tell it in a manner that can try to be detailed, precise, alive, and in that way give more or less the illusion of mimesis (showing). Narration (oral or written) is a fact of language and language signifies without imitating.
- Mimesis, for Gennete is only a form of diegesis, showing is only a form of telling.
- It is more accurate to study the relationship of the narrative to the information it presents under the headings of: Distance and Perspective

- Narrative Distance

- The only imitation (mimesis) possible in literature is the imitation of words
- Narrative of Events: Always a diegesis, that is, a transcription of the non-verbal into the verbal.
- **Mimesis** : maximum of information and a minimum of the informer.
- **Diegesis** : a minimum of information and a maximum presence of the informer.
  Narrative of Words: The only form of mimesis that is possible (Three types) :
- **Narrated speech** : is the most distant and reduced ("I informed my mother of my decision to marry Albertine" [exact uttered speech].
- **Transposed speech** : in indirect style ("I told my mother that I absolutely had to marry Albertine" [mixture of uttered and narrated speech].
- **Reproduced speech** : The most mimetic form is where the narrator pretends that the character is speaking and not the narrator: "I said to my mother: it is absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine."

Narrative Perspective

- **Perspective** is the second mode of regulating information.
- Traditional criticism, says Gennete, confuses two different issues (narrative voice and narrative perspective) under the question of "Point of View":

- **Gennete** argues that a distinction should be made between narrative voice (the question "Who speaks?") and narrative perspective (the question "Who sees?").
- The one who perceives the events is not necessarily the one who tells the story of those events, and vice versa.

Focalization: Who Sees?
- **Genette distinguishes three kinds of focalization :**
- Zero focalization : The narrator knows more than the characters
- Internal focalization : The narrator knows as much as the focal character
- External focalization : The narrator knows less than the characters
- **Levels of narration: Who Speaks?**
- Genette systematizes the varieties of narrators according to purely formal criteria

Lecture 9 Roland Barthes: "The Death of the Author
- Structuralism usually designates a group of French thinkers who were influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language
- applied concepts of structural linguistics to the study of social and cultural phenomenon, including literature.
- Structuralism developed first in Anthropology with Claude Levi-Strauss, then in literary and cultural
- In Literary Studies: Structuralism is interested in the conventions and the structures of the literary work.
- It is not easy to distinguish Structuralism from Semiotics, the general science of signs, which traces its lineage to Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce.

Roland Barthes : The Author: A Modern Invention
- Barthes reminds the reader in this essay that the idea of the "author" is a modern invention.
- a modern figure, a product of our modern society. It emerged with English empiricism
- Literature is tyrannically centred on the author, his life, person, tastes and passions
- The explanation of a text is sought in the person who produced it

The Function of the Author
- The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it
- The author, as a result, reigns supreme in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the mind of the critics anxious to unite the works and their authors/persons through biographies, diaries and memoirs.
- The work or the text, itself, goes unread, unanalyzed and unappreciated.

The Death of the Author
- Barthes proposes that literature and criticism dispose of the the author – hence the metaphor of "the death of the author."
- Once the Author is removed, he says, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile.
- The professional critics who claims to be the guardian of the text because he is best placed to understand the author's intentions and to explain the text, looses his position. All readings become equal.
- Structuralism and Poststructuralism proved that meaning is not fixed by or located in the author's 'intention.'
- Barthes rejected the idea that literature and criticism should rely on "a single self-determining author, in control of his meanings

From 'Work' to 'Text'

- According to Roland Barthes, it is language that speaks and not the author who no longer determines meaning. Consequences: We no longer talk about works but texts.
- According to Roland Barthes, it is language that speaks and not the author who no longer determines meaning.
- It is now known that a text is not a line of words realising a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture." Barthes, "The Death of the Author."

From Author to Reader

- Barthes wants literature to move away from the idea of the author in prder to **discover the reader, and more importantly, in order to discover writing**. A text is not a message of an author; it is "a multidimensional space where a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash." A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, **but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto** said, the author.
- In other words, it is the reader (not the author) that should be the focus of interpretation

From Work to Text

- The text is plural, "a tissue of quotations," a woven fabric with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, that signify FAR MORE than any authorial intentions. It is this plurality that needs to be stressed and it can only be stressed by eliminating the function of the author and the tyranny of the author from the reading process.

From Author to Scriptor

- The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a before and an after.
- The Author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child.

Lecture 10

Michel Foucault: "What is an Author?"

The idea of the Death of the Author

- Foucault questions the most basic assumptions about authorship. He reminds us that the concept of authorship hasn't always existed. It "came into being," he explains, at a particular moment in history, and it may pass out of being at some future moment.
- Foucault also questions our habit of thinking about authors as individuals, heroic figures who somehow transcend or exist outside history (Shakespeare as a genius for all times and all place).
- According to Foucault, Barthes had urged critics to realize that they could "do without [the author] and study the work itself." This urging, Foucault implies, is not realistic.
- Foucault suggests that critics like Barthes and Derrida never really get rid of the author, but instead merely reassigns the author's powers and privileges to "writing" or to "language itself."
- Foucault doesn't want his readers to assume that the question of authorship that's already been solved by critics like Barthes and Derrida. He tries to show that neither Barthes nor Derrida has broken away from the question of the author--much less solved it.

The Author as a Classificatory Function

- Foucault asks us to think about the ways in which an author's name "functions" in our society. After raising questions about the functions of proper names, he goes on to say that the names of authors often serve a "classifactory" function.

The "Author Function"

- Foucault here introduces his concept of the "author function." It is not a person and it should not be confused with either the "author" or the "writer." The "author function" is more like a set of beliefs or assumptions governing the production, circulation, classification and consumption of texts.

"Author Function" Applies to Discourse

- Foucault then shows that the "author function" applies not just to individual works, but also to larger discourses. This, then, is the famous section on "founders of discursivity" – thinkers like Marx or Freud who produce their own texts (books), and "the possibilities or the rules for the formation of other texts."
- He raises the possibility of doing a "historical analysis of discourse," and he notes that the "author function" has operated differently in different places and at different times.
- Remember that he began this essay by questioning our tendency to imagine "authors" as individuals isolated from the rest of society.

Lecture 11 Greimas: The Actantial Model

- A. J. Greimas proposed the actantial model based on the theories of Vladimir Propp
- The actantial model is a tool that can theoretically be used to analyze any real or thematized action, but particularly those depicted in literary texts or images.
- In the actantial model, an action may be broken down into six components, called actants. Actantial analysis consists of assigning each element of the action being described to one of the actantial classes
- 1. The **subject** : the hero of the story, who undertakes the main action.
- 2. The **object** : what the subject is directed toward
- 3. The **helper** : helps the subject reach the desired object
- 4. The **opponent** : hinders the subject in his progression
- 5. The **sender** : initiates the relation between the subject and the object
- 6. The **receiver** : the element for which the object is desired.

Actant Vs. Character

- The actants must not be confused with characters because :
- An actant can be an abstraction (the city, Eros, God, liberty, peace, the nation, etc), a collective character (the soldiers of an army) or even a group of several characters.
- A character can simultaneously or successively assume different actantial functions
- An actant can be absent from the stage or the action and its presence can be limited to its presence in the discourse of other speakers
- An actant, says Greimas, is an extrapolation of the syntactic structure of a narrative. An actant is identified with what assumes a syntactic function in the narrative.

Six Actants, Three Axes

The six actants are divided into three oppositions, each of which forms an axis of the actantial description:
- **The axis of desire - Subject – Object:** The subject wants the object. The relationship established between the subject and the object is called a junction
- **The axis of power – Helper – Opponent:** The helper assists in achieving the desired junction between the subject and object
- **The axis of transmission – Sender – Receiver:** The sender is the element requesting the establishment of the junction between subject and object

- # Lecture 12
- Poststructuralism is a broad historical description of intellectual developments in continental philosophy and critical theory
- An outcome of Twentieth-century French philosophy
- The prefix "post' means primarily that it is critical of structuralism
- Structuralism tried to deal with meaning as complex structures that are culturally independent
- Post-structuralism sees culture and history as integral to meaning
- Poststructuralism was a 'rebellion against' structuralism
- It was a critical and comprehensive response to the basic assumptions of structuralism
- Poststructuralism studies the underlying structures inherent in cultural products (such as texts)
- It uses analytical concepts from linguistics, psychology, anthropology and other fields

The Poststructuralist Text

To understand a text, Poststructuralism studies:
- The text itself
- the systems of knowledge which interacted and came into play to produce the text
- **Post-structuralism**: a study of how knowledge is produced, an analysis of the social, cultural and historical systems that interact with each other to produce a specific cultural product, like a text of literature, for example

Basic Assumptions in Postsctructuralism

- The concept of "self" as a singular and coherent entity, for Poststructuralism, is a fictional construct, an illusion.
- The "individual," for Poststructuralism, is not a coherent and whole entity, but a mass of conflicting tensions + Knowledge claims (e.g. gender, class, profession, etc.)
- Self-perception: Poststructuralism requires a critical attitude to one's assumptions, limitations and general knowledge claims (gender, race, class, etc)

Basic Assumptions

- "Authorial intentions" or the meaning that the author intends to "transmit" in a piece if literature, for Poststructuralism, is secondary to the meaning that the reader can generate from the text
- Rejects the idea of a literary text having one purpose, one meaning or one singular existence
- To utilize a variety of perspectives to create a multifaceted (or conflicting) interpretation of a text. Poststructuralism like multiplicity of readings and interpretations, even if they are contradictory
- To analyze how the meanings of a text shift in relation to certain variables (usually the identity of the reader)

Poststructuralist Concepts

- **Destabilized Meaning**
  Poststructuralism displaces the writer/author and make the reader the primary subject of inquiry (instead of author / writer)
- They call such displacement: the "destabilizing" or "decentering" of the author
  Deconstruction
- Poststructuralism rejects that there is a consistent structure to texts, specifically the theory of binary opposition that structuralism made famous
- Post-structuralists advocate deconstruction
- Meanings of texts and concepts constantly shift in relation to many variables. The same text means different things from one era to another, from one person to another
- The only way to properly understand these meanings: deconstruct the assumptions and knowledge systems which produce the illusion of singular meaning

Lecture 13

Post-structuralism is French

- Post-structuralism is a European-based theoretical movement that departs from structuralist methods of analysis. The most important names are :
- Jacques Lacan (psychoanalysis) **|** Michel Foucault (history) **|** Jacques Derrida (philosophy)

Deconstruction is American

- Deconstruction is a U.S.-based method of literary and cultural analysis influenced by the work of Jacques
- **Derrida on Language: What Language Is Not**
- **Derrida radically challenges commonsense assumptions about language. For him:**
- language is not a vehicle for the communication of pre-existing thoughts
- "language is not an instrument or tool in man's hands […]. Language rather thinks man and his 'world'" (J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host")
- language is not a transparent window onto the world
- **What Language Is**
- For Derrida, language is unreliable
- There is no pre-discursive reality. Every reality is shaped and accessed by a discourse. "there is nothing outside of the text" (Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology)
- Texts always refer to other texts (cf. Fredric Jameson's The Prison-House of Language)
- Language constructs/shapes the world
- **Note: Derrida has a very broad notion of 'text' that includes all types of sign systems)**

Lecture 14

Base-Superstructure

- This is one of the most important ideas of karl Marx
- **The idea** that history is made of two main forces:
- **The Base** : The material conditions of life, economic relations, labor, capital, etc
- **The Superstructure**: This is what today is called **ideology** or **consciousness** and includes, ideas, religion, politics, history, education, etc

Marxism & Literary Criticism

- Marxist criticism analyzes literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it while being aware of its own historical conditions.
- The goal of Marxist criticism is to "explain the literary works more fully, paying attention to its forms, styles, and meanings- and looking at them as products of a particular history.
- The best literature should reflect the historical dialectics of its time.
- To understand literature means understanding the total social process of which it is part
- To understand ideology, and literature as ideology (a set of ideas), one must analyze the relations between different classes in society.

Important Marxist Ideas on Literature

- **Literary products (novels, plays, etc) cannot be understood outside of the economic conditions, class relations and ideologies of their time.**
- Truth is not eternal but is institutionally created (e.g.: "private property" is not a natural category but is the product of a certain historical development and a certain ideology at a certain time in history.
- Art and Literature are commodities (consumer products) just like other commodity forms.
- Art and Literature are both Reflections of ideological struggle and can themselves be central to the task of ideology critique.

The Main Schools of Marxism

- Classical Marxism: The work of Marx and Engels**|** Early Western Marxism **|** Late Marxism

  Classical Marxism : Classical Marxist criticism flourished in the period from the time of Marx and Engels to the Second World War.
- Insists on the following basic tenets: **materialism**, **economic determinism**, class **struggle**, **surplus** value, reification, proletarian revolution and communism as the main forces of historical development. (Follow the money)
- Marx and Engels were **political philosophers**. The few comments they made on literature enabled people after them to build a Marxist theory of literature.
- **Marx and Engels were more concerned with the contents rather than the form of the literature**, because to them literary study was more politically oriented and content was much more politically important.

Early Western Marxism

- Georg Lukács was perhaps the first Western Marxist

  Raymond Williams says:
- There were at least three forms of Marxism: the writings of Karl Marx, the systems developed by later Marxists out of these writings, and Marxisms popular at given historical moments.

  Fredric Jameson says:
- There were two Marxisms, one being the Marxian System developed by Karl Marx himself, and the other being its later development of various kind