LITERARY THEORY: HISTORICAL ORIGINS, CURRENT CONSTRUCTS, DERIVATIVE APPROACHES AND ATLANTIC PROVINCES EDUCATION FOUNDATION DOCUMENT APPLICATIONS

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LITERARY THEORY:

HISTORICAL ORIGINS, CURRENT CONSTRUCTS, DERIVATIVE APPROACHES AND ATLANTIC PROVINCES EDUCATION FOUNDATION DOCUMENT APPLICATIONS

by

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Abstract

The herald and harbinger of the new millennium has, most decidedly, been change. Its hand has touched almost all facets of human existence, it being slow, slight and singular in some cases yet rapid, multiple and irrevocable in others. High school curriculum development has also felt its impress as well. The western provinces have recognized and responded to the call for change with the Western Canadian Protocol – Common Curriculum Framework; closer to home the impetus for change in curriculum direction, development, and documents has been answered through the formulation and gradual implementation of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation document. It is within the pages of this document that new directions and reconceptualizations take shape that will serve to inform the teaching of English language arts for the new millennium.

For the most part, this shape and direction has been a theoretical one, specifically that of literary theory. With the explosion of the "new" continental literary theories and their subsequent graft and maturation, this field has been a decided mover and shaker in not only the realm of the academy but, particularly of late, in the world of high school curriculum development. The philosophies and methodologies of movements and schools such as critical literacy, semiotics, deconstruction, cultural studies, etc. are those that now serve to form some of the key conceptual and structural pillars of the English language arts classroom. The presence, role, and practical application of such theories in current curriculum frameworks, particularly the APEF, necessitate an examination of this theoretical territory and its inherent consciousness in the APEF. It also necessitates a

proposal utilizing the integration and synthesis of said theories, resulting ultimately in workable practices for the English language arts classroom; applications borne of, circumscribed by, and adherent to critical literacy and multiple sign systems.

Critical literacy, itself, is an approach to teaching English language arts that is characterized by eclecticism and dichotomy, and draws its fuel and fire from postmodern theoretical stances. Transactions through multiple sign systems utilizes an application of Gardiner's Multiple Intelligences through Reader-Response Theory, specifically the American development of Rosenblatt termed aesthetic transactive theory. Such reshaping, refashioning, and reconceptualizing, evident in curriculum development, is no less evident within the APEF where its designers have sought and wrought new directions and innovations for the 21st century, theoretically grounded in literary theory. It is also clearly evident that these new directions and shifts embrace the philosophy behind critical literacy and transactions through multiple sign systems.

It is to such perceived shifts in the accepted order that Thomas Kuhn coined the term paradigm; it is to such shifts that the students of Newfoundland and Labrador will be introduced to a new paradigm under the aegis of the APEF and its inherent literary theories.

Acknowledgements

In a compilation of this nature the words of John Donne, once again, ring clear and true: "No man is an island, entire of itself." I would now gratefully like to acknowledge those who were "a part of the main."

Dr. Ursula Kelly, my thesis supervisor, for her direction, support, availability, enthusiasm, empathy, friendliness, and professionalism as well as her uncanny knack of always being able to turn on the light at the end of the tunnel.

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Dr. Joan Oldford Matchim with whom fate or chance crossed her path and mine and who, through her genuine spirit, provided the catalyst, initial encouragement and direction to take the road less travelled.

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On the home front: To my mother and late father, both of whom engendered an awesome love of learning and books in their daughters, a trait seemingly naturally acquired from their respective families. As well, to Mom, whose provision of meals, space, peace and quiet during my flying visits of the past year greatly aided my work. You may now have your table, counter top, coffee table, dressers, floor space etc. back.

To my good friends, I thank you for providing, in a purely literal translation of Barthesian terminology, the *jouissance*, just when I needed it most.

And lastly and especially, Dennis – and I fall back upon Derrida's decentring of the linguistic system as words here do indeed fail to fix adequate meaning - simply, thank you.

Dedication:

To my father, the late Patrick Knox, who through precept and example, taught his daughters how to "read the world."

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Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis

CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

> A long time ago ... people used ... to drop things from time to time. But nowadays we have physicists to inform us of the laws of gravity by which objects fall; philosophers to doubt whether there are really any discrete objects to be dropped at all; sociologists to explain how all this dropping is really the consequence of urban pressures; psychologists to suggest that we are really trying to drop our parents; poets to write about how all this dropping is symbolic of death; and critics to argue that it is a sign of the poet's castration anxiety. Now dropping can never be the same again. We can never return to the happy garden where we simply wandered around dropping things all day without a care in the world. (Eagleton, 1990, pp. 26-27)

It is highly unlikely and improbable that the literary scholar, critic and theorist, Terry Eagleton in *The Significance of Theory* (1990), is actually ruminating on dropping things. Rather, it is more likely and probable that the excerpt above is really an analogy for an aspect of literary studies - the theorization of literary studies to be exact. As Eagleton (1990) points out, there was a time when there was no articulated or conceptualized theory or theories of literature nor was it considered appropriate to and a defensible component of the nature of the discipline. But literary studies has gone the way of dropping and consequently there has been, particularly since the 1980s, an explosion of literary theory. It would be a mistake however, to think that literary theory is a new phenomenon, it being as old as literature itself. It would also be a mistake to believe, as noted by Sadoff and Cain (1994), that there has been a moment free from theory, to which they add that "the past looks to be without theory only to those dissatisfied with the theories they find in the present" (p. 6). To this Eagleton (1990) adds: "If all human existence is in some sense theoretical, then theory is an activity which goes on all the time, even when putting the cat out and smashing beer mugs" (p. 25).

As to the question, "What is literary theory?", Krieger (1994) offers the following succinct and pertinent definitions, pertinent as it is this statement defining theory, broad in its form (as opposed to a quantitative, empiricist definition) to which this work adheres:

> ... [T]heory here is the systematic rationalization of a set of guiding assumptions about the text and its relations to its author, its audience and its culture at large. (p.5)

> Literary criticism was moving toward literary theory. It was moving from the study of a text to be read to a text that should be read closely and analytically to reveal its underlying structure and then, beyond, to reveal the relations between that structure and others in order for us to generate a theory of literary texts that could account for their literariness, that which makes them different from other, presumably nonliterary texts, with that difference to be pressed as strongly as possible. So criticism was to move from the single casual reading of any individual text to a criticism of that reading - that is, to the creation of a privileged or model reading, rationalized by a systematic notion of how such readings should be done - and from there to a formulation of that system; the formulation, in other words, of a literary theory that could account for such readings and in turn for texts being read in this manner. (p. 7)

> ... [Literary theory is] "words about words about words": theoretical words that were to account for the words of the critic that were to account for the words of the literary text itself. (p. 7)

The query as to whether or not literary theory has arrived is simply a moot point; it is always already here. At this juncture, a salient distinction must be made between literary theory and the "new" theory. Many scholars and critics alike agree that literary theory has been around since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans citing Aristotelean and Platonian theory while the corresponding Roman parallel lay in the literary theories of Horace and Longinus. Furthermore, many scholars and critics tend to refer either to a particular epochal frame or to its systematic formulation of an approach to reading text as is evidenced by the terms Romantic theory, theory of hermeneutics,

aesthetic theory, etc. The "new" theories emerged during the 1960s, came to prominence in the 1980s, have their foundational tenets in intellectualism, particularly within the discipline of philosophy and have, essentially, originated in Europe, specifically Paris, which, quite conceivably, could be crowned the current capital city of philosophic intellectualism. Wolfreys (1999) has noted however that this movement, as of late, appears to be on the wane and that a new paradigm is emerging on the horizon, a paradigm with a historicist foundation.

With the ascendency of literary theory, literary studies has undergone a transformation, though not without reluctance, skepticism, opposition and even "war" – the latter term commonly being applied to the oppositional forces of the traditionalists versus the new theory advocates. It is also apropos to note that this conflict, disjointedness, and diversity is not only between theories but is a characteristic feature within most, if not all, theoretical schools of thought.

Yet, in spite of or because of the battle, literary studies has continued to forge ahead, albeit over some hitherto untrammelled terrain with new contingents of generals and soldiers and with some decidedly different plans of attack and strategy. This transformation is evident in a number of areas. Its obvious presence has been felt and fought within intellectual literary circles which has carried over to the hallowed halls of the university. Specifically, its presence is evinced in Departments of English in universities where courses in literary theory now form part of their syllabi. English majors who are pursuing the profession of teaching also find themselves being introduced to theory and those who study a particular literary theory or find an affinity with one, often tend to adopt and adapt its methodology once in the field. This leads quite nicely to the

final area where the new face of literary studies and its inherent theories are visible: the area of English language arts curriculum development. It is to this manifestation of theory that this work will address itself with specific reference to the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation document (hereafter referred to as APEF) and how particular theoretical constructs are evidenced within its framework, as well as to how certain applications and approaches developed upon these theories may be utilized in the implementation of this curriculum document.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Background to the Study

There is little doubt that the fiat of the new millennium is rapid and technological change. As discussed in the introduction, literary theory has exploded upon the scene and, through its labour, has transformed (to some, transmogrified) the traditional concept of literature (such that this ethereal and elusive creature existed), altered the methodologies and approaches that had served for the better part of the twentieth century and redefined what constituted a text and the overall concept of literacy itself. The accepted literary canon was now viewed as a creation/institution of the hegemonic control of the colonialists; an attack had been launched against the perceived reification and glorification of English literature; the notion of text had broadened, this broadened definition now synonymous with literature, and could include anything from a beer label to hypertext to a Black and Decker reciprocating saw to a Hollywood movie; and literacy had come to mean much more than reading and writing, had come to encompass a variety

of literacies and had become inexorably tied to technology, specifically one's ability to perform and function in an information technologically-driven world.

These waves of change have not only washed the shores of the industrial nations of the world but have not left the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador untouched, the educational realm being no exception. It seems to be stating the obvious to say that paradigmatic shifts are representative of and impetus for societal change (or vice versa as this constitutes somewhat of a chicken and egg conundrum) which in turn are catalystic for educational change. One of the results of these catalysts in this province has been in the form of documents and reports, all with an eye to redress current education problems and deficits and to address the changing needs of society through educational reform. 1992 saw the release of *Our Children, Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education* and 1994 and 1995 witnessed respectively, *Adjusting the Course, Part II: Improving the Conditions for Learning* and *Directions for Change: A Consultation Paper on the Senior High School Program*. The most recent report has been *Supporting Learning: Report of the Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* (2000) which was undertaken as a response to the profound changes, perceived and expected, within the school system. For example, during the past decade the Newfoundland and Labrador education system was witness to numerous reform initiatives and their resultant manifestations within districts, schools and classrooms; it had seen reports, commissions and inquiries by many and varied agencies from government to professional organizations; and it had been witness to demographic trends resulting in declining enrollments and financial constraints which have pressured and polarized those with a

stake in the education system of the province. It was against this backdrop that the Ministerial Panel undertook to report on educational delivery within the classroom with a view to examine and recommend possibilities for alternatives, improvements, and change.

Reports and commissions as such address the broader contextual arena of education, though their scope tends to touch upon many and most topical aspects of the education system. This change, however, does not restrict itself to the more general aspects of the system but is evidenced in initiatives in the more specialized and particularized areas of education. As testament to this, the last few years have seen sweeping changes in curriculum development in the areas of science, math and English language arts. These changes often follow not only a national but an international trend and countries such as Britain, Australia, and the United States have been energized to develop curricula models with the needs, goals, and demands of the twenty-first century in sight and mind. Canada, too, has both led and followed suit with two consortia, one in the East and one in the West, which have been established to produce curricula documents (Quebec and Ontario each proceeded independently). Barrell (1999a), speaking from an English language arts perspective, notes that these curricula documents produced by the Western Canadian Protocol-Common Curriculum Framework (hereafter referred to as WCPCCF) and the APEF have been in response to the changing needs and views of Canadian society and have been influenced by powerful political, commercial, economic and social forces within the country. He also states his belief that it is such forces which "link curricula to the use of emerging electronic technologies, cyber-genres and computer applications, in an attempt to construct a new and expanding vision of

literacy" (p. 231). It is reports and documents such as these that have provided the impetus for educational institution and curricula change.

Change, however, has not been carried solely by these pen and paper initiatives. Intellectual thoughts and forces underlie and underpin these progressive movements, some of which prove to be very adaptable to particular curriculum initiatives and classroom settings. Other intellectual conceptions when taken together and combined result in a synthesis that can prove its worth and value in an educational environment. For example, place into the mix J. Dewey's reconceptualization of aesthetic theory, L. Rosenblatt's transactional theory, L. Vygotsky's transmediation, H. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligencies, J. Harste, K. Short and M. Siegal's educational application of multiple sign systems and E. Eisner's expanded view of cognition with its emphasis on different kinds of meaning and different forms of representation and the synthesis is indeed an innovative and viable approach to teaching English language arts.

Weave together all these threads of change and the resultant contextual fabric is the formative background to this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is threefold in nature, each directly related to the three distinct features of the study itself. The first is to shed some light on the origins and aims of literary theory, this illumination then serving to provide a basic understanding and practical framework for teachers of English language arts. Conjoined with this intention, but on a somewhat grander scale, is the idea that this study will serve to contextually situate literary studies for all English language arts teachers by providing the theory that

will add a completeness to the discipline; that it will firmly anchor teachers in its past history and ancestry thus giving direction to the present and an illumination of and an allowance for future possibilities and potential; and, that it will provide an intellectual and philosophical meaningfulness for both its teaching and its teachers. Secondly, its intent is to explain and provide two particular classroom approaches for English language arts teachers based on the foundational constructs of literary theory or rather an eclectic synthesis of several of those frameworks. Thirdly, its purpose is to provide an examination and assessment of the APEF in light of this theoretical territory with a view to the possibilities for practice.

Summarily, a basic conceptual understanding of literary theory, practical classroom applications, and curriculum document assessment with an eye to its creative and critical potential will be the formative concepts of the design of this study.

Significance of the Study

Again, in keeping with the structure of the study, significance will be discussed with consideration to the three component parts of the work: theories of literary studies, approaches for practice derived from such, and an exploration of the APEF curriculum document.

In the area of literary theory, the study is significant as it provides a basis for establishing a realistic and practical understanding of such constructs and broadens the vision enabling one to see what it is that theory does. This is particularly significant in light of the fact of the unprecedented emphasis on theory in recent years; emphasis, however, not necessarily equating with clarity. Clarification is needed as theory's

expostulation and explication have not tended to form a crystalline vision of its premises, tenets and workings. Due, in part to its earmarkings as a college course of study worthy of teaching, there has been a recognition of the need for such clarification. This has resulted in a fair number of weighty and not so weighty compendia as well as volumes devoted solely to one particular theory (and even theorist) with the specific aim of lifting this veil of obscurity and establishing more solid conceptual parameters. This aim must also be addressed for teachers of English language arts as it now contributes to the elemental framework of curricula documents. This leads to another significant feature of theory: it allows for the provision of a skeletal structure for others from which direction, objectives and strategies for teaching may evolve. This does not necessarily mean the adoption of theory but rather is tied to the belief that at least a familiarization with theory must be provided. Aligned with this is the belief that certain theories will not do all but rather the knowledge of what theory offers, more importantly, is inextricably tied to knowing the capabilities of other theories.

A study of theory is also significant, according to Eagleton (1990), because there is an accepted awareness that theory operates regardless of whether one is aware of it or acknowledges its influence. In other words, theory is significant for its own sake if not for the sake of something else.

In the area of literary studies, it has been the task of theory to shed light on methods used to read and interpret texts which, to complete the circle, supplies a basis for constructing a rational discipline of literary studies which requires methods and so the cycle continues. In the same vein, it can be said that theory seeks to rationalize and to answer questions. Oftentimes though, as the solution keys in textbooks state, these

"answers may vary," may even ring of discord and dissonance, and may certainly not be standardized or established.

Literary theory is a response to the problems encountered by readers, critics and scholars in their contact with text. This is particularly salient with the current emphasis on reading and literacy in its redefined form. This response to problematic encounters with text also serves another function as it tends to illuminate old and new conflicts and afford insight into the origins, relationships, reverberations and resurfacings of such. The importance of this can not be denied as it can be said that this is indeed a prerequisite for those who study or practice theory, as well as performing a cohesive and unifying function for its operation. Essentially, not only is theory's chain made visible and clear but the links are there for all to see.

Because of theory's vital relationship to practice, it provides a way of thinking about English language arts. This mode of thought should then lead naturally to implications for practice and should ultimately lead to improved practice. Concisely, it is a source of tools. These tools also perform another important function, that of systematic organization. Booker (1996) uses the following analogy to aptly illustrate this point:

> Literary theories are somewhat analogous to scientific theories (as the name perhaps already implies), and we could compare the astronomer who observes a star within the framework of detailed training in the functioning of stars to the reader who reads literary texts within the framework of one or more specific literary theories. The reader who enjoys fiction or poetry but does not have a theoretical understanding of literature would then be comparable to the nature lover who enjoys the sky at night without any scientific knowledge of celestial phenomena. Both this naive reader and this naive lover of nature actually bring a great deal of knowledge to their experience of books or stars, but this knowledge is not organized in a systematic way. (p. 4)

The study is also significant as a review of theory will provide a means to evaluate theory, act against poor scholarship, and provide the means to judge not only the claims made by particular theorists but the claims of educationists whether it be those of government departments, curriculum developers or school board consultants. Booker (1996), as previously noted, suggests that theory is "really a synonym for any perceptive, educated approach to literature" (p. 5). In keeping with this idea, the ability to evaluate and judge theory will lead not only to more perceptive teachers of English language arts but to ones whose chosen field will have an additional mark of professionalization.

Regarding practical approaches to teaching English language arts, the study is also significant. Faust (2000) has noted that as of the late 1990s, there has been a resurgence of interest in this area, particularly in light of what many perceive to be the disarrayed state of the discipline. Theory must be put into practice but a practice that is relative to a thirteen or sixteen year old. Add to this a redefined and broader concept of literacy and reconceptualized theories of cognition and intelligence, and the door has been opened for workable classroom practice.

The advent of the APEF has also made the study significant. Firstly, it is of crucial importance that the APEF's conceptual framework with its philosophical and theoretical underpinnings be understood but understood and addressed in such a way that is relative to both the English language arts student and teacher. Secondly, the arrival of the APEF, coinciding with this work, speaks to the timeliness of such a study.

Thus, broadly speaking, the significance of literary theory and its practices and applications will better prepare teachers to deliver valuable, stimulating and meaningful

English language arts programs which in turn will better prepare students of the province as they forge ahead and meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

METHODOLOGY

The research project described thus far will utilize an analytic review of the literature in terms of specific theoretical positionings from which the subsequent understanding and interpretation will form the underlying tenets of two possible approaches to teaching English language arts.

As the primary objective of this study is to obtain the most pertinent and reliable data, the choice of method was largely dictated by this aim due to several reasons. Firstly, as the study is primarily theoretical in its stance, an analysis of these theories, their origins and terms of reference was deemed appropriate. Secondly, as the derivative pedagogic approaches are a synthesis of such theories and will be examined in light of the APEF, it would be difficult if not impossible to qualitatively research the impact of such approaches prior to the implementation of APEF designed courses.

The research methodology will employ a conceptual framework based upon the review of literature and specifically examining three conceptual pillars that form the foundation of the research. These conceptual pillars are as follows: a grasp of literary theory which underpins all English language arts programs; the possibility for derivative pedagogic approaches based upon these theories; and, an understanding of the place and contribution of such theoretical approaches in relation to the conceptual framework of the APEF.

These concepts will be analysed and interpreted in the context of the English language arts curriculum specifically through conducting a literature search of pertinent books, periodicals and other such data sources, as well as a review of the APEF. This research methodology should provide a systematic inquiry into the foundational ideas of this study and provide a solid understanding of this field of knowledge.

In summary, this conceptual framework should provide the theoretical frame of reference that will guide the research as it relates to the historical origin of such theories, the range and diversity of these theories, a conceptual structure of these theories in pedagogic action and an analysis of a particular curriculum document in relation to its theoretical underpinnings and philosophy.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the nature of the design of the study, there has not been input from teachers in the field regarding the merit and practicality of literary theory particularly as it relates to high school English language arts programs. Cohort analysis, focus groups or interviews may have yielded a broader understanding and more solid input from the field regarding the nature of this study.

Literary theory is an exceptionally crowded field to which volumes can not do justice. A study of this nature then can only hope to achieve the briefest overview with the expectation that some foothold into theory, or probably more accurately, some wetting of the feet will result.The compression and simplification of the material as well should not and does not reflect upon the nature of the subject matter nor should one be left with the impression that this concise synopsis makes for "theory in a box" or "instant theory."

A further limitation is the disjointedness and sometimes disappointment which results when theory is put into practice and one realizes that there are snags, glitches and results for which were not accounted in the idealized concept. This resultant disjointedness between the idealized concept and its practical classroom application is often the bane of many teachers.

Although sections of the research do focus upon the theory "wars" and its battle of critical debate, this study does not attempt to address this debate as the subsequent outcome would be merely the opinion of the researcher. Further to this, the nature of English studies has been questioned in a number of radical ways. This work does not purport to offer specific direction for English language arts teachers nor does it attempt to reconcile such differing views.

The divisions and chronological structure of the theoretical positions are somewhat arbitrary as is also clearly evident upon an examination of sources. These boundaries are not hard and fast and tend to overlap or repel and, as such, these divisions tend to give a somewhat artificial perspective of literary theories.

A further limitation due to the nature of the work is its selectivity of literary theory. As theories abound, judgements were made as to those which have previously informed English language arts curriculum and those which are currently inherent in the APEF. This is not to be construed as a marginalization of some theories or the preference of the researcher but was necessitated by the scope, aims, and both time and physical constraints of the study. Furthermore, selection was also dictated by the foundational tenets of current English language arts programs and the APEF. Regarding the fact that theories were given basically equal representation, this does not imply or infer that each

has had equal or similar influence and impact. These last points are also equally applicable to the curriculum approaches described within the work.

It is thus within such constraints and limitations that the study proceeded.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Although literary theory in its present form and function is a relatively recent phenomenon, the application of theory to literature or, as Eagleton (1990) notes, to any facet of social life, is not new or unwarranted. Using a broad concept of theory as opposed to a purely scientific, positivist and empiricist view, critics have begun a re-examination of literature with the precise objective of presenting it in a particular theoretical framework. This lens or theoretical approach has been extended to pedagogical methods in English language arts and, coupled with a redefined literacy and a resurgence and rejuvenation in approaches to literary studies and the teaching thereof, has resulted in a proliferation of literature on the subject. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine pertinent literature in reference to the origin, history and underpinnings of literary theory; to examine the literature in reference to critical literacy, a pedagogical approach with its derivation in current and particular literary theory; to examine the literature in reference to transactional theory, multiple intelligencies, multiple sign systems and a reconceptualized notion of intelligence in order to integrate key conceptual features which would allow for a transactional approach to literature through multiple sign systems; and, to examine the theoretical underpinnings of the APEF in light of literary theory and its bandwidth for derivative approaches.

LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

Literary theory itself is a very recent development, it being virtually non-existent on the university curriculum of the 1970s while, simultaneously, literary criticism was simply an optional course in literary history (Webster, 1990; Krieger, 1994). Literary history, as defined by Krieger (1994), was "the study of different historical periods and their total formative power to shape, first, literary 'movements' and from them the interpretation of individual texts ..." (p. 3).

Literary criticism, on the other hand, involved the act of reading, analysis, explication, and interpretation of texts that were designated as literary (Klarer, 1999; Davis & Schliefer, 1994; Krieger, 1994; Webster, 1990). In this category, Aristotle's *Poetics* is considered as one of the earliest and greatest works of theoretical criticism to set out principles, terms, distinctions, and categories, the *Poetics* still proving to be original, salient and thought-provoking in the 21st century.

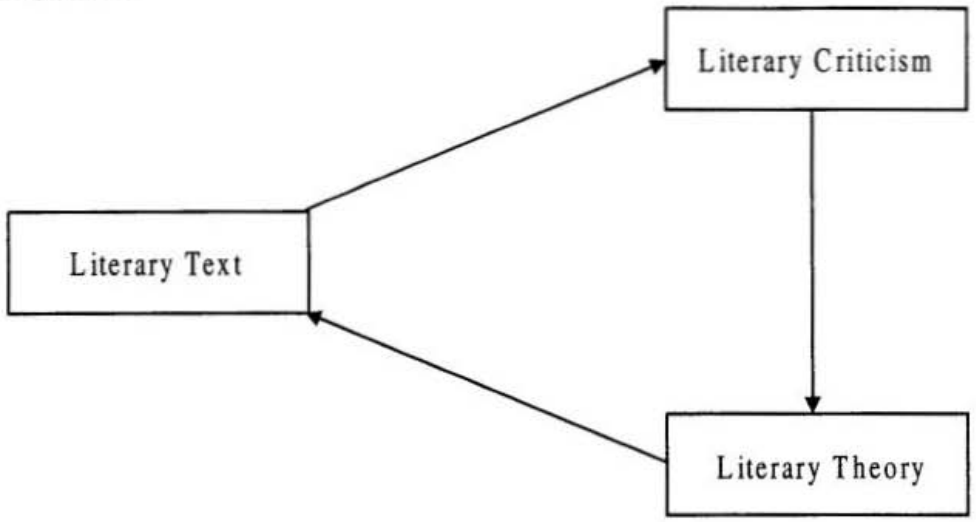
Abrams (1981) traces the development of literary criticism through specific influential works such as the literary essays of Dryden, Johnson and Coleridge; I.A. Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924); Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957); Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*; T. S. Eliot's *Selected Essays*; and Cleanth Brooks' *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947).

Even within the realm of literary criticism at that time, there were calls for a conceptual theoretical framework as is evidenced in Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). *Anatomy* delivered a strong indictment against literary criticism because of the absence of a cohesive and coherent framework and called for the need of a systematic approach to literary studies. Frye (1957) stated that criticism was simply a state of "naive induction"

without such a framework and that literature must make a "leap to a new ground from which it can discover what the organizing or containing forms of its conceptual framework are" (p. 16). He further stated that this would involve "assuming the possibility of a coherent and comprehensive theory of literature, logically and scientifically organized, some of which the student unconsciously learns as he goes on, but the main principles of which are as yet unknown to us" (p. 11). This call from the mid-20th century for a conceptual theoretical framework would be answered in the 1980s.

Literary theory emerged and evolved as a distinct entity from the discipline of philosophy. Literary theory "analyzes the philosophical and methodological premises of literary criticism … [and] tries to shed light on the very methods used in these readings of primary texts. [It]... thus functions as the theoretical and philosophical consciousness of textual studies, constantly reflecting on its own development and methodology" (Klarer, 1999, p. 77). Krieger (1994) defines literary theory as "words about words about words: theoretical words that were to account for the words of the literary text itself. The procedure moved from a given text to any random reading of it, to an authorized reading of it that was called criticism, and to the authorization for such readings that was called theory" (p. 7). Webster (1990) makes a salient point noting that criticism and theory are not mutually exclusive and are not totally separate, each informing the other, thus testament to and evidence of an interdependent relationship. Webster's (1990, p. 9) diagram below suggests this relationship:

Figure 2.1



Webster's (1990) final point regarding literary theory is that theorists, more often than not, discuss critical theory rather than literary theory which he notes "points to the flexibility, or perhaps imprecision, of terminology which has constantly dogged literary studies in unfortunate ways" (p. 9).

To use Webster's (1990) notion of the interdependence of theory and criticism, and in the relative absence of the term theory prior to the 1980s, a historical overview, to be such, must examine literary criticism to gain insight into movements, thoughts, and ideas that have formulated and reformulated conceptions of literary texts and literary studies. As Eagleton (1990) states: "At whatever level it is undertaken, the practice of literary criticism inevitably leads to questions of theory" (p. 1). To suggest a logical converse of Eagleton's statement is to conclude that questions of literary theory lead back to the practice of literary criticism. Davis and Schliefer (1994) indicate that any student of literary studies will very soon become aware of this and realize that this feature has been

part and parcel of understanding and interpreting texts since the time of classical Greece and Rome.

CRITICAL THEORY, PEDAGOGY AND LITERACY

Critical literacy's parentage is that of critical theory and critical pedagogy. As McLaren (1998) states: "Critical educational theory owes a profound debt to its European progenitors. A number of critical educational theorists continue to draw inspiration from the work of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, which had its beginnings before World War II in Germany's Institut fur Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research)" (p. 163). He further notes prominent founding members such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthal, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse, as well as the influence of the second generation school, Jurgen Habermas, and reiterates their inroads in social research and their influence on other disciplines such as literary criticism, anthropology, sociology and education theory. As a definition of critical theory Hinchey (1998) offers the following:

> Critical theory is about possibility, and hope and change. It calls our attention to places where choices have been made, and it clarifies whose goals those choices have served. It calls our attention to the fact that we might have chosen otherwise. Indeed, it proposes a radically different version of schooling and urges us to make different choices .... Critical theory is, above all else, a way to ask questions about power. Who has it? How did they get it? How do they keep it? What are they doing with it? How do their actions affect the less powerful? How might things be otherwise? (pp. 15-16)

Horkheimer (1972) defines the intentions of critical theory as follows: "What is needed is a radical reconsideration ... of the knowing individual as such" (p. 199). Popkewitz and Fendler (1999) believe that:

> Critical theory addresses the relations among schooling, education, culture, society, economy, and governance. The critical project in education proceeds from the assumption that pedagogical practices are related to social practices, and that it is the task of the critical intellectual to identify and address injustices in these practices .... In short, critical theory is concerned with the workings of power in and through pedagogical discourses. (p. xiii)

This notion of power in pedagogic discourses has lead to the application of critical theory resulting in a critical pedagogy. In discussing this concept, one could truly and easily interchange and substitute the name of Paulo Freire with the term as he is indeed recognized as the founder, pioneer and most significant philosopher in this educational movement. McLaren (cited in Steiner et al., 2000) argues convincingly that as Whitehead pronounced that all philosophy was simply a series of footnotes to Plato, so too can criticalists claim that their endeavours are underwritten by and indebted to the work of Freire. According to McLaren (cited in Steiner, et al., 2000) "Freire's pedagogy was anti-authoritarian, dialogical and interactive, and put power into the hands of the students and workers. Most important, Freirean pedagogy put social and political analysis of everyday life at the centre of the curriculum" (p. 7). Among Freire's prolific works, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1973) espouses how this critical pedagogy can become praxis:

> [T]rue dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking – thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. Critical thinking contrasts with naive thinking, which sees historical time as a weight, a stratification of the acquisitions and experiences of the past, from which the present should emerge normalized and "well-behaved." For the naive thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized "today." For the critic, the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality. (p. 73)

Not only Freire himself but others who have been inspired by Freirean pedagogy have defined their criticalist position and have developed and provided points of reference for critical pedagogical practices. Lankshear and McLaren (1993) have summarized the following six principles from Freire's work:

1. The world must be approached as an object to be understood and known by the efforts of learners themselves. Moreover, their acts of knowing are to be stimulated and grounded in their own being, experiences, needs, circumstances and destinies.

2. The historical and cultural world must be approached as a created, transformable reality which, like humans themselves, is constantly in the process of being shaped and made by human deeds in accordance with ideological representations of reality.

3. Learners must learn how to actively make connections between their own lived conditions and being and the making of reality that has occurred to date.

4. They must consider the possibility for "new makings" of reality, the new possibilities for being that emerge from new makings and become committed to shaping a new enabling and regenerative history. New makings are a collective, shared social enterprise in which the voices of all participants must be heard.

5. In the literacy phase learners come to see the importance of print for this shared project. By achieving print competence within the process of bringing their experience and meanings to bear on the world in active construction and reconstruction (of lived relations and practice), learners will actually experience their own potency in the very act of understanding what it means to be a human subject. In the post literacy phase, the basis for action is print-assisted exploration of generative themes. Addressing the theme of "western culture" as conceived by people like Hirsch and reified in prevailing curricula and pedagogies, and seeking to transcend this conception..., involves exactly the kind of praxis Freire intends.

6. Learners must come to understand how the myths of dominant discourse are, precisely, myths which oppress and marginalize them – but which can be transcended through transformative action (pp. 43-44).

Wink (1997), a California State University professor and a practising critical theorist and pedagogue, has collected the following definitions of critical pedagogy from her students:

- a state of mind, a place of reference;
- a framework from which to build;
- a questioning frame of mind;
- it makes us double-check our action and the action of others;
- it makes me do the best I can;
- it empowers with a perspective needed to ask good questions; it makes me actively commit to do something;
- it makes me see beyond what was taught yesterday (p. 19).

These definitions lead naturally to a definitive role of the critical person who, according to Burbules and Beck (1999) "is one who is empowered to seek justice, to seek emancipation. Not only is the critical person adept at recognizing social injustice but, for critical pedagogy, that person is also moved to change it" (pp. 50-51).

Because Freire worked directly in the development of literacy with the Brazilian poor, he is also considered a pioneer of critical literacy. McLaren (cited in Steiner et al., 2000) saw Freire's efforts in this area changing "the very protocols of literacy" and the "act of coming to know" in order to make a prominent place for social practice and emancipation; saw critical literacy as the primary vehicle that would lead to the development of "critical consciousness"; and, saw literacy becoming a common "process" of participation open to all individuals. The Freirean model of critical literacy in a classroom as envisioned by Shor (1987) would see teachers and students "develop

reading, writing, thinking, speaking and listening habits [that] provoke conceptual inquiry into self and society and into the very discipline under study. ... [Teachers and students would] *problematize* all subjects of study, that is, to understand existing knowledge as a historical product deeply invested with the values of those who developed such knowledge" (p. 24).

Those who are promoters and practitioners of critical literacy have developed guidelines and definitions for its implementation in the classroom. However, as noted by Gordon (1999), defining critical literacy becomes a complicated problem because of a lack of uniformity in the definitions that do exist, this being due to how one uses the term "critical." For instance, definitions using cognitive and developmental concepts focus on the relation between literacy and critical thinking while others such as McLaren (1996) use social and political concepts and focus on the relation between literacy and the ability to form cultural critiques and achieve sociopolitical emancipation. Gordon (1999) further notes that there are some definitions which fall between and are categorized as sociocognitive and stress the student's ability to "read the world." Nevertheless, an explication of the terminology is far from non-existent and any good cross-section of literature will readily provide concise or expanded, practical or theoretical definitions of the concept. The following definitions should provide a solid formulation of its concepts, theoretical framework, processes, application, and aims. Horning (1999) states that:

> ... critical literacy is best defined as the psycholinguistic process of getting meaning from print and putting meaning into print, used for the purposes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation; these processes develop through formal schooling and beyond it, at home and at work, in childhood and across the lifespan and are essential to human functioning in a democratic society." (p. 21)

Christensen (2000) believes that "Critical literacy ... explore[s] the social and historical framework. It moves beyond a description of society and into an interrogation of it .... In a society that has so much, why do some starve while others get fat? Why do women have to be beautiful to be loved? Critical literacy questions the basic assumptions of our society" (p. 56). Fraizer (1999) states that a critical literacy situation would provide opportunities for students to "read their world" through interaction with others while also undertaking reading and writing activities that encourage them to do the following:

- create personal and differentiated meanings from their experiences with others;
- explore dominant power relations among various groups of people and work toward more socially democratic relations among these groups;
- question or challenge traditional or "received" sources of knowledge (such as textbooks, documents, official policies); and,
- pose or reframe problems, rather than attempt to solve problems without examining underlying assumptions about what constitutes a problem (p. 123).

Morgan (1997) offers what she terms a "map" of critical literacies:

> Critical theories of literacy derive from critical social theory and its interest in matters of class, gender and ethnicity. Both share the view that society is in a constant state of conflict, for the possession of knowledge (hence power), status and material resources is always open to contest. Struggles to define the world and claim its goods are carried out by unequally matched contestants, for certain social groups have historically controlled the ideologies, institutions and practices of their society, thereby maintaining their dominant position. But since these are socially and historically constructed, they can be reconstructed. One of the chief means of such re/construction is language. Therefore critical literacy critics and teachers focus on the cultural and ideological assumptions that underwrite texts, they investigate the politics of representation, and they interrogate the inequitable,

> cultural positioning of speakers and readers within discourses. They ask who constructs the texts whose representations are dominant in a particular culture at a particular time; how readers come to be complicit with the persuasive ideologies of text; whose interests are served by such representations and such readings; and when such texts and readings are inequitable in their effects, how could these be constructed otherwise. They seek to promote the conditions for a different textual practice and therefore different political relations than present social, economic and political inequalities as these are generated and preserved by literacy practices within and beyond formal education (pp. 1-2).

Ball, Kenny and Gardiner (1990) provide a schematic which delineates four versions of English, one version being English as critical literacy:

> This version of English is assertive, class-conscious and political in content. Social issues are addressed head on. The stance is oppositional, collective aspirations and criticisms become a basis for action. Campaigns and struggles in the community become vehicles for learning social and literacy skills. Children are taught how to "read the world"; [Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 132] to question the grounds and origins of knowledge. In this form "Literacy has a potential role within attempts by subordinate groups to engage in political action aimed at resisting existing inequalities of structural power (and their human consequences) and bringing about structural change" [Lankshear & Lawler, 1988, p. 47]. This critical gaze is turned upon the school itself and the processes of schooling. Education and schooling are separated. Attempt is made to confirm the voices of the oppressed .... And the emphasis is upon shared experience and collective struggle: the State is challenged. (p. 80)

It is within this conceptual and, what some may term, radical framework, that critical literacy will be examined. The focus of this examination will be upon classroom educational practices and delivery as well as how critical literacy both underpins and intricately weaves the fabric that constitutes the English language arts curriculum of the APEF.

AESTHETIC TRANSACTIONS THROUGH MULTIPLE SIGN SYSTEMS

This section will provide a review of the work and literature of theorists whose ideas, when synthesized, provide key contributory elements for a pedagogic technique for

the teaching of English language arts. Furthermore, as will be noted in a later chapter, the foundational philosophic tenets of this technique should, and do, resonate strongly with the aims and objectives of the APEF document.

The work of John Dewey is synonymous with progressive education and pedagogic practices. It is only in recent years that much attention has been paid to his efforts in another area, that of the philosophy of art and, in particular, his text *Art as Experience* (1934). It is within the confines of this volume that Dewey expostulated and explicated his idea of what aesthetic theory should be. He reinforced unequivocally that there was a relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, he believing that this relationship was so crucial as to form the essence of aestheticism; he stated his belief that the value of art was not in artifacts but in the dynamic and developing experiential activity through which it is created and perceived; he reiterated his notion that a continuity existed between experience and aesthetic experience and that the twain could, must and did meet; he attacked the notion of separating art and identifying it apart from human experience; and, he defined aesthetic experience as a whole that was set in motion by acts of remembering lived-through experiences which, when combined with practical, intellectual and emotional phases, resulted in a quality of perception which was the aesthetic. A mathematician would equate his definition with the equation A + B = C, A being the piece of art, B being the subject, and C being the aesthetic response.

Similar beliefs, conceptions, reconceptions and terminology were to be re-echoed in the widely influential and seminal work of Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration* (1938). Flynn (1990) remarks upon the influence of Dewey on Rosenblatt's

thought and work while Salvatori (1990) quotes from Rosenblatt herself regarding this influence:

> When in 1949 Dewey called for a *transaction* in place of interaction, he was drawing on a theoretical position he had long espoused. And if I may be forgiven the inescapably personal character of these remarks, in adopting Dewey's terminology for the relationship between reader and text, I was finding a new designation for a theory of reading that I had been developing since 1938 .... In the following decades, I presented this view of the dynamic relationship of reader and text (e.g. 1964, 1968, 1969, 1977). In the second and later editions of *Literature as Exploration* (1968, 1976, 1983), I indicated that I preferred transaction to my use of interaction, and in the Winter, 1969, issue of *Journal of Reading Behaviour*, published "Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading." (cited in Salvatori, 1990, p. 56)

Thus *Literature as Exploration* (1938) can be linked to Dewey's reconceptualized aesthetic theory as expounded in *Art as Experience* (1934), both works recognizing the crucial interplay between art and experience.

Some of Rosenblatt's elemental ideas regarding aesthetic response are the terms aesthetic and efferent and that there is a direct relationship between the two; the belief that the text was not the authority and that there was indeed a crucial relationship between the text and the reader; that aesthetic reading focussed not upon the message of the text but upon the text itself as a self-contained artifact where the message and form are totally incorporated, the reader attending to this totality without seeking knowledge or consequent action; that reading is determined in part by the reader but it is also clearly affected by the nature of the text; and, her definition of aesthetic reading as not focussing upon facts but upon what was lived-through during the reading such as ideas, feelings, sensations, moods and attitudes (Cai, 2001; Karolides, 1999; Purves, 1988; Westbrook Church, 1997; & Rosenblatt, 1938 & 1978).

As recently as the last couple of years, transactional theory and aesthetic response have been utilized through an innovative meaning-making tool. This tool has been derived from Howard Gardner's 1980s groundbreaking and now well-known Theory of Multiple Intelligencies. His *Frames of Mind* (1983) has postulated that all individuals have at least eight intelligencies, including linguistic, mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and natural. His *The Disciplined Mind* (1999) and *Intelligence Reframed* (1999) have further focussed and defined multiple intelligencies and *The Disciplined Mind* in particular has provided three topics (the music of Mozart, the Holocaust and Darwin's theory of evolution) to show "how one might be able to educate the broad range of students about these topics, exploiting their multiple intelligencies, their multiple ways of representing the world ... [and] how the tremendous differences among individuals can actually serve as an ally in the conveying of gritty intellectual content" (pp. 158-159).

Eisner (1994 & 1999) also holds views similar to Gardner's and proposes a wider view of cognition, an expanded view of knowledge and different forms of representation. Eisner (1994) does affirm that many of the issues he has identified are closely related to Gardner's work but notes:

> He is interested in the developmental features of each of the seven types of intelligence and in the characteristics of the cultures that encourage the development of each. However, Gardner's work and mine have an important difference. I am concerned with matters of meaning and with different kinds of meaning that different forms of representation can make possible .... The curriculum that is made available to students in school is, in an essential sense, a means through which students can learn to encode and decode the meanings made possible through different forms of representation. (p. 23)

In his book *Acts of Meaning*, Jerome Bruner (1990) makes a similar important point and notes that the tools humans have invented, what he calls "technologies of the mind" or "prosthetic devices," are means for exceeding our biological limits. He writes:

> The tool kit of any culture can be described as a set of prosthetic devices by which human beings can exceed or even redefine the "natural limits" of human functioning. Human tools are precisely of this order – soft ones and hard ones alike. There is, for example, a constraining biological limit on immediate memory – George Miller's famous "seven plus or minus two." But we have constructed symbolic devices for exceeding this limit: coding systems like octal digits, mnemonic devices, language tricks. Recall that Miller's main point in that landmark paper was that by conversion of input through such coding systems, we, as enculturated human beings, are enabled to cope with seven chunks of information rather than with seven bits. Our knowledge then becomes enculturated knowledge, indefinable save in a culturally based system of notation. In the process, we have broken through the original bounds set by the so-called biology of memory. Biology constrains, but not forevermore. (p. 21)

Bruner's point is thus: it is through our biological system that humans experience but it is through cultural forms of representations that such experience is extended.

Chomsky (1973) also recognized that thinking exceeds the limits of discourse. He writes:

> Is it the case, for example, that humans necessarily think in language? Obvious counterexamples immediately come to mind. Our only evidence of any substance is introspective, the introspection surely tells me that when I think about a trip to Paris or a camping expedition to the Rockies, the few scrapes of internal monologue that may be detected hardly convey, or even suggest the content of my thought. In struggling with a mathematical problem, one is often aware of the role of a physical, geometrical intuition that is hardly expressible in words, even with effort and attention. (p. v)

This transaction from language to experience that has been noted in the above quotations of Eisner, Bruner and Chomsky will not simply occur unaided through the tool of multiple signs, an intermediary power or agent being required.

The social cognition theorist Lev Vygotsky (1962) has provided the intermediary and pivotal catalyst for a transaction through multiple sign systems to occur with his theory of transmediation. Vygotsky also advocated the use of signs and tools and believed that sign systems served as a mediating function in developing higher mental processes through the internalization of socially meaningful activities (Moyer, 2000). Siegal (1995) explains that "transmediation, the act of translating meaning from one sign system to another, increases students' opportunities to engage in generative and reflective thinking because learners must invent a connection between the two sign systems, as the connection does not exist a priori" (p. 455).

Leland and Harste (1994) have actually developed specific features of a language arts curriculum using the concept of multiple sign systems. They note that such a curriculum is part of an effort to find out what happens when students and teachers are encouraged to use multiple ways of knowing in mediating their experiences with the world. Further to this, they state the obvious that language has traditionally been seen as the dominant way of knowing and note the verbocentricity of language arts programs. Moffett (1992) speaks in a similar vein: "Schools have seldom bothered much about learning divorced from language. Most traditional subjects are cast into language and cannot be learned without words" (p. 86).

Short et al. (2000) have also implemented a similar curricula approach integrating multiple sign systems as a part of a reading and writing curriculum. For these researchers it involved both exploring the integration of sign systems within an inquiry-based curriculum and the exploration of the potential for understanding that becomes available when students respond to literature through multiple sign systems. Researchers such as

these have argued that it is within such an approach that students push their understanding and create more complex meanings, that they become involved in the processes of interpreting and composing and that they are encouraged to think and reflect creatively and respond to and solve problems.

CONCLUSION

The literature on literary theory is quite extensive indicating not only its widespread influence but also its actual application in both college and high school curriculum documents. Similarly, critical theory and its offspring, critical pedagogy and critical literacy, as models of progressive education, have made corresponding inroads in curriculum development and have had an influence on curriculum documents. It is with such knowledge and recognition that an examination of these concepts within a high school curriculum design should and must be undertaken. Furthermore, innovative approaches utilizing new and recent theoretical concepts, as indicated by the literature, must also be examined with a view to viable and practical classroom approaches, approaches that are both timely and in synchronization with the philosophic aims of the APEF. It is to these ideas that the following chapters will speak.

CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of time, the creative process of humankind has been evident; comitative with the dawning of this creativity has been an exploration, examination and theorization of this process. This examination has ranged from simple inquiry to exacting and structured formulations of methodologies to consuming passion. As with any historical overview, a set of conventions and parameters defining and prescribing the thoughts and actions of an era are brought to the fore. Of this factor, historian or otherwise, one must be ever cognizant as neglect of this awareness can lead one to fall into the trap whereby history simply becomes a judgmental exercise upon which current conventions and standards are brought to bear. A rather enlightening asset of historical overviews is that while on a trek through time, one realizes that certain ideas and schools of thought, sometimes uncannily so, tend to reverberate and resonate and are reinvested and reinvented under the same, similar or even different guises and nomenclature. Illustrative of this point are: biblical exegesis with hermeneutics; St. Augustine's signs and signifiers with modern day semiotics; Longinus's structuralism with Russian formalism; and the Socratic method of sceptical inquiry and relentless interrogation to find an argument's underlying assumptions with critical theory and deconstruction. This is not to say that competing versions, dichotomous approaches and varying theoretical foundations do not exist as well, literary studies being no exception to this rule. These schools and approaches will become self-evident upon an examination of the history of

literary criticism and theory. As seemingly all intellectual thought is rooted or connected to the ancient Greeks and Romans, this historical journey will begin appropriately in the realm of classical time.

THE CLASSICAL ERA

The contributions to literary theory begins with the work of Aristotle. The mind of this great thinker has graced many subject areas and, as such, he has been duly accorded an honourable and esteemed place in the annals of history and time. Once his thoughts turned to poetry (a Greek term inclusive of all literary work), his keen analytical abilities offered insights, directions and questions that are still formulative and formative, serving as points of departure in literary studies even in this new millennium. For instance, his distinction of genre and characterization of the elements of poetry have guided literary studies throughout the ages and have been the foundation of countless theories of literary criticism.

Plato, Aristotle's teacher, although most renowned for his philosophical notion positing an ideal realm, the real world thus being reduced to shadows and imitations, did have distinct views regarding the literary realm as well. It is from his views that criticism would serve a specific use, in this case a functional or utilitarian one. This function would be pedagogic and the subject matter would be that of morality with the express purpose of serving moral regulation. Criticism needed to serve this didactic social mission as he believed in the "dangerously powerful nature" of literature (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, pp. 5-6). This belief was further espoused in his teaching credo that if art is not true it is a lie.

According to Davis and Finke (1989), the Socratic method may also be viewed as having far-reaching effects on literary criticism as at its core it preached sceptical inquiry and relentless interrogation into the underlying assumptions of an argument, these assumptions taking the form of the social, the economic and the political. Again, this conceptual framework has been foundational to many literary movements and schools of thought throughout the ages and is currently echoed in movements such as cultural studies and poststructuralism. Socrates also pushed rational thinking into the realm of the abstract, honouring abstract thinking above all others, and thereby opening the floodgates for literary reflection for all time to come.

The classical contribution to contemporary literary criticism and theory did not end with the Greeks but had its corresponding parallels with the Romans, particularly in the ideas of Horace and Longinus.

Horace's view may be summated in his dialectic "dulce et utile" (sweet and useful) which aptly characterizes and epitomizes a most contentious, controversial and perennial issue in literacy studies: does literature serve an aesthetic or a functional purpose? He further valued "nature" in poetics (what one would term genius) but stressed that "rigorous poetic preparation" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 92) could also aid genius.

The contribution of Longinus may be defined by stating that he was a structuralist; his objective for literary criticism residing in structural analysis. Because of this, Davis and Finke (1989) note that Longinus has been attributed with the theoretical break between rhetoric and literature.

Thus, the great minds of the classical era have left an indelible mark on the world's history and ideas, their classical literary criticism and theory providing the foundations for and shaping of the formative questions of all that was yet to come.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The Medieval Period is often referred to as the Dark Ages, a classification which premises the supposition that this was an era in which civilization and its intellectual progression had stagnated, marking the age as one which wallowed in a perpetual state of ignorance and squalor. The fact that this period followed in the steps of the monumental intellectualism of the classical period, while the Renaissance, its very name and nature indicating the historical explosion of expression, experience and exploration, strained at its heels, certainly did not aid and, quite conceivably, abetted this notion. As noted by Davis and Finke (1989), literary critics often viewed this era as devoid of literary criticism and theory with many anthologies simply ignoring and excluding this period in their surveys, often broad-jumping history from Longinus into the Renaissance and Restoration. Whether one lays aside labels and attitudes or not, it is an inescapable fact that this period was a time of great literary accomplishment as well as offering a vital contribution to literary criticism and theory in the form of the interpretation of language and meaning.

The famous of this period who tackled the question of the meaning and interpretation of texts did so within a particular framework, that of Christian doctrine and philosophy. Those most notable Medieval fathers of the church who devoted their lives to both God and textual interpretation were St. Augustine, John Cassian, Hugh of St. Victor

and Bernard of Clairvaux. One feels that a mother of the church needs representation so to the list will be added St. Catherine of Sienna and St. Theresa de Avíla. The practice of interpretation centred around religious or biblical exegesis and was based upon the assumption that the meaning of a text could only be discovered through the act of interpretation (Klarer, 1998). It was also the biblical scholars of this time who coined the phrase hermeneutics, a term which had and still is integrated and applied to literary interpretation. As well, Klarer (1998) notes that the term interpretation as used by critics and theorists is a direct derivation from the textual study that occurred during this era. Historically speaking, these exegetic practices can be traced to preliterate times when interpretative techniques were applied to magical, mystical, and religious realms (Klarer, 1998). Exegesis is certainly evident during the time of the ancient Greeks, the Oracle at Delphi being but one specific example. As Prickett (1991) argues, "the interpretation of texts was thus not an incidental activity of the new religion, but an essential part of its foundation and development. Critical theory was what Christianity was all about" (p. 655). Furthermore, Prickett (1991) argues that:

> The importance of this basic need for biblical interpretation on the subsequent development of European literature and criticism can not be overestimated. Until almost the end of the eighteenth century the literal meaning of the Bible was seen as being only one among many ways of understanding it. Not merely did allegorical, figural and typological modes of reading coexist with the literal one, they were often in practice (if not in theory) accorded higher status. Since the Bible was the model for *all* secular literature such ways of reading naturally became the model for the way in which all books were to be read. The allegorical levels of *The Divine Comedy* or *The Romance of the Rose* are not in any way optional additions to the basic story, they are a normal and integral part of what literature was expected to be. (p. 655)

Thus, through the Medieval hermeneutic tradition, there is the emergence and recognition of different forms of meaning, some accorded higher privilege than others, as

well as an emphasis on the role of interpretation of texts. (It would not be until the eighteenth century with the rise of the prose novel, as pointed out by Prickett (1991), that the idea of a text having a primary literal meaning would emerge thus making this notion an essentially modern idea.) Following is a brief examination of some of the contributions of this time to meaning and interpretation.

Davis and Finke (1989) note that the basis of all Medieval literary theory is evidenced in Hugh of St. Victor's treatise *Didascalicon* where one must read the world as a reflection of imitation of God's work.

> ... [T]his whole visible world is a book written by the finger of God, that is, created by divine power; and individual creatures are as figures therein, not devised by human will but instituted by divine authority to show forth the wisdom of the invisible things of God. But just as some illiterate man looks at the figures but does not recognize the letters: just so the foolish natural man, who does not perceive the things of God, sees outwardly in these visible creatures the appearances but does not inwardly understand the reason. But he who is spiritual and can judge of all things, while he considers outwardly the beauty of the work inwardly conceives how marvelous is the wisdom of the Creator. (*Didascalicon* cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, pp. 116-117)

Didascalicon thus encapsulates and epitomizes Medieval literary theory where, as Prickett (1991) notes, God was the supreme author and text such as biblical scripture could not simply be taken at face value, but that a hidden meaning was interwoven within the text which must be uncovered. "Thus, the act of reading leads not to a pale imitation of nature, but to a discovery of the ways in which reading a text and reading the world are parallel activities" (Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 117). Hugh of St. Victor's reading the world was to be strikingly echoed in the 20th century in the work of the poststructuralists.

Medieval hermeneutics can also be credited with creating and employing levels of distinction among meaning. This idea was first articulated in the 4th century by John

Cassian, but by Medieval times it had become entrenched as standard practice. Hugh of St. Victor used a three-tier system whereas many Medieval writers utilized a four-tier one. Davis and Finke (1989) indicate the levels as follows: the first level was the historical or literal meaning; the second was an allegorical or spiritual interpretation; the third level was one of tropological or moral interpretation; while the fourth was an anogogical level where an idea is held together by its vast system of meaning. (This system of interpretation does indeed seem synonymous with the current principle of intertextuality.) Regardless of the number of tiers, this system does speak to the plurality of meanings and was the system of interpretation adopted as a primary focus of the Medieval poets of that time. Labels aside, it is also a system through which the esteemed literary critic, the high school student and even the young child derives and arrives at meaning in text.

The Medieval theologian, St. Augustine (354-430 AD), is often credited with being the father of semiotics due to his interest, work and writings on the interpretation of signs and signifiers. However, as with many original thoughts, the ancient Greeks had already laid prior claim, Aristotle having noticed the phenomenon, developed an interest in it and discoursed and wrote upon the subject. Historically, St. Augustine espoused the view that there is an interpretative component to the process of representing the world with signs and that words are only special kinds of signs (Todorov, 1999). He also believed that the one-to-one correspondence between word and thought would not be sufficient to tell a reader how to find meaning. For this, one must look to the metaphoric language which St. Augustine referred to as "figurative signs" to discover not simply what it means but how it means (Todorov, 1999). St. Augustine's plumbing and delving

into the interpretation of texts and search for meaning lead him to conclude that no system of interpretation would ever totally fix the meaning of the text and that, ultimately, meaning must be construed by the reader.

As indicated by Davis and Finke (1989), the hermeneutic tradition of the Middle Ages reached its culmination in the work of Thomas Aquinas and his *Summa Theologica*. Like St. Augustine's work, it contained an explication of multiple meanings and like Hugh of St. Victor, he believed that these were vertically and hierarchically organized into a four-tiered schemata.

The legacy of the Middle Ages and biblical hermeneutics to literary theory is the emergence of and wrestling with the notions of multiple levels of meaning and interpretation, particularly in how texts represented the world; the semiotic ideas of signs, signifiers and metaphors; and, due to a pluralism of interpretation, the idea of the instability of the text.

RENAISSANCE TO RESTORATION (1589-1688)

Up to this point in time, literary criticism and what is currently by some referred to as literary theory, was uniform and representative throughout Europe. It was during the period of the Renaissance and Restoration that English criticism emerged as distinct from, and non-imitative of, Continental trends and was, according to Meehan (1991), "the very paternity and birth of English descriptive criticisms" (p. 668). This was also the time of the printing press and its revolutionary role in literacy, as well as a time marked by the emergence of a new class of writers who took the era by storm – the middle class. Not only did the Renaissance and Restoration allow this movement away from the aristocratic

dominance of and jurisdiction over literary writing and criticism but actually allowed the ordinary and average middle class to dominate this sphere to which a quick perusal of names such as Shakespeare, Marlow and Behn will attest. There was one final emergence and appearance during this era, that of another group of writers who had traditionally been excluded from the literary sphere – that of women. Though the iridescence of the enlightenment did indeed illuminate and recognise the female intellectual ability, its shine was somewhat dim by today's standards. Parfitt (1991) notes that there was probably little in the Renaissance for peasants of either sex or artisans and that the general emphasis was on the idea of the gentle*man*. He does however believe that,"it can be argued that sixteenth-century England saw increased opportunities for some [females] on the fringes of gentility (and for a very few beyond the fringes) but the objective remains participation in the genteel ..." (p. 85). Furthermore, his statement which follows is applicable to the role of women in literary theory during the era:

> There is, so far as I know, as yet no full-scale analysis of the myth [the myth of the Renaissance woman] by a feminist historian, but there are signs that the male-dominated view of Renaissance women which the myth enshrines is beginning to be called into question. This is partly through interest in writings of the period actually by women and partly through a re-examination of how women are represented by male authors. Stella is looking unsteady on her pedestal, and the witches in *Macbeth* are being rethought and revalued. (p. 89)

The truth and credence of this statement will be evidenced further in this section through an examination of the voice and views of one of the most outspoken critics and prolific writers of that time – a female.

An examination of literary criticism and theory of the sixteenth century reveals an emphasis and concern with the technical aspects of poetics and rhetoric, George Rittenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1580s) being a classic example of such, it often

being cited as the most ambitious and complete piece of Elizabethan literary criticism and theory. The volumes themselves ranged from *Book I* which offered a justification of the existence of poetry particularly as an expression of societal and individual needs; *Book II* analysed the structure and form of literary works; *Book III* dealt with the creative possibilities of language; and *Book IV* dealt with language itself and how the English were coming to terms with the "vulgar English" as a literary language (Davis & Finke, 1989). Chords of the latter point are heard in the concept of Hallidayan grammar of the last quarter century as well as in the current ebonics movement in the United States. Because *The Arte of English Poesie* emphasised language usage, this led naturally to a discussion of style and it is therefore viewed as one of the first critical/theoretical treatments of this concept.

All literary theory of this time, however, did not deal solely with the aspects of the technical. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) in *An Apology for Poetry* was actually not at all concerned with technical rules or rhetoric, his treatise simply being devoted to poetry in general (Davis & Finke, 1989). His contribution to sixteenth and seventeenth-century criticism and theory was in the form of a fundamental aesthetic question: is poetry real or fictive? Sidney argued that the nature the poet imitated was the ideal, not the real, but that this ideal was actually more real than reality (Plato revisited). Francis Bacon maintained exactly the opposite – that the ideal represented or imitated by poetry was entirely fictive, what he termed "feigned history" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 193) and is therefore inferior to the real nature of things. Sidney's criticism also focussed on Horace's dialectic of *dulce et utile*, the critics of this period emphasising the *utile* in the form of moral instruction. However, as noted by Davis and Finke (1989), this may have arisen out of

necessity as this era saw the rise of Puritanism accompanied by its attacks on literature and bans on theatre. Moral instruction may well have been viewed as the only lifeline of poetry.

Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), a master of French classical theatre, made famous the critical paradigm of the three unities. Hazard (1992) notes that Corneille's discussion and explication of the three unities actually derived from a misreading or personal interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Corneille making the rules, particularly of unity of place, fit the plays of his time. John Dryden's (1631-1700) work, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, put forth a dramatization of debate of how English criticism should be freed from the strict classicism of French drama and combine neoclassical ideals with English common sense to create a "richer, more lively imitation of nature" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 250). He illustrated his point through an analysis of Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, thereby being the first to advocate a "close reading" of the text. This concept of close reading was another facet to be echoed throughout literary theory's history and would serve to become the stanchion of the New Criticism.

It was during this time that the Renaissance made way for the voice, views and impact of the female writer and critic, Aphra Behn, who has been credited as being one of the most prolific writers of the era. She was also regarded as the most outspoken. As a woman, her education would not have included an education in Latin and Greek, the classics. This era being devoted to the neoclassical tradition, one might view this as a disadvantage, particularly for a professional writer. Aphra Behn, however, turned it into an advantage. As her writing could not be confined to and proscribed by neoclassical tendencies and tenets, she asserted her writing was more real. She also launched a very

vocal and critical attack, not against poetry itself, but against the purpose to which it had been relegated, that of moral utility and instruction:

> I am myself well able to affirm that one of all our English Poets, and least the Dramatique (so I think you call them) can be justly charg'd with too great reformation of men's minds or manners, and for that I may appeal to general experiment, if those who are the most assiduous Disciples of the Stage, do not make the fondest and the lewdest Crew about this Town. (Cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 195)

This point of view was further emphasised in her "Epistle to the Reader" that formed the preface to *The Dutch Lover* where she argued that "poetry, and drama in particular, rarely if ever improves anyone's morality, nor indeed were plays written with such an end in mind" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 291). Because of her outspokenness and refusal to conform to the societal expectations for a woman of her time, critics often dismissed and denounced her as "licentious and immoral" and as "a harlot who danced through uncleanness and dared others to follow" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 291). And follow they did. The realization of where this dance led is quite interesting in and of itself; it is also quite interesting in light of literary criticism and theory. The indication of Davis and Finke (1989) is that historians of literary criticism and theory delving into nontraditional domains of the time, i.e. of women, are finding that women may have caused a radical shift in literary criticism, a shift from moral utility to aesthetic pleasure – led by the dance of Aphra Behn.

THE 18th CENTURY

It was during this century that certain modern views of literary criticism and theory emerged: that it would and should serve as a vehicle of rational discourse; that

there were notions (or illusions) of consensus (at least within theories); and, that the public should be made aware of the role and meaning of literature. As Davis and Finke (1989) note, these ideas were promulgated and promoted through a number of avenues and sources – clubs, coffeehouses, journals and periodicals – which appeared to place criticism and theory on the road to professionalization. It was also during this time that the critics began to not only seriously recognize but to avow the essentiality of the work of the middle class to cultural literacy. Because of this recognition, literary criticism and theory were viewed as the ways and means to set the reading public in the right direction regarding literary material. In other words, it would serve as a vehicle to deliver the social, moral, political and national issues of the time. This view was propounded as a response to a new classes of readers – the middle class and women. This notion not only reappears throughout periods of time but may be said to be a constant throughout the literary history of humankind. At times it was strongly vocalized and dominant, its essence forming the core of literary purpose (Plato, Arnold and Leavis) while at other times it was more subtle and ephemeral, operating under the guise of other approaches. One might go as far as to say that all literary theory simply serves to meld and mould the reader to a presumptive societal form, be it analytical, functional, aesthetic, social transformative, critical, etc.

As Davis and Finke (1989) state, the eighteenth century also witnessed the debate of several theoretical values such as the idea of "the reading public;" conceptions of author; and, the use of critical judgement and taste. The standards for these debates were reason and disinterest, both synonymous with objectivity.

As previously mentioned, literary theory increasingly adopted the guise and air of professionalism, aided in no small part by the periodicals of the time. The most famous were Steele's *Tattler*, Addison and Steele's *Spectator* and Jonson's *Rambler* (Davis & Finke, 1989). Because of the circumstances, conventions and attitudes of the time, expressively articulate female critics were not given due attention by history. Feminist historians and others who are searching history with a new lens and new intent may indeed unearth and reveal a view of women that had previously been shaped, albeit somewhat skewed, by the historical lens through which the examinations were conducted. Parfitt's (1991) belief regarding the Renaissance woman is but one example. Other historians have recently revealed numerous accounts of women, such as their role as warriors (Semiramis of Assyria and the female Celts who fought alongside the men during the Roman invasion) who hitherto had not been accorded a place in the annals of history. The eighteenth century literary critic and theorist, Eliza Hayward, is another. She began *The Female Spectator* specifically to address criticism and theory and particularly on the premise "to rectify some small errors which, small as they may seem at first, may, if indulged, grow into greater" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 322). Hayward's *Spectator* discussed issues from the trivial to the monumental and also included "stories" designed to attack those literary precepts which she believed to be erroneous or founded upon erroneous concepts, her attacks thus being an avenue of public awareness, enlightenment and knowledge. She exposed the hypocritical and vicious nature of the so-called professional critic who claimed to operate according to principles of reason and disinterest and, in one particular instance, related the "story" of a young playwright who had submitted a play, *Mariamne*, to the judgement of a "certain noble person," an "arbiter

of wit," who responded:" Poet, whoe'er thou art, G-d, d–m thee' Go hang thyself and burn thy Mariamne" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 322).

Not only did Hayward expose the falsity of the critic's claim of reason and disinterest, but quite bluntly stated that they were simply self-serving. In a similar vein, she attacked the licensers of theatres who because of a political act could only obtain a license through the sanction of a particular government office; she attacked theatre managers who held virtual monopolies; and she attacked the star actors of the time who controlled what type of play they wanted written and by whom (Davis & Finke, 1989). Thus, Eliza Hayward had, in essence, introduced a key player onto the literary stage, that of censorship, and, by her questioning of what gets noticed, by whom and for what purpose, had advocated and practised a form of critical theory and inquiry.

Joseph Addison and the contribution of his *Spectator* to literary theory of the eighteenth century may be classified under the term aesthetics. Addison proposed that the pleasurable experience derived from literature was a key to literary understanding and he delineated a primary and secondary pleasure of the imagination – primary dealing with the immediate experience of the object while the secondary pleasure derived from the experience of ideas (Hazard, 1992). His work, "Pleasures of the Imagination," is regarded as an early attempt at a psychological theory of aesthetics (Davis & Finke, 1989).

Davis and Finke (1989) offer a summary of the contributions of the eighteenth century to literary theory: (1) it became institutionalized and acknowledged and recognized the role of the middle class and to some extent women; (2) it had become a genre in and of itself; (3) it recognized the transcendental nature of works; (4) it further delved into the "nature of nature" debate, questioning whether the nature constructed by

the author and critic was immutable or multiple, i.e., multiple persons and multiple meanings; and, (5) it allowed the field of aesthetics to broaden and gain more ground. These questions which were raised, debated and attacked in the clubs, coffeehouses and journals of that time were some of the self-same questions that are raised, discussed, debated, explicated and attacked in the arena of literary criticism and theory today.

THE 19th CENTURY – THE ROMANTIC PERIOD AND BEYOND

The term "Romantic" can be attributed to the German literary critic and theorist, Friedrich Schlegel, who, like other critics of this era, believed that the key to criticism and theory lay in the past, particularly the past of the classical era. Wellek (1955) notes that Schlegel renewed this debate and created a theory of the Romantic which literally spread around the world, a critical theory which anticipated many interests of the 20th century. Two of his key contributions to literary theory were in his notion of the literary text being, as he termed it, an "organism" in which the whole history of the arts and science formed a whole (intertextuality?) and the role, place and importance of history in literary theory (New Historicism?). Wellek (1955) notes that, for Schlegel, literature formed "a completely coherent and evenly organized whole comprehending in its unity many worlds of art … [and he was] disgusted with every theory which is not historical .... [The critic must] spy on what [the poet] wanted to hide from our sight or at least did not want to show at first .... We should uncover the deeply hidden, the unfathomable ..." (pp. 7-9). Because of the views inherent in such statements, Schlegel's conception of language was that it was not static or specific and definitive and, as such, would not allow the user

an exact, set and precise signification. According to Zima (1999), by this emphasis on the obscurity or "incomprehensibility" of language, Schlegel was:

> Turning upside down the rationalist creed according to which language is a means of communication and comprehension, an instrument enabling us to classify and clarify, [he] exposes the dark side of language: its irreducible polysemy, its notorious resistance to communication of meaning, and its poetic hermetism. (p. 10)

Schlegel himself asked: "But is incomprehensibility something so bad and despicable" and added, "Indeed, you would be greatly distressed if the whole world was made quite comprehensible in accordance with your wishes" (cited in Zima, 1999, p. 10). Schlegel's theoretical constructs of the incomprehensibility of language and therefore the inability to reduce meaning to a pure form and of the idea that there were shifts in meaning between the speaker and the listener, the sender and the receiver, was his legacy to another group of theorists – the deconstructionists. Their theory "reveals the imponderabilities of an autonomous expression plane which incessantly shifts in meaning. These shifts are the gist of language according to the deconstructionists" (Zima, 1999, p. 10).

The lasting contribution to literary theory of the somewhat radical and very English poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, was in the form of an essay "The Defense of Poetry." Like Wordsworth, Coleridge and other contemporaries of his time, Shelley emphasised the poetic dimension of experience and aestheticism as opposed to a purely didactic dimension. "Defense" railed against Thomas Love Peacock's attack on poetry and made great claims for its potential such as poetry being a creator of new linguistic possibilities and the ability of the poet to remake the world by reconstructing the form through which it is viewed. Poetry "purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity .... It creates

anew the universe .... [It] sows the seeds of social revolution" (cited in Abrams, 1992, p. 515). Wellek (1955) summarizes this potential of the literary work as follows:

> The poet and the art of poetry had almost lost their identity, but they had newly found a social role which was so exalted and so secure in its very inevitability that no contemporary neglect and no isolation could affect it. Poetry was re-established as part of the fabric of society and of the process of history: potent even when scarcely visible. This was Shelley's true defense of poetry .... (p. 129)

It is interesting to note that Reader-Response literature and its proponents often parallel and liken Shelley's "A Defense of Poetry" to Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1938) because of their emphasis on the aesthetic, their impact, and their longevity. Thus, Shelley's most penetrating insight into Romantic theory was his speculation on the power of poetics to work an aesthetic transformation, evocation, and transcendence in the individual and the ability of poetics to reconstruct the world.

Reiman's (1991) section, Innovations in Literary Theory, in his essay "The Romantic Critical Tradition" offers a summary of the contributions of this period from several sources: Abrams (1953) points out the Romantic era witnessed a shift from a mimetic to an expressive mode; Stone (1967) sees a shift from rhetoric technique to a more imaginative, inspired way of writing; and the aesthetic with its emphasis on the feeling and experience of the reader was the final hallmark of the first half of the nineteenth century.

As the Romantic period drew to a close, literary theory of the latter part of the century felt the impact of two great minds: Friedrich Nietzche and Matthew Arnold. As Adams (1992) points out, the role of Nietzche in literary theory has been recognized, acknowledged and enlarged by the recent perception of him as one of the first deconstructionists, along with the Schlegel brothers, Friedrick and August, due to

Nietzche's questioning discourse on the relation of language to truth. Nietzche stated that "In the multiplicity of languages, that word and thing do not necessarily coincide with one another [so that] the word is a symbol ..." (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 446). This arbitrariness of symbol leads to an arbitrariness of language, an elemental feature of deconstructionism.

The turn of the century saw the rise of one of the most influential critics in English literature as well as one who was responsible for and credited with launching English literature as *the* school discipline. This critic was, of course, Matthew Arnold. Though the end of the Romantic era had arrived and the anti-traditionalist and rationalistic perspective was beginning to find purchase, Arnold's belief in the role and purpose of poetry derived mainly from ideas combined in Shelley's "A Defense of Poetry," specifically his notion that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (cited in Willinsky, 1991, p. 57). Ball, Kenny and Gardiner (1990) state that Arnold's main concern was with civilizing the new middle class, imparting culture to the masses and establishing the roots of a civilized aesthetic heritage. Because Arnold was an educator as well as a poet and a critic, Willinsky (1991) saw his contribution to literary criticism and theory as twofold: in the form of pedagogical principles that (1) poetry can engage students' attention and (2) that poetry can go on to form the character of the student; and in the form of literary principles where (1) poetry of the best sort is a vehicle for the vital ideas of the time and (2) that poetry dares to constitute a culture of life. Possibly of more renown and repute than these principles were several phrases and terms of Arnold derived from his essays. *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* gave the world the phrase that criticism must "endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is

known and thought in the world" (cited in Adams, 1992, p. 585). The legacy from *The Study of Poetry* was the term touchstone. Touchstones could simply be a line in a poem where the poetic truth would be revealed; these touchstones would then be recognized in other pieces of work and aid in understanding and meaning (Adams, 1992; Willinsky, 1991). Arnold's impact on literary theory is best summarized by Patterson (1992):

> The goal of English as viewed by Arnold ... was to encourage students to experience life through literature, to be transported in time and space, to feel as though they were really there with the characters, fighting their battles, suffering their losses, experiencing their pleasures and satisfactions.... Arnold's (1964) assertion that literary study should be apolitical, morally elevating, and socially desirable promoted the twin ideals of literary study as personal experience and as aesthetic appreciation .... (pp. 134-135)

At the waning of the millennium and the dawning of another, literature and its theories were undergoing a radical change in the form of avant-garde literature; a reaction against traditionalism; and, a glorification of rationalism and empiricism over imagination and subjectivity. This would herald the arrival of a new paradigm with all its trappings – that of modernism.

CHAPTER FOUR: MODERN THEORETICAL APPROACHES

THE NASCENCE OF MODERNISM

The arrival of the twentieth century witnessed not only the beginning of a new era but also witnessed the evolution of a new mode of thought introsumed and subsumed under the rubric of modernism. Brooks (1991) indicates that the roots of this movement lay in the seminal work of several thinkers and writers who essentially proposed an emerging view of the human being. The human faces and foundational works of these forces of changes were those of Charles Darwin and *The Origin of Species* (1859); Karl Marx and *Das Kapital* (1867); Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901); and, Friedrich Nietzche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5) and *The Gay Science* (1882). According to Abrams (1981) modernism involved "a deliberate and radical break with the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art" and that those thinkers mentioned above were "thinkers who questioned the certainties that had hitherto provided a support to social organization, religion, morality and the conception of the human self ..." (p. 109). Furthermore, Abrams views the rise of modernism as a revolt against traditional literary criticism and theory and as a direct result of and response to the horror of World War I. Baldrick (1996) notes that the period between the two world wars was one of literary revolution. As to a particular point in time or a specific event that marked the entry of modernism upon the world stage, Brooks (1991) offers the following:

> D.H. Lawrence has claimed (*Kangaroo*, 1923) that 'It was in 1915 the old world ended,' Virginia Woolf ('Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,' 1924) that 'On or about

> December 1910 human character changed' (1966, p. 321), while Ezra Pound might instead have chosen the debut of Imagism in the tearoom of the British Museum in April 1912, and H.G. Wells the Moroccan crisis of 1905. Even the established commentators on modernism do not readily agree: Harry Levin (1966), for example, would seem to see the years 1922-4 as a climax of the movement, Richard Ellmann (1960) would prefer 1900. (p. 122)

Others chose not to refer to a specific modernist historical period but instead chose to use the term to describe certain periods in literary history to which the term is applicable. De Man (cited in Brooks, 1991) chooses to speak of "'incandescent' moments of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at least a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure" (p. 123). Terry Eagleton (cited in Brooks, 1991) views modernism in much the same light when he writes of:

> a sense of one's particular historical conjuncture as being somehow peculiarly pregnant with crisis and change.... [A] portentous, confused yet curiously heightened self-consciousness of one's own historical moment, at once self-doubting and self-congratulatory, anxious and triumphalistic together.... [A]t one and the same time an arresting and denial of history in the violent shock of the immediate present, from which vantage point all previous developments may be complacently consigned to the ashcan of 'tradition.' (p. 123)

Thus, as Fredric Jameson points out in Davis and Finke (1989), contemporary postmodernism is simply another version of modernism.

Specificity of date or definition aside, the modernist era saw a radical shift in the traditional stances of literary criticism and theory, proclaimed and made concrete through the works of T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound and Virginia Woolf. This radical reconceptualization touched on aspects such as character, emotion, imagination and text. Regarding character, D.H. Lawrence wrote of the heroine of *The Rainbow*: "I don't much care about what the woman feels.... That presumes an ego to

feel with. I only care about what the woman is … as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater inhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception" (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989, p. 566). Therefore, character and subject were to be represented as antiromantic, antiexpressionist and impersonal. Theory was now not to focus on the forms of literary experience, and personal aesthetic response could be damned. Irving Babbitt (cited in Davis & Finke, 1989) reiterates this point when he calls for a movement away from "soft" and "uncritical" romanticism to "tough," "critical" modernism (p. 566). There was also a call to move from personal, imaginative expression to a more logical and rational form, underpinned by the belief that art is born out of knowledge which in turn is born out of reason and rationality. Furthermore, language was to be hard and dry and did not need to impose emotions upon the reader as these were already in the text. As Davis and Finke (1989) indicate, "In short, this entire operation [reading activity], from the deployment of images as an objective correlative through the received effect of a "structured emotion," takes place as a "textual" operation, a poetic experience that is not brought to the text as a personal experience but is generated precisely out of the text's particular patterning or structure" (p. 567).

Baldrick (1996) believes that this literary revolution had a decisive leader "cunningly disguised as a London bank clerk" (p. 64). This was T.S. Eliot whose theoretical position may be characterized "as one of reaction in terms of 'impersonality' and of classical 'order' against a Romantic and Victorian inheritance that was assumed to have exaggerated the importance of free, personal self-expression of literature (Baldrick, 1996, p. 65). Literary theory's heir apparent, structure, language and symbol, was now ready to claim ascendency over personal aesthetic response.

FOUR BASIC APPROACHES

Literary theory is not a new phenomenon as some argue that it is as old as literature itself, Aristotle's *Poetics* being cited as the first foundational, cohesive and collected literary theoretical work. However, its prominence and developmental growth have only been established during the final quarter of the last century, having now garnered for itself a firm foothold and niche in the world of literary studies. Nonetheless, one is often left with a sense of disorder and some confusion. This resultant state is no doubt due to the increase in theory's application, use, and function, particularly in its diverse and dichotomous forms. It is also no doubt due to its effects, though some may say havoc, which it has brought to bear on the study of literature. Furthermore, the diversity and variety, and even antithetical and polarized approaches and methodologies of theory, have contributed to this sense of disorder. No less contributing factors are its base in philosophical abstractions and its neologistic bent which have not served to lift this haze of confusion and, quite conceivably, have contributed further to its density. Add to this the continuous debate over the birth of literary theory and what constitutes true literary theory, the picture becomes somewhat vague and fuzzy, as are the lines of demarcation between particular schools of thought. For instance, should structuralism and semiotics be regarded as separate entities unto themselves as some critics do or, as other critics do, regard them as somewhat interchangeable as both espouse similar principles and approaches? Should cultural materialism be regarded as a separate discipline or should it be subsumed under New Historicism? Should deconstruction be included under the aegis of poststructuralism or be regarded as separate and apart? Again, the literature is as diverse as the theories. However, all is not vague and fuzzy and the immitigable

presence of theory has necessitated not only, as some see, a call to arms, but a call to those who see the need and rise to the challenge of organization and explication of clearer lines of demarcation. As noted in the review of literature, this call has been admirably answered. In answering, Klarer (1999) has isolated four basic approaches under which most schools of thought or methodologies can be classified. These are categorized according to the main focus of either text, author, reader, or context oriented and include the following theoretical approaches: (1) TEXT: philology (which centres around editorial problems and the reconstruction of texts); rhetoric (which emphasizes aspects of form and style); formalism and structuralism; New Criticism; and semiotics and deconstruction (2) AUTHOR: biographical; psychoanalytical; and phenomenology (which assumes the author is present in the text in coded form (3) READER: Reception Theory; reception history; and Reader-Response Theory (4) CONTEXT: literary history; Marxist literary theory; feminist literary theory; and, New Historicism and cultural studies. Text-oriented approaches focus primarily upon the formal structural features of a text to the exclusion of extra-textual factors such as author, audience, or historical, social or political conditions as well as focussing upon language. Author-oriented approaches simply seek to establish a direct link between the text and the life of the author (as evidenced in the movie "Finding Forrester"(2000)). Reader-oriented approaches believe the reader's point of view is the focal point and they do not see the text as single or objective. Context-oriented approaches "refer here to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do not regard texts as self-contained, independent works of art but try to place them within a larger context. Depending upon the movement, this context can be history, social, political background, literary genre, nationality or gender" (Klarer, 1999, p. 94).

Following will be a brief explication of the theoretical schools which have had a more influential and lasting impact upon literary studies.

RUSSIAN FORMALISM

Terry Eagleton (cited in Rice & Waugh, 1992) has suggested that "... if one wanted to put a date on the beginnings of the transformation which has overtaken literary theory in this century, one could do worse than settle on 1917, the year in which the young Russian Formalist, Viktor Shklovsky, published his pioneering essay "Art as Device" (p. 16). However, Formalism gained much of its recognition during the 1960s when there was a concerted call for an organized theory(s) of literature, critics at that time liking the Formalists' stress on the systematic study of literature and its scientific basis. Because of its emphasis on the close examination of text as opposed to context, Formalism has some striking similarities with structuralism, semiotics and the New Criticism.

Historically, the origin of Formalism derives from two particular groups, the Moscow Linguistic Circle founded in 1915 and led by Roman Jakobson and the OPOJAZ (or OPOYAZ) – the Society for the Study of Poetic Language founded in 1915, its leaders being Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Eikenbaum. Elemental features of Formalism include a concern with method; the notion that emotions, ideas and reality possess no literary significance; an emphasis on a writer's technique and craft skills; the regarding of literature as simply a special use of language; a focus not on literature but literariness which would be revealed through analysing structures of meaning and consequently uncovering a system of language; a stress on the formal patterns of sounds and words;

and, a movement away from the intrinsic study of text to its study as a semiotic structure thereby negating the ideas of mimetic expression, cultural influences and social didactism (Buchbinder, 1991; Davis & Schliefer, 1994; Jefferson & Robey, 1982; Rice & Waugh, 1992; Selden, 1985; Selden, 1989; and Zima, 1999). In summary, the key concerns of the Russian Formalists were language and its linguistic properties. It was because of this particular emphasis on text, form, and language that Russian Formalism was often linked as a close cousin to structuralism, semiotics and the New Criticism. Additionally, some of the prominent Russian Formalists such as Roman Jakobson sought refuge in the United States and, once there, directly influenced certain structuralists and semioticians such as Claude Levi-Strauss. Abrams (1981) does note that the New Criticism did have certain Formalist features such as viewing the literary text as an object independent of social and literary history and of the special mode of literary language. However, he does make a distinction in that the New Critics did not apply linguistic theory to texts nor emphasized linguistic patterns. Zima (1999) also speaks to the commonality between Russian Formalism and the New Criticism regarding the aesthetic autonomy of the text but argues that it was not an invention of either but dates back to the philosopher, Immanuel Kant and his *Critique of Judgement* (1790). This commonality of features provides a natural avenue leading to the next school of thought along the road of literary theory.

STRUCTURALISM AND SEMIOTICS

Structuralism and semiotics attempt to examine not the communicative nature of language but the conditions under which meaning is made possible. Because of their emphasis on language, each school is said to have its roots in Russian Formalism. Each

also has its roots in the twentieth century linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, Andrew Peirce, Umberto Eco and Jonathan Culler. Historically, these roots go back to the time of the ancient Greeks, particularly Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers who were the first to investigate and lay forth a theory of signs. Their theory stated that signs consisted of a triadic dimension: (1) the physical part of the sign itself, (2) its reference to something in the world, and (3) its evocation of meaning (Danesi, 1998). The well-known semiotician, Tzvetan Todorov, however, believes that the true scientific study began with the Medieval theologian, St. Augustine (referred to in Chapter Three). A specific theory of structuralism was born in the twentieth century through the labour of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (the movement itself often being referred to as French Structuralism because of his impact, he himself being directly influenced by the Russian Formalist, Roman Jakobson) and the literary critic Roland Barthes.

The birth of structural literary theory was not met with open and welcoming arms, receiving a less than cordial reception. Selden (1985) credits this to the fact that structuralist approaches directly challenged some of the most widely accepted beliefs of the reader:

> The literary work, we have long felt, is the child of an author's creative life, and expresses the author's essential self. The text is the place where we enter into a spiritual or humanistic communion with an author's thoughts or feelings. Another fundamental assumption which readers often make is that a good book tells the truth about human life – that novels and plays try to tell us how things are. However, structuralists have tried to persuade us that the author is 'dead' and that literary discourse has no truth function.... John Bayley spoke for the anti-structuralists when he declared 'but the sin of semiotics is to attempt to destroy *our* sense of truth in fiction.... In a good story, truth precedes fiction and remains separate from it.' (p. 52)

Roland Barthes further emphasised this point with his "The Death of the Author" (from *Image-Music-Text*, 1968) where he placed language as the controlling force rather than the author and argued that writers only have the power to mix already existing writing and do not create a unique or original form or truly express a definitive self (Adams, 1992; Selden, 1985). From this derives the famous Barthesian phrase "always already written." Thus, as Buchbinder (1991) paraphrases, "In a way, the culture unites the literary text by means of the author" (p. 46).

A key figure in the development of modern approaches to language study was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Saussure's first achievement was in his making two pivotal distinctions regarding language. First, he was to distinguish between language and speech, language being the system underlying the utterances and speech being the actual utterances (Danesi & Santeramo, 1999). Secondly, in his exploration of language, he created a shift from the study of language across historical periods, the diachronic model, to a study of language as it relates to a culture and its activities at a single moment in time, referred to as a synchronic model (Buchbinder, 1991). Barry (1995) summarized Saussure's work according to three key principles. First, is his idea that the meaning given to words is simply arbitrary and that there is no inherent connection between a word and what it designates, which leads to the great structuralist idea that language is not simply a reflection of the world but is a separate system of and unto itself. Secondly, is his idea that the meaning of words are totally relational and thereby dependent upon the other words surrounding it. Thirdly, Saussure believed that language constitutes and makes our world therefore meaning is attributed to and constructed by humans through language and meaning does not simply reside in the object. Putting this another way,

Buchbinder (1991) states that "our perception of reality, and hence also the ways in which we respond to it, are dictated – or constructed – by the structure of the language we speak" (p. 36).

For a number of years the structuralist theory of Saussure remained within the domain of linguistics. Such was the case until the meeting of a French anthropologist and a Russian Formalist who was seeking refuge in New York during World War II. Roman Jakobson, who had been influenced by Saussure, soon enlightened Claude Levi-Strauss regarding the structural theory of language. As structuralist linguistics was used to analyse sentences, Levi-Strauss saw the possibilities of applying the same theory and method to analyse anthropological narrative discourse, what he termed structural anthropology (Davis & Schliefer, 1994). Thus, defining meaning in culture became a direct aim of structuralism and semiotics, their inherent methods becoming the tools with which to work.

From structural anthropology the move was easily and quickly made to structural literary analysis through the work of the literary critic, Roland Barthes, whose books, as Barry (1995) notes, "sit on the fence between structuralism and post-structuralism ..." (p. 50). Barthes's 1968 essay "Analysing Narrative Structures" identified the five following codes from which meaning can be interpreted:

1. THE PROAIRETIC CODE. This code provides indications of actions....

2. THE HERMENEUTIC CODE. This code poses questions or enigmas which provide narrative suspense ....

3. THE CULTURAL CODE. This code contains references out beyond the text to what is regarded as common knowledge.

> 4. THE SEMIC CODE. This is also called the connotative code. It is linked to theme, and this code … when organized around a particular proper name constitutes a 'character' ....
>
> 5. THE SYMBOLIC CODE. This code is also linked to theme, but on a larger scale, so to speak. It consists of contrasts and pairings related to the most basic binary polarities – male and female, night and day, good and evil, life and art, and so on. These are the structures of contrasted elements which structuralists see as fundamental to the human way of perceiving and organizing reality. (pp. 50-51)

In this, once again, echoes of the past are heard, particularly the echoes of John Cassian of the fourth century and his four-tiered system of meaning; St. Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor and their respective four- and three-tiered systems; and, Thomas Aquinas and his vertical and hierarchical order of meaning.

The ideas espoused by these structuralist theorists have been summarized by Abrams (1981) as follows: a literary work is a mode of writing using a set of rules or conventions and codes, literary effects being generated within this language system and are not dependent upon outside reality; the author or subject has no creative or expressive intent or authority but is a product of the linguistic system; similarly, the individual reader disappears in the act of reading which is impersonal, this reading activity being defined by codes and conventions and not personal response, aesthetic pleasure or historical, social or political implications (although within structuralism meaning is regarded as pluralistic but because of the system of codes it is therefore constrained as opposed to the unconstrained and unlimited meanings of the deconstructionists) and, although structuralists use traditional literary terms and concepts (genre, character etc.), they are radically altered and are "translated into sets of prepared responses and expectations,

generated in a reader by his knowledge of conventions acquired from his earlier readings which may in the course of a text be either fulfilled, frustrated, or altered" (p. 189).

Parallelling the emergence and growth of structuralism was the discipline of semiology. The last half of the 1900s has borne witness to an unprecedented interest and increase in the study of semiology; a great deal of scholarly production about its theories; practices and methods; and its wide application to diverse fields such as literary studies and theory, advertising, deconstruction, anthropology and cultural studies. Deely (1990) borrows a line from a poet to convey this condition: "the image of astronomy in Hell conveyed by John Donne has been suggested as the image of the modern semiotic universe: 'This all in pieces, all coherence gone;/All just supply, and all Relation'" (p. ix). Yet, one might add, pieces and relations are the form and substance of puzzles from which, with a little effort, a completed picture may emerge.

Semiotics may be defined as the study of the nature of sign-making and sign-using in the human species (Danesi, 1998) or simply the study of signs as indicated by Wray:

> Semiotics is the study of signs. On that and little else, all "semioticians" seem to agree. Specifically it is the study of semiosis, or communication – that is, the way any sign, whether it is a traffic signal, a thermometer reading 98.6°F, poetic imagery, musical notation, a prose passage, or a wink of the eye, functions in the mind of an interpreter to convey a specific meaning in a given situation. Broadly defined, semiotics includes the study of how Sherlock Holmes makes meaning out of Hansom tracks, how deoxyribonucleic acid conveys hereditary traits, how an historian sees significance in an old church registry, or how Baudelaire's view of the world can be approached through a pattern of words arranged on paper. (Cited in Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993, p. 7)

Historically, the development of semiotics and discourse centring around sign systems may be traced to the ancient Greeks, though in this case it is in the area of medicine and not poetics as indicated below by Danesi (1998):

> Semiotics is actually an ancient form of inquiry arising from the scientific study of the physiological symptoms induced by particular diseases or physical states. As a matter of historical fact, it was Hippocrates (460-377 BC), the founder of Western medical science, who established *semeiotics* as a branch of medicine for the study of symptoms – a symptom being, in effect, a semeion, "mark or sign" that stands for something other than itself. The physician's primary task, Hippocrates claimed, was to unravel what a symptom stands for. (p. 12-13)

This is the essence of modern-day semiotics. Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) offers the following insightful abbreviated quote from a newspaper article by Pines (1982) which serves as a concise introduction into semiotics:

> Everything we do sends messages about us in a variety of codes, semioticians contend we are also on the receiving end of innumerable messages encoded in music, gestures, foods, rituals, books, movies or advertisements. Yet we seldom realize that we have received or sent such messages, and would have trouble explaining the rules under which they operate....
>
> Nothing seems too trivial or too complicated for semioticians to analyze. Take the matter of cowboy boots, for instance. A New Yorker who buys such boots is actually responding to well-established myths about the cowboy in our culture, and also to the new power of the oil millionaires and ranchers who support the Reagan administration, says Dr. Marshall Blonsky....
>
> "In both myths, the wearer of cowboy boots handles the world masterfully," says Dr. Blonsky. "He is virile, self-reliant, free to roam over the wide-open spaces that New Yorkers lack, and has or supplies virtually limitless energy." Nobody cares that real cowboys often lead humdrum lives, he points out. New Yorkers don't want real cowboy boots – just the idea of cowboy boots. So they buy boots made of lizard or snake that serve as symbols or signs of cowboy boots, in which they can roam the city with a feeling of power, but wouldn't be much good for rounding up cattle....
>
> The method of semiotics is, first, to separate an act, called "the signifier," from its meaning, called "the signified." When a man offers a woman a red rose,

> for instance, the signifier is the act of giving the rose but the signified is romance. The rose itself has little importance. (Cited in Leeds-Hurwitz, p. 9)

Even though the nomenclature and terminology may be traced to Hippocrates, it was an American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), who performed the actual christening and is credited with founding a study which is called semiotics. Meanwhile, Saussure had almost concurrently proposed a science called semiology thus each are simply alternate names for the study of signs.

Like Saussure's signifier and signified, Peirce developed his own typology. The signifier was called the representamen (something that does the representing); that to which it referred, the referent, he called the object; and the meaning one derived from a sign was the interpretant. This typology, as Danesi (1998) points, out suggests three forms of knowing. Peirce also proposed three types of signs: qualisigns (referring to qualities), sinsigns (referring to things in time and space), and legisigns (referring to conventions). Three distinctions within the object/signified/referent were also proposed: icons (representing an object through similarity of features or resemblance); indexes (representing an object's existence in time and space or its causal relationship) and symbols (representing an object through conventions, this relationship not being natural but one which is created and developed through social conventions). In keeping with this triadic typology, Peirce also identified three types of interpretants, from which three different types of meaning could be derived depending upon the particular representamen (Danesi, 1998).

Leeds-Hurwitz's (1993) work also adds further to the constitutive elements of semiotics as it is based upon three basic theoretical assumptions of the discipline: signs,

codes (sets of related signs and rules for their use), and culture (the proper context for understanding a single code).

Klarer (1999) details a new aspect of semiotics – the traditional literary text interpretative method being applied to the non-literary (popular culture, e.g., advertisements, geography, architecture, film and art history) and the non-linguistic (buildings, myths, or pictures) system of signs. Abrams (1981) also speaks to this diverse application of semiotics, noting that a semiotic approach has been used in cultural anthropology by Claude Levi-Strauss, in medical and carceral interpretation by Michel Foucault, in psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan, and in the interpretation of advertising and women's fashion by Roland Barthes.

As a literary theory, semiotics is a phenomenon that gained prominence during the 1970s and 1980s. Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981) states that "A semiotics of literature would attempt to describe in systematic fashion the modes of signification of literary discourse and the interpretative operations embodied in the institution of literature" (p. 12). A further adjunct to a semiotic theory of literature is the concept of intertextuality which arose in France during the 1960s (Webster, 1990) and, according to Culler (1981), was formulated and developed by Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality is the offspring of semiotics because text is a body of signs to be interpreted and these signs are considered arbitrary and, because a text has an existence independent from its author/ sender and its reader/receiver, this gives rise to the idea of multiple writings or a plurality of texts (the latter term attributed to Barthes). Simply put, a text can not be reduced to a single meaning because of the influences of other "texts" from within the text. Culler (1981) defines a double focus of intertextuality:

> On the one hand, it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written. Yet in so far as it focuses on intelligibility, on meaning, 'intertextuality' leads us to consider prior texts as contributions to a code which makes possible the various effects of signification. Intertextuality thus becomes less a name for a work's relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture. The study of intertextuality is thus not the investigation of sources and influences as traditionally conceived; it casts its net wider to include anonymous discursive practices, codes whose origins are lost, that make possible the signifying practices of later texts. (p. 103)

Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as "the sum of knowledge that makes it possible for texts to have meaning" (cited in Culler, 1981, p. 104). The deconstructionist, Harold Bloom, also embraces the concept of intertextuality as noted by Culler (1981):

> Few notions are more difficult to dispel than the 'commonsensical' one that a poetic text is self-contained, that it has an ascertainable meaning or meanings without reference to other poetic texts.... Unfortunately, poems are not things but only words that refer to other words, and those words refer to still other words, and so on into the densely overpopulated world of literary language. Any poem is an inter-poem, and any reading of a poem is an inter-reading. (p. 107)

One final component of semiotics is the relationship between ideology and sign as espoused by Mikhail Bakhtin (1973). Bakhtin (cited in Easthope & McGowan, 1994) states that: "Signs can only arise on inter-individual territory" and are therefore always ideological" (p. 6). Thus, signs are determined within ideology and in relation to subjectivity.

The implications of semiotics as a literary theory are summarized by Easthope and McGowan (1994) as follows:

1. that texts must be understood in terms of their specificity as forms of signs.... [and]

2. that signs are always ideological but that ideology is not just a matter of the signified meaning but also of the *operation* of the signifier. (p. 6)

NEW CRITICISM

The arrival of modernism in the twentieth century is often closely linked with the emergent literary theories of the time, many of the theoretical frameworks being viewed as a direct response to modernism. This is particularly the case of the New Criticism, its proponents advocating for and reacting against the same principles and views as characterized the modernism movement. Booker (1996) indicates that there is a very close relationship between the New Criticism and modernism, so much so that many critics tend to treat New Criticism and modernism as virtually indistinguishable as pointed out by Allan Wilde: "Modernist literature is by now virtually inextricable from the shape New Criticism has imposed upon it" (cited in Booker, 1996, p. 17).

T.S. Eliot is often cited as being the poet and the critic who first articulated the founding ideas of the New Criticism but it is not he who is credited with its establishment as a literary framework (Russian Formalism being regarded as its predecessor in Europe). The founding father accolade, however, belongs to two groups, depending upon which side of the ocean one stands. Upon the western side of the Atlantic, it had its foundations in the "Fugitive" club, begun in 1919 by a group of Americans at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, later becoming known as the Agrarians (Rylance, 1989). Key figures associated with this movement were John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, Rene Wellek, Austin Warren, William K. Wimsett and Monroe Beardsley. The eastern side of the Atlantic, specifically Great Britain, witnessed the emergence of the "practical'

criticism, its key proponents being T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, Q.D. Leavis and F.R. Leavis. Some critics combine the two and refer to it as Anglo-American New Criticism.

Most critics are of the opinion that the New Criticism emerged as an alternative theoretical framework to that of Russian Formalism. Zima's (1999) belief is that in spite of the differences between Russian Formalism and the New Criticism, each movement had a common goal: their belief and assertion in the autonomy of art and their strong opposition to any school of thought, especially Positivism, which sought to base literary theory on the study of causal relationships built upon empirical data (such as relating texts to biography, history, or psychology). Critics who stress the differences between the two schools, such as Jefferson and Robey (1982), highlight one difference in particular: the emphasis of the New Critics on literature's connection with the real world and the effect, influence and contribution it could make to everyday life.

As Buchbinder (1991) explains, New Criticism originated as a response against three particular reading practices that had been carried over from the nineteenth century into the twentieth. The first was belle-lettrism, from the French term *belle lettres* meaning fine writing which, when applied to literature, referred to the production and reading of only polite and elegant writing. This resulted in two particular attitudes: that the critic, artist and "sensitive" reader were different and separate from other social activities and other humans which in turn led to the attitude as paraphrased by Buchbinder (1991) that "a banker might be able to buy art, but only those of appropriate sensitivity and ability were able to understand it" (p. 13). The second attitude regarding literary study was that it must be a study of the classics, Greek and Latin language and literature, while the study of English literature was to be relegated to those of lesser intelligence and ability in

addition to women. The New Criticism's reaction to belle-lettrism resulted in one of its principal tenets: that anyone could appreciate or apply critical theory or evaluation to literature as long as the "tools" or methods were supplied. As many of the sources note (Abrams, 1981; Baldrick, 1996; Booker, 1996; Buchbinder, 1991; and Rylance, 1989), this tenet is one of the key reasons that the New Criticism became so attractive and accessible to professors, teachers and students alike. The second reaction was against the "great" texts of the past and, as Walter J. Ong notes (cited in Booker, 1996), the New Criticism became preoccupied with instituting an unprecedented emphasis on contemporary literature such that had never been seen in the history of criticism and theory. Rylance (1989) states that the New Criticism became a populist movement to teach criticism on a mass scale.

The second approach to which the New Critics reacted was impressionism – the notion that the individual response would/should take precedence over the actual details of the text. The New Criticism signalled a shift from impressionism and individual response to an emphasis upon the text itself and to regard the work as a separate entity, an independent object, thereby de-emphasizing the social, psychological, political or historical role of the text. Thus, the meaning of a text resided primarily in the text itself. Several New Critics, W.K Wimsett and M. Beardsley, in particular, addressed the importance of the text by targeting what they referred to as the "intentional fallacy" and the "affective fallacy" where certain critics mistakenly equated the meaning of a text to the intention of the author or to the emotional response of the reader (Abrams, 1981; Adams, 1992; Booker, 1996; Buchbinder, 1991; and Jefferson & Robey, 1982).

The third approach to reading practices which initiated a response from the New Critics was historicist criticism which sought to establish the historical context of the work and sought out literary sources and influences (Buchbinder, 1991). The New Critics believed this simply reduced the text to a historical document and consequently would serve to place its meaning in a particular place, time and era which, in turn, would serve to give the author's life a much more powerful role in the meaning of the text.

Other key theoretical elements of the New Criticism, as noted by Abrams (1981), Baldrick (1996), Booker (1996) and Buchbinder (1991), were the concept of the organic unity of the work of art (a tenet which can be seen as a logical response to the New Critics' belief in the independence of the text from social, political or cultural conditions); the idea of close reading which entailed a detailed and careful analysis of the techniques in a work of literature, the object of this close reading being to generate meaning (because of this, the New Critics made a clear distinction between denotative and connotative meaning, making popular and essential to their theory the latter); the popularization of terms such as paradox, ambiguity, irony, contrast, tension, imagery, symbol and metaphor; the belief in a multiplicity of meaning in a text due to the idea that the author was not present in the text (although the New Critics cautioned that this does not mean that a text can mean whatever one wants it to mean as the verbal structures of the text would act as a constraint against this); and a shift of attention to another genre, that of the novel, and a consequent renewed appreciation for this form.

As previously mentioned, the practices and philosophy of the New Criticism served it well in its rise to stardom and in its tenacity, longevity, and popularity. Rylance (1989) has almost itemized the reasons for this success:

> It articulated a political and spiritual view of the world which was in tune with the hardening attitudes of the Cold War of the 1950s when the difference between capitalism and Communism was seen to reside in the former's respect for spiritual values. Art, in New Critical theory, seemed an autonomous entity, composed and permanent in contrast to the strident demands for 'realism' made by left-wing theorists. Meanwhile at a practical-critical level the techniques of the New Criticism were equally attractive. The method was highly portable and adapted to classroom practice; it was cheap in equipment, requiring only the 'words on the page' (preferably in approved anthologies) and not the resources of scholarly libraries; it had a clear sense of purpose and a coherently worked out set of aims and objectives; it required relatively little prior training or learning by teachers or students alike; its terminology and jargon was carefully adapted from that already in use, though standard meanings were often altered...; it drew upon and helped develop a sense of mission and professional identity and expertise; it drew to it the glamour of the new, the topical, the innovative; it could generate a high yield of interpretation apparently very quickly and – within the protocols set – of high and verifiable quality; and its methods and results looked neutral and objective. (pp. 729-730)

The success and practicality of the New Criticism possibly had its greatest influence with students of college, high school and even junior high. Though many students may not have been aware that they were indeed New Critics, or even familiar with the term, they would have been practitioners of its methodologies and followers of its philosophy due almost entirely to one particular medium and legacy of the New Criticism – the textbook. The most prominent and well-known was probably *Understanding Poetry* by Brooks and Warren, first published in 1938 and continuing to be published until 1976 as well as their subsequent texts *Understanding Fiction* (1943) and *Understanding Drama* (1948). Then there was Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1942) and the journal *Scrutiny*, edited by F.R. Leavis and Q.D. Leavis as well as the Leavisites' seven-volume work, *The Pelican Guide to English Literature* (1954-61).

In a discussion of the New Criticism, however brief, the influence and impact of F.R. Leavis and his wife Q.D. Leavis must be given mention. Christopher Norris (cited in Willinsky, 1991) states that Leavis was "undoubtably the single most influential figure in 20th century English literary criticism" and to which he adds, "indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that "English" as a modern university subject was shaped largely by his example, his writings and their influence on successive generations of teachers and students" (p. 83). As a testament to this statement and to the stature of his image, Willinsky (1991) recalls that while on a train ride in England and opening *The Times Literary Supplement*, he found the leading article, "England and Englishness: Ideas of Nationhood in English Poetry 1688-1900" by John Bayley which had situated and planted Leavis squarely within the ideology of Englishness. Reading *The Independent* later, he noticed a book review that was written in classic Leavisite style. In addition to Willinsky's current encounters, there is also a reverential reference made to "Professor Leavis" in both the book and the movie *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2001).

As any scholar or student of literary studies will agree, the New Criticism constituted the English-speaking world's major contribution to literary theory and, due to its monumental impact, continued to dominate the teaching of literature in North America and Great Britain for the better part of the twentieth century. As Robey (1982) states, even with the recent introduction of European literary theory, many of the literary tenets and assumptions of the New Critics are indeed still a significant part of the academic world today. Furthermore, the New Critics offered an alternative theoretical framework to that of structuralism, a framework that, once articulated, caused the battlelines to be drawn between the traditionalists and the New Critics (though as noted by several

sources, when the dust died down there was little fundamental difference between the two camps). These battlelines are still evident though, and to use some New Criticism terminology, with an ironic twist in the organistic whole of literary theory. This twist is in the strategic positioning of offense and defense. While the New Critics entered the literary field and mounted a powerful offensive, the traditionalists were called to battle to defend their theoretical territory. Now, ironically (as is the wont of history and time), the New Critics are the traditionalists who fight defensively to hold and maintain their theoretical territorial ground while the offensive has been mounted by Reader-Response Theory and the powerful "new theories" with their roots in European intellectual and philosophical movements.

READER-RESPONSE/RECEPTION THEORY

It is certainly not untoward or unusual to assume that the fervour of individualism of the 1960s would affect literary theory. The concepts and principles that had been set forth by the New Critics, and had by this time become entrenched, were simply at variance with the attitudes and views of this era. The notion of the autonomy of the text which left the reader virtually powerless and invisible, denying his/her individuality and the progressivism of the time, did not sit well with many of this generation. Selden (1985) also points to other various assaults upon what had one time been considered objective certainties, particularly the seemingly indubitability of science. He points to developments such as Einstein's theory of relativity which had cast doubt upon the belief that knowledge was simply an accumulation of facts; Thomas Kuhn's revolutionary idea that what was considered as scientific fact depended entirely upon the frame of reference

at the time, for which he coined the term paradigm; and the ideas of Gestalt psychology that things were not perceived in unrelated bits and pieces but as meaningful wholes, concomitant with the ideas that the perceiver was not a passive receptor but played an active role in perception and that a single view or vision could be interpreted quite differently (this was very simply demonstrated with the idea of figure and ground). With these scientific and psychological trends in thought, the moving away from objectivity to subjectivity and the emphasis upon determinate individualism, there is no wonder that a reaction to the New Criticism would develop. This reaction took the form of Reader-Response or Reception Theory.

It should by now go without saying that concern for Reader-Response originated with the Greeks. McQuillan (cited in Wolfreys, 1999) states that in Plato's *Republic*, particularly in the cave analogy, Plato had considered the way in which readers received representations, i.e., texts. Aristotle's concern with the effect on a reader is familiar to anyone who has studied tragedy in high school, the feelings of pity and fear invoked in the reader being termed catharsis. As Selden (1989) indicates, the history of Reader-Response Theory is rooted in the discipline of phenomenology which is the study of phenomena. Modern foundational concepts of phenomenology were laid down by its founding father, Edmund Husserl, who argued that the only thing one can be certain of is one's consciousness of the world and that one can not say with any certainty that objects exist "out there" outside the mind. He further purports that this consciousness of the world is not passive but is active and forming. Thus, the underlying assumption and controlling tenet of Husserl's phenomenology is that the individual consciousness is the

basis for understanding the world thereby emphasising subjectivity, the individual and his or her active, formative role.

As Selden (1989) further points out, Husserl's phenomenology was adopted and adapted by the Geneva School of Critics which included the Swiss, Jean Rousset and Jean Starobinski; the French, Jean Pierre Richard; and the American, J. Hillis Miller. This school then applied key aspects of phenomenology to literary criticism resulting in grounds for a literary theory based upon an individual conscious perception and subjective experience as it relates to text. The Belgian critic, Georges Poulet, also added more fuel for the launch of Reader-Response/Reception Theory with his essay "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority" (cited in Tompkins, 1980). His formative argument was that a book was not an exterior object like a vase or statue but transferred an "interiority" to the reader and contained a consciousness. Thus, a book involved the meeting of two consciousnesses – that of the reader and the writer. Selden (1989) uses the following vivid analogy: "The book I read lives its life through me like a vampire living off another's blood" (p. 104).

Another contribution to the growth of Reader-Response/Reception Theory came from the field of semiology which, according to Selden (1989), had already developed some sophistication within the discipline. A problem for Reader-Response/Reception Theory centred around whether the text triggered the reader's act of interpretation or whether the reader's own interpretative strategies found solutions to the problems posed by the text. The semiotician and novelist, Umberto Eco (1979), argued from essays dating back to 1959 that some texts are open which invite the reader's collaboration in the interpretation of meaning while others are closed and predetermine the reader's response.

He also theorized upon the use of codes and how those available to the reader would aid in textual meaning and interpretation.

The final contributions to Reader-Response/Reception Theory lay in Roland Barthes' influential essay "The Death of the Author" which stressed the involvement of the reader in the production of meaning and in the contribution of the Structuralist Narrative Theory of Gerald Prince. It was Prince who asked why so much effort was spent on describing and analysing the narrative view but no questions were asked about whom the narrator addressed. According to Wolfreys (1999) and Selden (1985), Prince coined the term "narratee" for this person which he emphasised was not the same as the reader, the narratee being the person whom the text addressed.

Sources such as Abrams (1981), Booker (1996), Latimer (1989), Selden (1985 & 1989) and Wolfreys (1999), indicate that Reader-Response/Reception Theory is not a unified field of thought and contains fairly eclectic approaches regarding the role of the reader and the text. The following should provide a brief survey of the more prominent forms of Reader-Response/Reception Theory and their proponent theorists. It should be noted at this point that the Europeans use the term rezeption äesthetik/Aesthetics of Reception or Reception Theory while the Americans refer to it as Reader- Response Theory.

Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss are the major European figures in reception aesthetics, Iser's influence being felt more strongly in America. Iser's work is rooted in phenomenology, particularly the philosophy of Roman Ingarden who defined the literary text as "a production of the interaction between the objective existence of literary texts and the subjective conscious of their readers" (cited in Booker, 1996, p. 44). Iser,

borrowing from Ingarden, proposed that the literary text was full of blanks and gaps which must be filled by the reader. Therefore a reader is continually imagining how a sentence will continue and is using his/her imagination, skill and experience to fill in these blanks. Simultaneously, the reader picks up on questions posed by the text and its blanks that are then connected to various explanations by the reader. As Booker (1996) notes, the process of filling in the blanks in a literary text is referred to by Ingarden and Iser as "concretization." The process of concretization, obviously, gives the reader considerable creative control over response and meaning, although there are certain guides and limits placed upon the possibilities of meaning and interpretation. Booker (1996) refers to this concept as "bioactive" in that there is active participation on the part of both reader and text in the formation of meaning.

Iser also emphasised the structuralist idea of "extratextual reality" in this bioactive process. Simply, for this process to occur, the reader must draw upon familiar experiences, knowledge, cultural material, etc. from both the real world and the world of literature which Iser termed the "repertoire" of the text. Regarding the see-saw issue of whether the reader contributes to a text's meaning or whether there are structures or triggers within the text which serve to direct a reader's interpretation, Iser offers the distinction between implied and actual reader. Selden (1985) defines these terms, explaining that the implied reader is created by the text through "response inviting structures" (p. 121) that propel the reader and reading into a particular direction; the actual reader's interpretation is formed by his/her existing stock of experiences, knowledge, predispositions, etc. which are brought to the reading and serve to formulate meaning.

Iser's contemporary in Reception Theory is Hans Robert Jauss who, according to Selden (1985), tried to reach a compromise between Russian Formalism which ignored history and social theories which ignored the text. Jauss' contribution was to add a historical dimension to Reception Theory. As such, his theory would emphasise a close analytical detail to structure (derived from Russian Formalism) while simultaneously emphasising the role of history, particularly as it impacts upon the formation of meaning in the reader. Jauss borrowed Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigms, noting that the reader operates within a particular framework and, depending upon the individual reader, he/she may be aware of and be able to share in the historical paradigm of a particular text. Jauss used the term "horizon of expectation" to describe how a reader judges texts of different historical periods. If the reader can share in the horizon of expectation, the text will be understood and interpreted. The words of Jauss from "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (1970) (cited in Rice and Waugh, 1992) explain it thus:

> If ... one considers the previous horizon of expectations of a text as a paradigmatic isotropy, which is transferred to an immanent syntactical horizon of expectations to the degree to which the message grows, the process of reception becomes describable in the expansion of a semiological procedure which arises between the development and the correction of the system. A corresponding process of continuous horizon setting and horizon changing also determines the relation of the individual text to the succession of texts which form the genre. The new text evokes from the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, changed or just reproduced. (pp. 84-85)

Wolfreys (1999) states that Jauss "argues that while different historical periods may have their own dominant interpretation of a text, the meaning of a text lies in the fusion of these different interpretations over time" (p. 147). As Rice and Waugh (1992) point out, Jauss further draws upon hermeneutic theory, particularly the perspective of Hans

Gadamer who views the text as "situated in an endless dialogue between past and present in which the present position of the interpreter will always influence how the past is understood and received" (p. 76).

In North America, Reader-Response Theory grew as a direct reaction against the techniques and philosophy of the New Criticism with its emphasis on affective fallacy as expounded by W.K. Wimsatt and M. Beardsley and its insistence that meaning resided in the text, the task of the reader then being to uncover this established and set meaning. Several leading proponents of Reader-Response Theory are Norman Holland and David Bleich, both working within a psychological frame; Michael Riffaterre working within semiotics; and Stanley Fish working within an experiential framework. The theoretical position of Fish was termed affective stylistics, a direct salvo aimed at W.K. Wimsatt and M. Beardsley and their idea of the fallaciousness of the role of the reader. Affective stylistics concentrated on reading as a "temporary, experiential process" and was later reworked and redeveloped to include the more interesting notion of "interpretative communities" (cited in Rice & Waugh, 1992). Fish's Reader-Response Theory proposed that all readers are members of interpretative communities which train readers into a shared set of expectations about how a text should be read and about what it might mean. As such, when a reader reads, s/he encounters certain stylistic devices to which s/he reacts, adjusts and updates his/her interpretation according to the conventions of his/her interpretative community. It is these anticipated reevaluations and adjustments of the reader that result in interpretation and meaning. Therefore, Fish believed that one should not focus on interpreting the meaning but upon describing these experiences which the reader encounters or, as Selden (1989) notes, concentrate not upon what a work means

but upon what it does. Because Fish's approach granted a more dominant role to the text in its ability to provoke a reader's response, it is often referred to as "text-active" (Booker, 1996, p. 43). Fish also had specific views of the reader whom he termed informed or ideal: "The critic [reader] has the responsibility of becoming not one but a number of informed readers, each of whom will be identified by a matrix of political, cultural, and literary determinants" (cited in Booker, 1996, p. 48). Criticism of Reader-Response Theory is often aimed directly at this concept (as is similarly the case with Iser's implied and actual reader) as most readers would not have the critical experience and literary knowledge to recognize some of these stylistic devices which trigger meaning.

Norman Holland and David Bleich have formulated a Reader-Response Theory with its basis in psychology. As indicated by Booker (1996) and Selden (1985), Holland believes that readers respond to text and derive meaning according to their identity themes. Holland (cited in Booker, 1996) defines an identity theme as "the individual awareness of the continuity of his existence in space and time and his recognition of others' awareness of his existence; more his awareness of the continuity in the style of his individuality and its existence and the coincidence of his personal style with his meaning for significant others in his immediate community (p. 47). As an example, Selden (1985) cites the following case given by Holland "of a boy compulsively driven to read detective stories to satisfy his aggressive feelings towards his mother by allying himself with the murderer" (p. 122). On a more typical note, readers assert control and make meaning of text by discovering unifying themes and structures which relate to their identity themes,

thus meaning and interpretation are incumbent upon an interplay between the unity of the text and the reader's psychological identity.

David Bleich's Reader-Response Theory, though complex, is based upon a simple shift from an objective to a subjective paradigm. Bleich states that: "Knowledge is made by people and not found ... [because] the object of observation appears changed by the act of observation" (cited in Selden, 1985, p. 123) and he also insists that advances in knowledge are determined by the needs of the community. Key concepts of his Reader-Response Theory are subjective criticism and experience which, according to Selden (1985), entail:

> (i) the reader's spontaneous "response" to a text, and (ii) the "meaning" the reader attributed to it. The latter is usually represented as an "objective" interpretation (something offered for negotiation in a pedagogic situation), but is necessarily developed from the *subjective response* of the reader. Whatever system of thought is being employed..., interpretations of particular texts will normally reflect the subjective individuality of a personal 'response'. (p. 124)

Perhaps the literary critic and educationist who has done more for Reader-Response Theory in its popularization, influence, and use is Louise Rosenblatt. Yet there is a conspicuous absence of any frame of reference in the compendia of literary criticism and theory. Other critics and scholars have, as of late, remarked and written upon this absence, Willinsky (1991) referring to it by the phrases "minority position" and "sense of isolation" and discusses it in terms of Rosenblatt's own indication that "she suffered an undue neglect in a manner related to questions of gender and education in our society" (p. 138). Bleich (cited in Willinsky, 1991) has speculated that "for reasons not altogether clear – perhaps having to do with her being a woman in a School of Education – her work did not (or was not permitted to) enter the continuing critical exchange in academic

literary communities" (p. 138). Be that as it may, her *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and her *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978) have had a monumental influence upon Reader-Response Theory and curriculum development and have also allowed students and teachers at one point or another to utilize Reader-Response Theory and engage in its practice. Faust (2000) believes that with the disarray in the field of literary studies, educationists and curriculum scholars are revisiting the ideas of Rosenblatt and her theory with a view to develop creative and cohesive approaches to the teaching of English language arts. But more of these ideas to come.

CHAPTER FIVE: POSTMODERN THEORIES

POSTMODERNISM

As time, change and circumstance ushered out the era of the enlightenment to make way for modernism and its avant-garde trappings, so to has modernism been intellectually ousted by the movement of postmodernism. In accordance with this notion of separate and identifiable movements, times and eras, Sarup (1993) notes that "Postmodernism suggests what came after modernity; it refers to the incipient or actual dissolution of those social forms associated with modernity (p. 130). However, Sarup (1993) further notes (the literature suggesting likewise) that there are many ambiguities surrounding modernism and postmodernism such as the idea of a continuity between the two which intimates simply an extension of the era or movement; the opposing idea of a radical break and polarization of the two; the idea that though both are viewed as separate entities, there is a mixing, and therefore blurring, of tenets, principles and work of the two; and, the notion that postmodernism is not an actual change or shift in an era but is simply an intellectual mood. While there are many arguments as to its actuality and conditions, there are many who have concisely, and some not so concisely, nailed down the specific emergence of postmodernism, as well as having hammered out definitive and workable definitions of this era/movement/mood.

The term postmodernism was first used in Spanish by Frederico de Onis in the 1930s and was first circulated in the world of architecture. Boyne and Rattansi (1990) state that it then gained prominence in the literary commentaries of Irving Howe, Harry Levin, Leslie Fiedler, and Ihab Hassan during the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1970s and

1980s, further prominence, coupled with notoriety, was accorded postmodernism due to its adoption by European theorists. Its claim to fame during those decades may be seen as resting squarely on the shoulders of one particular French European theorist, Jean-Francois Lyotard and his publication in 1979 of *The Postmodern Condition*, a critique of the state of knowledge at that time. According to Ray (1991), by this time postmodernism had "migrated rapidly until it now seem[ed] to designate simultaneously an aesthetic style, a cultural condition, a critical practice, an economic condition, and a political attitude" (p. 131).

The postmodern theorist, Ihab Hassan, is one who is directly associated with distinguishing modernism from postmodernism. His typology, given in the table below (cited in Powell,1998, p. 17), is cited in many treatises on the postmodern and elucidates a marked and concise differentiation between the two movements.

Table 5-1

Modernism	Postmodernism
• Form (conjunctive/closed)	• Antiform (disjuncture/open)
• Purpose	• Play
• Design	• Chance
• Hierarchy	• Anarchy
• Art Object/Finished Work	• Process/Performance/Happening
• Presence	• Absence
• Centering	• Dispersal
• Genre/Boundary	• Text/Intertext
• Root/Depth	• Rhizome/Surface

Marshall (1992) offers the following as to what is the postmodern:

> Postmodernism is about language. About how it controls, how it determines meaning, and how we try to exert control through language. About how language restricts, closes down, insists that it stands for some thing. Postmodernism is about how "we" are defined within that language, and within specific historical, social, cultural matrices. It's about race, class, gender, erotic identities and practices, nationality, and ethnicity. It's about difference. It's about power and powerlessness, about empowerment and about all the steps in between and beyond and unthought of....It's about those threads that we trace, and trace, and trace. But not to a conclusion. To increased knowledge, yes. But never to innocent knowledge. To better understanding, yes. But never to pure insight. Postmodernism is about history. But not the kind of "history" that lets us think we can know the past....It's about chance. It's about power. It's about information. And more information. And more....The word postmodern does not refer to a period or a "movement". It really isn't an "ism"; it isn't really a thing. It's a moment but more a moment in logic than time. Temporally, it's a space.(pp. 4-5)

Silverman (1989) further delineates the philosophy of the postmodern thusly:

> The meaning and function of postmodernism is to operate at places of closure, at the limits of modernist productions and practices, at the margins of what proclaims itself to be new and a break with tradition, and the multiple edges of these claims to self-consciousness and auto-reflection....Its very significance is to marginalize, delimit, disseminate, and decenter the primary (and often secondary) works of modernist and premodernist cultural inscriptions.
>
> Postmodernist thinking offers to re-read the very texts and traditions that have made premodernist and modernist writing possible-but above all it offers a reinscription of those very texts and traditions by examining the respects in which they set limits to their own enterprises, in which they incorporate other texts in a juxtapositional and intertextual relation to themselves. Postmodern thinking involves rethinking-finding the places of difference within texts and institutions, examining the inscriptions of indecidability, noting the dispersal of signification, identity, and centered unity across a plurivalent texture of epistemological and metaphysical knowledge production.
>
> Postmodernism brings the modernist hegemony to closure (p. 1).

As with all movements, there are inherent characteristic elements that may be generalized about the nature of such approaches. These elemental truisms (though the po-mo proponents would find much objection to the nature and use of the word "truism") have been enunciated and established by the seminal and totemic grandparents of the

movement and have been furthered developed and popularized by their coterie and cortege. Possibly one of the most important of these foundational tenets was established by Lyotard and his *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) which, upon an examination of the state of knowledge, laid forth the postmodern mantra that there is no foundational truth or reality, no absolutes, no eternals, and that all knowledge is but a cultural construct contingent upon cultural groups and systems and, as such, is simply subjective positioning. Introsumed within this theoretical matrix, and emerging in its own right as a postmodern pillar, is the notion that there exists no grand or meta-narratives and that these so-called narratives are merely the historically specific social and cultural constructs of a dominant social class which have served the covert function of emphasising members of the dominant class at the expense of the "other". This view becomes even more narrow as the dominant class is traditionally ruled by middle-aged, masculinized males who have dominated the natural and social sciences, as well as politics and business. Simply put, these meta-narratives have been reduced to a convenient political convention through the working lenses of postmodernism.

In addition to these postmodern postulates, there are a number of principles that weave the fabric of postmodernism and are as follows: the conceptualization of the power of language , its complexity, its elusivity, and its surface meaning; the idea that language is the essence of culture and, because of the nature of language, all constructs are relational; the questioning of the notion of authority and the downplaying of experts; the conception of knowledge as being one of utility and function; the death of ideologies; the celebration of chaos; the notion of the plurality of truth and the emphasis on fragmentation and multiplicity; the abandonment of objectivity; the loss of faith in

science; the idea that the world is a construction of ideologies; and the notion that the world is textual and is woven of former texts (Lyotard, 1979; Barry,1989; Boyne and Rattansi, 1990; Silverman, 1990; Marshall, 1992; Waugh, 1992; Sarup, 1993; Lemke, 1994 and 1996).

Ray (1991) states that the best way to understand postmodernism is with a list and has composed the following enlightening and creative alphabet typology of the postmodern:

A: allegory, appropriation, aberrant decoding, *Arcades Project* , Ashberry

B: banality, *bricolage*, biographeme, Benjamin, Barthes, Baudrillard, Borges, Barthelme

C: collage, co-option, complicity, camp, conceptual art, consumption, computer, compact disc, chance, Cage, Calvino

D: displacement, dandyism, dead-pan, *detournement*, deconstruction, difference, desire, democratization, *Dictionary of Received Ideas*, Derrida, Duchamp

E: exchange value, everyday life, ecology, entropy (Pynchon)

F: feminism, film, fashion, fetish, *Finnegan's Wake*, Foucault

G: graffiti, Godard

H: heterogeneity, heteroglossia (Bakhtin)

I: image, iterability (Derrida), intertextuality, implosion (Baudrillard)

J: *jouissance*

K: knell (*Glas*), knowledge

L: lateness, levelling, Lacan

M: mechanical reproduction, media, MTV, multi-national corporations, montage, mass culture, mime (Derrida), margins

N: nuclear, neo, nostaglia

O: overdetermination, OULIPO (Workshop for Potential Literature)

P: pop art, pun, parody, pastiche, *poste*, plagiarism, photography, popularization, performance

Q: quotation

R: readymade, recuperation, remotivation, repetition, Rauschenberg

S: Situationists, spectacle, speed, sign, signature, site-specific art, Sirk

T: television, tape recorders, textuality

U: urinal (Duchamp), uniformity (Warhol)

V: volatility (semiotic), video, vernacular, voyeuristic, *V* (Pynchon)

W: word-processor, Walkman, Warhol

X: Xerox

Y: yuppies

Z: *[S]/Z* (pp. 141-142).

From even a brief perusal of Ray's (1991) list, it becomes quite obvious that there are characteristics of postmodernism that are simply ordinary and everyday, and seemingly not the stuff from which philosophical intellectual movements are made. This leads to another facet surrounding the movement, its cultural aura. This cultural aura is very specific and definitive, so much so that postmodernism is often used interchangeably with the terms media culture, consumer society, and information-technological society.

Interestingly, postmodernism is often correlated with the emergence of computer technology.

The final point to be made regarding postmodernism deals with its proponents and derivative approaches and critiques. To adopt the style used by Ray(1991) above, what follows is a listing of some key postmodern theoreticians: M. Bakhtin, R. Barthes, J Baudrillard, W. Benjamin, J. Derrida, T. Eagleton, S. Fish, M. Foucault, the Frankfurt School, J. Habermas, W. Iser, J. Kristeva, T. Kuhn, J. Lacan, J.F. Lyotard, H. Marcuse, and the Yale deconstructionists (Bloom, de Man etc.). Some of the approaches and critiques associated with postmodernism are those of post structuralism, deconstruction, Queer Theory, feminism, Marxism, critical pedagogy, New Historicism, and cultural studies. It is into these theoretical thickets that this study will now delve.

THE NEW THEORIES

The last quarter of the century saw a decisive movement in the expounding and establishing and in the promoting and proliferating of literary theory, culminating in an explosion of such during the 1980s. As many critics noted, theory had become *de rigeur* and highly fashionable, to the point that in some circles it had become fetishized. Several resultant effects were the so-called theory wars ranged both between differing schools of new theory and between the traditionalists and the new theorists (the traditionalists being more or less synonymous with the New Critics); the appropriation/misappropriation of continental philosophies as the underpinnings of these new theories; the dissolution of an established framework of literature; and the resistance to theory. Some of these theories are in relative infancy, such as post-colonialism and queer theory, while others, such as

deconstruction, have been around since the 1960s. In reference to the latter point, some critics have noticed that some of these new theories have become old theories and are beginning to fade from the limelight. Wolfreys (1998) has observed critics who believe deconstruction "is not as widely expounded as it was a few years ago, at least in the United States, and this it is claimed ... is because 'deconstruction' is no longer fashionable; it is *passé,* it is dying" (p. 31). Regardless of tenure or fashion, these new theories have made their mark upon literary studies and, through scholarship, practice and societal thoughts, trends and conditions, have become not merely represented but an inherent part of literary studies and practice.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND DECONSTRUCTION

The intellectual movement known as structuralism was based largely upon the work of Saussure, his signified and signifier, his notion of the arbitrariness of signs and his belief in the connection established between signified and signifier. During the 1960s, several philosophers, psychologists, historians and literary critics (Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes) adopted Saussure's theory of signs but with one crucial difference – the rules of the signifier. These theorists disagreed with this stable linking between signified and signifier and proposed, rather, an instability between the two, thus allowing the signifier to totally determine signification, thereby granting a total freedom and disallowing a final signified. Barry (1995) offers these further distinctions between structuralism and poststructuralism:

1. ORIGINS. Structuralism derives ultimately from Linguistics. Linguistics is a discipline which has always been inherently confident about the possibility of establishing objective knowledge.... Structuralism inherits this

confidently scientific outlook: it too believes in method, system, and reason as being able to establish reliable truths.

By contrast, post-structuralism derives ultimately from philosophy. Philosophy is a discipline which has always tended to emphasize the difficulty of achieving secure knowledge about things.... Post-structuralism inherits this habit of skepticism, and intensifies it. It regards any confidence in the scientific method as naive, and even derives a certain masochistic intellectual pleasure from knowing for certain that we *can't* know anything for certain, fully conscious of the irony and paradox which doing this entails.

2. TONE AND STYLE. Structuralist writing tends towards abstraction and generalisation: it aims for a detached, 'scientific coolness' of tone....

Post-structuralist writing, by contrast, tends to be much more emotive. Often the tone is urgent and euphoric, and the style flamboyant and self-consciously showy....

3. ATTITUDE TO LANGUAGE. Structuralists accept that the world is constructed through language, in the sense that we do not have access to reality other than through the linguistic medium.... [It] decides to live with that fact.... After all, language is an orderly system....

By contrast, post-structuralism is much more fundamentalist in insisting upon the consequences of the view that, in effect, reality itself is textual. Post-structuralism develops what threatens to become terminal anxiety about the possibility of achieving *any* knowledge through language....

Likewise, the meaning words have can never be guaranteed one hundred percent pure. Thus, words are always 'contaminated' by their opposites....

4. PROJECT.... Structuralism, firstly, questions our ways of structuring and categorising reality, and prompts us to break free of habitual modes of perception or categorisation, but it believes that we can thereby attain a more reliable view of things.

Post-structuralism is much more fundamental: it distrusts the very notion of reason, and the idea of the human being as an independent entity, preferring the notion of the 'dissolved' or 'constructed' subject, whereby what we may think of as the 'individual' is really the product of social and linguistic forces – that is not an essence at all, merely a 'tissue of textualities.' (pp. 63-65)

From "structural" differences, one now moves into structural pillars. Two of these pillars of poststructuralism have been created by the ideas espoused in two literary essays, one by Roland Barthes and the other by Jacques Derrida. Barthes' "The Death of an Author" (1968) signalled his move from structuralism to poststructuralism with his assertion that the text was independent of any author and immune to the possibility of being unified (textual independence) and, hence, as Barry (1995) notes, " post-structuralism revelled in the free-play of meanings and the escape from all forms of textual authority" (p. 66). The second pillar was created by Jacques Derrida's entrance upon the intellectual stage in 1960 as a guest lecturer at Berkeley with his lecture entitled "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." This paper postulated his belief the modern era was undergoing a radical break from the past ways of thinking, particularly the notion of the centering of all things in the universe and this decentering entailed no absolutes or fixed points, everything being "free play" as his title suggested (Abrams, 1981). Derrida's rapid rise to prominence and prolific writing drew for him from the intellectual world another accolade – as the father of deconstruction.

As Wolfreys, in *Deconstruction – Derrida* (1998), emphasises, there is much doubt, due to the philosophical nature and underlying tenets of deconstruction, if it actually exists. As Wolfreys (1998) noted, Derrida himself began an interview with: "Deconstruction, if such a thing exists" (p. 7) and Wolfreys affirms that Derrida does not/ has not practised deconstruction. Wolfreys (2000) offers the following quotation from Derrida regarding the question of the existence of deconstruction:

> [Deconstruction] cannot be applied because deconstruction is not a doctrine; it's not a method, nor is it a set of rules or tools; it cannot be separated from performatives .... On the one hand, there is no 'applied deconstruction.' But on the

> other hand, there is nothing else, since deconstruction doesn't consist in a set of theorems, axioms, tools, rules, techniques, methods. If deconstruction, then, is nothing by itself, the only thing it can do is apply, to be applied, to something else, not only in more than one language, but also with something else. There is no deconstruction, deconstruction has no specific object.... Deconstruction cannot be applied and cannot *not* be applied. So we have to deal with this *aporia* [contradiction, irreconcilable paradox] and this is what deconstruction is about. (p. 270)

Deconstruction – Derrida (1998), authored by Wolfreys, as well further presents a succession of Derridian quotes to offer more enlightenment as to what deconstruction is/is not, does/does not:

> All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an *analysis* nor a *critique*.... It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a *simple element*, toward an *indissoluble origin*. These values, like that of analysis, are themselves philosophemes subject to deconstruction. No more is it a critique in a general sense or in a Kantian sense....
>
> I would say the same about *method*. Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one.... It is true that in certain circles (university or cultural, especially in the United States) the technical and methodological 'metaphor' that seems necessarily attached to the very word 'deconstruction' has been able to seduce or lead astray. Hence the debate that has developed in these circles: Can deconstruction become a method for reading and for interpretation? Can it thus let itself be reappropriated and domesticated by academic institutions?...
>
> It must also be made clear that deconstruction is not even an *act* or an operation. Not only because there would be something 'passive' about it.... Not only because it does not return to an individual or collective *subject* who would take the initiative and apply it to an object, a text, a theme, etc. Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject.... (pp. 51-52)

One somehow feels that with such an elusive quality and disembodied spirit of existence/nonexistence, that one is dealing with a deconstruction ghost. Nonetheless, as there are those who not only believe in ghosts but who testify to sightings and encounters, there are also those who believe in the existence of deconstruction and offer testimony to

its definitive quality and methodology. Wolfreys (1998) offers first a dictionary definition from the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (Adamson, 1993) which states quite confidently that deconstruction is "a school of philosophy [and] ... deconstruction seeks ... [or] deconstruction celebrates limitless interpretation and an unrestricted semantic play" (p. 33). The following literary critics offer their views, definitions and methodological approach of deconstruction as a literary theory. J. Hillis Miller states that:

> Deconstruction as a mode of interpretation works by a careful and circumspect entering of each textual labyrinth. The critic feels his way from figure to figure, from concept to concept, from mythical motif to mythical motif, in a repetition which is in no sense a parody. It employs nevertheless, the subversive power present in even the most exact and ironical doubling. The deconstructive critic seeks to find, by this process of retracing, the element in the system studied which is alogical, the thread in the text in question which will unravel it all, or the loose stone which will pull down the whole building. The deconstruction, rather, annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated that ground, knowingly and unknowingly. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of the text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air.
>
> The uncanny moment in Derrida's criticism, the vacant place around which all his work is organized, is the formulation and reformulation of this nonexistence of the ground out of which the whole, textual structure seems to rise.... (Miller, 1991, p. 126)

Norris (1988) offers the following comment as to what deconstruction is:

> To 'deconstruct' a text is to draw out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the object of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means. (p. 7)

Eagleton (1981) characterizes deconstruction by its flamboyant nature and, as is characteristic of his own style, constructs the following lively and flamboyant definition:

> Deconstruction is in one sense an extraordinarily modest proposal: a sort of patient, probing reformism of the text, which is not, so to speak, to be confronted over the barricades but cunningly waylaid in the corridors and suavely chivvied

> into revealing its ideological hand. Stoically convinced of the unbreakable grip of the metaphysical closure, the deconstructionist, like any responsible trade union bureaucrat confronting management, must settle for that and negotiate what he or she can within the left-overs and stray contingencies casually unabsorbed by the textual power system. But to say no more than this is to do deconstuction a severe injustice. For it ignores that other face of deconstruction which is its hair-raising *radicalism* – the nerve and daring with which it knocks the stuffing out of every smug concept and leaves the well-groomed text shamefully dishevelled. It ignores, in short the *madness* and violence of deconstruction, its scandalous urge to think the unthinkable, the flamboyance with which it poses itself on the very brink of meaning and dances there, pounding away at the crumbling cliff-edge beneath its feet and prepared to fall with it into the sea of unlimited semiosis or schizophrenia. (p. 134)

Having established its existence and methodology, deconstruction, as it bears on literary criticism, is a strategy of reading. As stated by Davis and Schliefer (1994), because western thought is based upon dualistic thinking (all aspects of thought are set in binary opposites such as day/night, man/woman, good/bad), one member of the set being presented as superior to the other inferior one, deconstruction sets about to reverse this hierarchy and therefore illustrates the impossibility of any particular meaning. Johnson (cited in Booker, 1996) illustrates her use of the process of deconstruction of binary oppositions in the reading of literature:

> The starting point is often a binary difference that is subsequently shown to be an illusion created by the workings of differences much harder to pin down. The differences *between* entities (prose and poetry, man and woman, literature and theory, guilt and innocence) are shown to be based on a repression *within* entities, ways in which an entity differs from itself.... The "deconstruction" of a binary opposition is thus not an annihilation of all values or differences; it is an attempt to follow the subtle, powerful differences already at work within the illusion of a binary opposition. (p. 60)

Abrams (1981) describes the deconstructive procedure as a "double reading:"

> [I]n one aspect, it recognises the "legibility" of a text, as proffering illusory effects of meaning: in its other aspect, it deploys deconstructive operative terms, such as difference and dissemination, to show that text inevitably involves an aporia ... which subverts its own grounds and coherence and disperses its seeming

> meanings into indeterminancy. Derrida's claim is that there is no possible way to escape the logocentric system of language and its internal self-contradiction; all texts thus in fact deconstruct themselves, in a way that a deconstructive reading merely exposes. (p. 40)

Since becoming *en vogue*, there has been much opposition to the use of deconstruction both from the literary and philosophical world. Those practitioners of philosophy see the use of deconstruction by literary critics as an appropriation or misappropriation of philosophical thought that has consequently reduced deconstruction to methodological procedures and mere protocols, rules and programs. Wolfreys (1998) mentions a number of philosophers who have expounded upon this argument, notably Irene Harvey and Rudolphe Gasché whose writings claim that literary critics are neither trained or are unversed in reading philosophy and improperly construe, use, and apply philosophical tenets. Gasché states that literary criticism, conceived fashionably as 'theory,' operates by "the ridiculous application of the results of philosophical debates to the literary field" (cited in Wolfreys, 1998, p. 37). Rorty (1995) speaks in similar vein:

> [T]his chapter will be concerned with the deconstruction movement narrowly construed as a school of literary criticism. Despite this focus ... it will be necessary to spend a good half of the available space on deconstructionist philosophizing. This is because deconstructionism is perhaps the most theory-oriented, the most specifically philosophical movement in the history of literary criticism. The catchwords which pepper its readings of literary texts ... are unintelligible to those who lack a philosophical background. (p. 168)

The final word on deconstructionism will go to Derrida himself:

> I am not sure that deconstruction can function as a literary *method* as such. I am wary of the idea of methods of reading. The laws of reading are determined by that particular text that is being read. This does not mean that we should simply abandon ourselves to the text, or represent and repeat it in a purely passive manner. It means that we must remain faithful, even if it implies a certain violence, to the injunctions of the text. These injunctions will differ from one text to the next so that one cannot prescribe one general method of reading. In this sense deconstruction is not a method. (Cited in Wolfreys, 2000, p 271)

MARXISM

Karl Marx (1818-1883), a German philosopher, and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a German sociologist, were the founders of the Marxist school of thought. Marxism differs markedly from traditional philosophy in that it is a materialist one as opposed to an idealist one. Idealist philosophic systems were based upon abstract and ideal concepts whereas Marx based his upon physical reality. As Booker (1996) succinctly puts it, "Marx believes – in contrast to Rene Descartes's idealist dictum, "I think, therefore I am" – that material conditions in the world are prior to and play a determining role in human thought about the world" (p. 71). Selden (1985) summarizes the basic tenets of Marxism (though he states that summarization of Marxism is as easy as summarizing the basic doctrines of Christianity) by providing the following oft-quoted statements of Marx himself:

> The Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.
>
> It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (p. 23)

The first statement is contradictory to the idealist tradition and suppositions a real and material world. The second statement contradicts traditional philosophic thought which believed that the expression of ideas, culture, religion, life, etc. was the creation of thought and reason; Marx reversed this and stated that all systems were the products of social and economic existence. Selden (1985) provides a concrete example of this belief by relating it to legal systems. Marx would contend that such systems were not the pure manifestations of human thought or divine reason but ultimately reflected the interests of the dominant class.

Marxism, like most if not all literary theories, does not conform to a real, pre-packaged formula but manifests a number of "criticisms" or traditions. Frow (1991) distinguishes three main traditions which he refers to as the Hegelian, the Structuralist, and the Gramscian. Hegelian Marxism addressed questions about the evolution of literature, its reflections of class relations, and its function in society. Selden (1985) outlines several key principles of this tradition: *portinost* which is translated as a commitment to the working-class cause of the Party; *norodnost*, translated as popularity and achieved by a work of art by expressing a high degree of social awareness and revealing a true sense of the social conditions and feelings of the time; and *klassovost*, the class nature of art in which there is a double interest – the writer's commitment or class interest and the social realism of the work. Works are therefore accordingly judged as to the degree in which they reveal the social developments of the time. The Hegelian theoretical tradition is most often associated with Georg Lukács who viewed realism as the fundamental bourgeois mode of literature. According to Booker (1996): "For Lukács, the great bourgeois historical novels cohere because they narrate the grand historical process (sometimes referred to as the bourgeois cultural revolution) through which the bourgeoisie gained this power. Such novels thus become the official literature ..." (p. 75).

The domination of structuralism during the 1960s also had its influence on Marxist criticism resulting in, as mentioned, structuralist Marxism. Whereas Hegelian Marxism was concerned with the problem of representation, structuralist Marxism was concerned with the institutional structure of literary production. According to Frow (1991), the crucial concern of structuralist Marxism was with such questions as what are the mechanisms of the production of literary knowledge, how and to what extent can this

knowledge be differentiated from ideology, and how does it relate to scientific knowledge?

The third tradition of Marxist Theory, Gramscian, is defined by Frow (1991) as:

> ... not a particular allegiance to Gramsci's thought but a more diffuse attention to the specific conditions of ruling class hegemony. This would include, for example, analysis of literature as a historical institution [here he cites the work of Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton]...; of the class function of intellectuals; and of the contradictory interrelationships between canonical and non-canonical cultural forms as they are used in the formation of a 'national-popular' culture. (p. 718)

Having dispensed with the key traditions, some key terms which have proven particularly useful to critics will be noted. Marxist literary theory deals with and explores the notion of *alienation*, the result of the exploitation of one class by another. Alienated workers have undergone *reification*. Barry (1995) describes this as "the way, when capitalist goals and questions of profit and loss are paramount, workers are bereft of their full humanity and are thought of as 'hands' or 'the labour force,' so that, for instance, the effects of industrial closures are calculated in purely economic terms. People, in a word, become things" (p. 157). *Economic determinism* involves the terms *base* (the material means of production, distribution and exchange) and *superstructure* (the forms of culture, ideas, art, religion, etc.), and purports the view that cultural ideas are determined by the nature of the economic base. *Commodification* is the idea that a commodity is produced not for use but for exchange within the market system thereby being valued not for its use but for its price. Booker (1996) views commodification as representing "the embodiment of powerful and mysterious hidden forces which, in some cases, endows the commodity with an almost mystical quality and leads individuals to become enthralled with the commodity, thus making the commodity a fetish, or the object of an intense emotional

attachment" (p. 73). As well, because human labour is a commodity, human beings also become commodified. Two final key terms are ideology and hegemony, the latter being coined by Antonio Gramsci (1977), and defined by him as the ability of the bourgeoisie to obtain the "spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (p. 12).

Having established traditions and terminology, the final task is to establish the role of Marxist literary theory. Haslett (1999) states that the most fundamental work of the Marxist critic is the refusal to separate art from society thus attempting to situate art within a total context (what she terms "an ambitious project"); that the relationship between the economic and the literary is its central concern (and is also the subject of its most heated debates); and that literature permits us to perceive the ideology of its context although this is not always obviously reflected in the literature as the underclasses often collude or consent to the prevailing ideology (hegemony). Barry (1995) further adds to Marxist literary theory as the theorist must:

1. ... make a division between the 'overt' ... and 'covert' ... content of a literary work ... and then relate the *covert* subject matter of the literary work to basic Marxist themes ... [such as class struggle, alienation, hegemony etc.]

2. ... relate the context of a work to the social-class status of the author. In such cases an assumption is made ... that the author is unaware of precisely what he or she is saying or revealing in the text.

3. ... explain the nature of a whole literary genre in terms of the social period which 'produced' it ....

4. … relate the literary work to the social assumptions of the time in which it is 'consumed' ....

5. … practice... the 'politicisation of the literary form'.... (pp. 167-168)

Hence, the philosophy of Karl Marx and its manifestations in varied Marxist schools of thought have provided much intellectual food for thought for a long line of literary theorists. This has ranged from its influence on Russian Formalism and the Frankfurt School, to the work of the 1960s structuralists, to the 1970s work of Terry Eagleton, and to such current theories as feminism and postcolonialism. Essentially it has served a dual purpose: as a tool for theoretical literary analysis and as a tool for political practice. Thus, it is no small wonder as to its longevity and influence and no small presumption as to its continuation and effects in future directions and theories, underscored by the philosophical and political wisdom of Karl Marx.

FEMINISM

As noted by Barry (1995), the women's movement of the 1960s was not the start of feminism. He then proceeds to trace what he refers to as a renewal of an old tradition that had already diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in society and had offered solutions. Much of this elucidation came in the form of classic books, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) being the prototype of feminist thought, criticism, and literature which would develop in the years to come and eventually anchor and establish the school of thought known as Feminist Theory. 1911 saw the publication of Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour* followed by Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1924) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

Davis and Schliefer (1995) specifically mention the indebtedness of Feminist Theory to the latter two works as they exemplified "the strength, as well as the challenge, of literary feminism as a social critique and as an aesthetic of women's texts or an explanation of how writing by women manifests a *distinctly* female discourse" (p. 509). For Woolf, it was the social and economic conditions that had made it difficult for women to write. Because they were denied the financial opportunity accorded to men, Woolf concluded that therefore women were unable to obtain the time or privacy to write. As Booker (1996) explains, the title refers to her solution: an independent income and a room of her own in which to write. Woolf also anticipated the French feminist critique which, in part, viewed the masculine domination of literature as directly related to the masculine domination of language itself (and foreshadows Cixous' *écriture feminine*).

Regarding the latter two texts, Davis and Schliefer (1995) state that:

> Woolf suggests a model of textual alinearity and plasticity (female) versus hegemony and rigidity (male) that guides her critique of social displacement of women in relation to the "shadow" of the ego of the privileged male casts starkly across Western culture ...
>
> Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) most pointedly criticizes patriarchal culture and analyzes the marginal position of women in society and the arts. She describes a male-dominated social discourse within which particular misogynist practices occur. (p. 509)

The 1960s and 1970s opened and widened avenues of civil rights and freedoms often figuratively termed "revolution," this being no less the case in feminism. The 1970s witnessed the appearance of three revolutionary books for feminism: Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, and *Patriarchal Attitudes* by Eva Figes. To this list Selden (1985) adds Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968) and Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) while Booker (1996) includes

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's sweeping study of nineteenth century women writers, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979). It was the contention of Gilbert and Gubar that while women ostensibly wrote within the patriarchal standards, they were actually using, reworking and twisting these to suit the female gender.

> Women from Jane Austen and Mary Shelley to Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson produced literary works that are in some sense palimpsetic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. (p. 59)

Feminist Literary Theory itself is premised on the assumption that gender difference has been neglected in literary activity and argues that literature must be re-examined from a gender-oriented perspective. Feminist Literary Theory is also, to use Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s term, a "rainbow coalition" of theoretical positions and therefore very eclectic in nature. However, as eclectic as it is, its evolution points to distinct and recognizable phases of passage. In the beginning, this theory looked at thematic issues in the portrayal of women in literature texts by male authors. Robbins (1999) describes this portrayal as stereotypic where the female was "represented either as ideal (virginal, beautiful, passive, dependent, nurturing) or monstrous (whorish, sexually voracious, independent and dangerous"(p. 51). She notes that the early feminist critics drew two conclusions from their examination of texts: that male writers wrote unrealistically (badly) about women and secondly that male writers produced and reproduced these images to enforce their own ideals of femininity on women.

The 1970s saw Feminist Literary Theory shift its efforts into exposing what Barry (1995) termed the "mechanisms of patriarchy" (p. 122). It was also during this decade

that these female critics focussed upon and drew attention to neglected female authors thereby propagating and propelling a new literary history devoted solely to an independent female literary tradition (which would come to fruition during the 1980s). Elaine Showalter coined a specific phrase for this shift: a move from "androtexts" (books by men) to "gynotexts" (books by women). This evolved into her term of gynocritics and hence gynocriticism was born.

The 1980s witnessed still another distinctive change in feminism and was summarized by Barry (1995) as having the following three distinctive elements:

> Firstly, feminist criticism became much more eclectic, ... it began to draw upon the findings and approaches of other kinds of criticism – Marxism, structuralism, linguistics, and so on. Secondly, it switched focus from attacking male versions of the world to exploring the nature of the female world and outlook, and reconstructing the lost or suppressed records of female experience. Thirdly, attention was switched to the need to construct a new canon of women's writing by rewriting the history of the novel and of poetry in such a way that neglected women writers were given new prominence. (pp. 122-123)

It was also during the 1980s, with the translation of important texts, that the influence of the French feminism critics, particularly Helene Cixoius, Luce Ingaray and Julie Kristeva came to the fore. These writers had been profoundly influenced by certain philosophic and theoretical positions, particularly those of Lacanian psychoanalysis, by linguistic theory and by poststructuralism. However, the introduction of the French approach resulted in debates, disagreements and even divisions within feminist criticism. According to Barry (1995) and Robbins (1999), these centered around the role of theory, the nature of language and the value or otherwise of psychoanalysis. Regarding theory, the Anglo-Americans tended to disagree about the over-reliance on theory and its amount and type and were more sceptical and cautious in its use. Furthermore, they disapproved

of the inherent difficulty in the works whom the French critics employed. Similarly, the Anglo-Americans had difficulty seeing the potential of psychoanalysis, particularly in relation to the female, due in part to the nature of the feminist position in these theories, Lacan's tenuous relation with feminism, and the fact that in his writing men came out better advantaged than women. The final bone of contention concerned language (anticipated by Virginia Woolf). The French posited the existence of an *écriture feminine* (the term itself belongs to Helene Cixous and is from her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa") which is associated with the feminine and is a model for feminine speech/ writing while, in a similar vein, Julia Kristeva had theorized a visionary feminine semiotic world. As Barry (1996) notes, this had become one of the most contentious issues in female criticism as "it fatally hands over the world of the rational to men and reserves for women a traditionally emotive, intuitive, trans-rational and 'privatised' arena" (p. 130). Furthermore, 1990s gender studies and Queer Theory would come to attack this female concept of language as it would serve to define and position a "femaleness."

The final phase in Feminist Literary Theory's evolution occurred during the 1990s and was due to the alignment of feminists with Queer theorists. According to Robbins (1999), this current view is based upon the premise that:

> Since sexuality is learned behaviour rather than a biological 'given,' and since sexuality is performative rather than just 'there,' the theory leads to the practice of playful politics of identity that undermines the idea of essence, including the strategic essentialisms that feminist criticism used in order to argue for women's writing. It has, therefore, produced some quite hostile responses (see, for example Ward-Jouvre, 1998) because it appears to undo some of the earlier political assumptions about women as a group who are oppressed because they are women. (p. 54)

Having concluded such a compact history, one must now turn to identifying the assumptions and practices upon which Feminist Literary Theory is based. Robbins (1999) offers the following:

1. The first proposition is that a feminist literary theory assumes some relationship between words and the world – between texts and the reality from which they arise and in which they are read....

2. The second proposition is that the relationships between texts and worlds are necessarily political in the broad sense of having to do with power. Texts can be coercive.... Texts can also be subversive... texts can change the world.

3. The third proposition is perhaps the most important. What all feminist theories share is a focus on women.... [F]eminism suggests that women are troubled by other structures of oppression as well. Among those structures, feminist theories identify social deprivations specific to women...; physiological oppression or the oppression of the body by virtue of its femaleness...; cultural oppression...; and psychological oppression.... The name given to the intersection of these structures is patriarchy ... and feminist theory identifies patriarchy .... (pp. 49-50)

It is thus within such a framework of history, evolution, theory and practice that Feminist Literary Theory has made its impact upon the world making both possible and necessary the importance of feminist criticism and literature and allowing for future possibilities.

CULTURAL STUDIES

It is strikingly coincidental that two of the most significant figures who have shaped, developed, proported and, yes, even created two influential schools of literary studies share certain commonalities. Those to whom referred are F.R. Leavis and Raymond Williams while their commonalities are their attendance at Cambridge, their collegial peerage and their emphasis on culture, though in a diversified and dichotomous

form, as the cornerstone for their own conceptualization of literary studies. It was Leavis who, as previously mentioned, was credited with almost single-handedly creating the subject of literature known today and who gave it a respectability, prominence and importance that heretofore had been unheard of. It was also Leavisite criticism and ideology that came to dominate, and still does, almost a century of literary thought with its reliance upon a particular vision of literature that would serve to socially instill cultural values and ideas. It was within this vision and tradition that Williams's counterpoint, cultural studies, developed; a counterpoint that would emphasize the multiple facets of mass culture.

What exactly then, is cultural studies? Hall's (1996) definition is as follows:

> [Cultural studies is] concerned with the changing ways of life of societies and groups and the networks of meanings that individuals and groups use to make sense of and communicate with one another; what Raymond Williams once called whole ways of communicating, which are always whole ways of life; the dirty crossroads where popular culture intersects with the high arts; that place where power cuts across knowledge, or where cultural processes anticipate social change.... [It] reflects the rapidly shifting ground of thought knowledge, argument and debate about a society and about its own culture.... It represents something, indeed, of the weakening of the traditional boundaries among the disciplines and the growth of forms of interdisciplinary research that don't easily fit, or can't be contained with the confines of the existing divisions of knowledge. (pp. 336-337)

Morgan (1995) offers the following extrapolated definition:

> ...it can be characterized as a form of inquiry committed to a historically aware and "theoretically-informed concrete analysis of contemporary culture" (Schulman, 1993, p. 62) an engagement with the whole range of signifying practices as these are embodied in language, institutional structures, and the forms of subjectivity of a society. It is "an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counter-disciplinary field [which] rejects the exclusive equation of culture with high culture." (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992, p. 4) (pp. 22-23)

Womack (1999) believes that: "Cultural studies, by encouraging readers to look outwardly at the social, artistic, political, economic and linguistic *mélange*, simultaneously challenges us to reflect inwardly upon the ethical norms and biases that constitute ourselves" (p. 593). Finally, Giroux (1999) sees cultural studies as largely concerned with the relationship among culture, knowledge and power and, as a pedagogic technique, "challenges the self-ascribed, ideological and institutional innocence of mainstream educators by arguing that teachers always work and speak within historically and socially determined relations of power" (p. 233). For Giroux (1999), "cultural studies signifies a massive shift away from Eurocentric master narratives, disciplinary knowledge, high culture, scientism, and other legacies informed by the diverse heritage of modernism" (p. 234).

Having established a workable definition, the next point is from whence it came. Scholars contend and posit, and inarguably at that, that cultural studies appeared as a field of study during the 1950s in Great Britain and developed out of and in response to the Leavisite promulgation of "cultural capital." Its founding fathers were Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart who, as During (1999) points out, experienced Leavisism ambivalently. They "accepted that its canonical texts were richer than contemporary so-called "mass culture" and that culture ought to be measured in terms of its capacity to deepen and widen experience; on the other hand they recognized that Leavisism at worst erased, and at the very least did not fully come into contact with, the communal forms of life into which they had been born" (p. 3). Hoggart's inaugural work was *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) where he explored "postwar shifts in the lives of working-class Britons confronted with the changes inherent in modernisation, as well as the disintegration of

traditional familial roles and social practices" (Womack, 1999, p. 594). Williams's seminal work was *Culture and Society: 1870-1950* (1958) which offered:

> A critique of the radical consequences of making distinctions between conventional notions of 'culture' and 'society' and between 'high culture' and 'low culture.' Williams also discusse[d] the demise of the 'knowable communities' that characterize[d] prewar life, arguing that an increasingly politicised culture and the emergence of new forms of global imperialism [would] ultimately displace prewar conceptions of politics and society. (Womack, 1999, p. 594)

His *Marxism and Literature* (1971) also proved a valuable contributory work to cultural studies, describing the complexity of the concept of culture as well as providing the impetus and foundation for the linked discipline of cultural materialism.

From its embryonic beginnings, the evolution of cultural studies continued, aided and abetted by two further developments of the 1960s. In 1964, Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall founded the Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS); it very soon became synonymous with cultural studies itself. The second development was the publication of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964), a volume that "examined the political and economic components of working class identity and argued that conceptions of individuality had become fragmented in the postwar world and no longer restricted themselves to notions of shared cultural interests and value systems" (Womack, 1999, p. 595). As noted by During (1999), it was within this context that the political function of culture began to be explored and the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci's term, "hegemony," began to be used in reference to cultural relations of domination, particularly those notions readily visible.

The theoretical forces which interpreted dimensions and drove cultural studies are widely arrayed and include gender studies, gay and lesbian studies, postcolonialism, race

and ethnic studies, pedagogy, ecocriticism, the politics of nationalism, popular culture, postmodernism, historical criticism, psychoanalysis, Marxist social theory, anthropology and sociology, as well as being shaped in direct relation to literary studies and aesthetics (Womack, 1999; Davis & Schliefer, 1994). This *melange* is what Henry Louis Gates, Jr. refers to as "the rainbow coalition of contemporary critical theory" (cited in Davis & Schliefer, 1994, p. 597) and is why cultural studies is often referred to as an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and even a de-disciplinary approach.

In addition to this "rainbow coalition," Stuart Hall's "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms" (1980) offers a further significant contribution and quintessential element for those who follow the discourse of cultural studies. This quintessential element is the term culture itself. Hall (cited in Davis & Schliefer, 1994) divides the work in cultural studies into two initiatives: the culturalist and the structuralist. Culturalism assumes the existence of a common culture and to use Hoggart's term, "a whole way of life" that is premised upon shared experiences. The structuralist view of culture is "largely semiotic in orientation, "experience" in this view is culturally – and socially – constructed, never "natural" or universal in its range but always specific to a particular culture" (Davis & Schliefer, 1994, p. 600). Thus it is the languages, the signifiers and the codes which produce the experience. Simply put, the problematic definition of culture lies in the question of whether the experience creates the culture or the culture creates the experience.

Even within this rainbow coalition and the complexity and problem of a definitive notion of culture, there are a number of distinguishing and defining features of cultural studies. Because of Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), one of the earliest defining

features was that of subjectivity, meaning that it studied culture in relation to individual lives as opposed to the then widely produced strictures of positivism. A second feature which defined early cultural studies was what During (1999) termed its "engaged form of analysis" (p. 2). Previous to this discipline, political questions were not considered relevant and on the rare occasions when considered, were regarded as a peripheral consideration. Cultural studies made the political essential to the study of culture. Politicization had arrived. The idea of Raymond Williams of the politics of intellectual work also provided a framework for the cultural studies concept of knowledge. Knowledge was not an abstract entity separate from human activity but, for a culturalist, knowledge was formed within the social context of inquiry at a particular historical moment. Davis and Schliefer (1994) defined this form of knowledge not as "disinterested ... [but] as an actual act in the world, not something simply that *is*.... [C]ultural studies attempts to understand and locate knowledge as a phenomenon that is conditioned not by an individual subject but by a social world" (pp. 600-601). This performative conception of knowledge is another definitive feature of cultural studies. A further feature is the way this discipline is situated in power relations, thereby consequently contributing to an expanded notion of power, one which included both the personal and private manifestations of culture. It is therefore ideologically oriented as can be attested to and confirmed by its incorporation of Marxist philosophy, specifically that of Gramsci.

Characteristic of cultural studies as well is that it does not ignore the local. Davis and Schliefer (1994) put it best:

> As a local activity, its different activities have to be judged individually, in terms of the contest for forms and values in which each one participates. That is, rather than compatibility and congruence, cultural studies seeks local activity that can

> *always* be subject to critique because some particular form or value is always at stake, and … the state of "knowledge" as an actual *act* in the world – its reexamination – is simultaneously an enablement to some who can perform it in a particular way and an impediment to others. (p. 606)

During the 1970s and 1980s, the evolution of cultural studies enveloped several more features which came to be characteristic of the discipline. During (1999) notes that:

> The new mode of cultural studies no longer concentrated on reading culture as primarily directed against the state. Mainly under the impact of new feminist work at first, it began to affirm "other" ways of life on their own terms. Emphasis shifted from communities positioned against large power blocs and bound together as classes or subcultures to ethnic and women's groups committed to maintaining and elaborating autonomous values, identifies, and ethics. (p. 13)

This affirmation of "otherness" marked a looser, more pluralistic and postmodern concept of the discipline than that existing in the former conceptual model, with its emphasis on Marxism and the unequal relations and conflicts between the competing interests in this system. Because of the emphasis on "otherness," it led naturally to another evolutionary feature: cultural studies as the voice of the marginal, it then becoming the academic site for such.

Possibly the feature that propelled cultural studies into international recognition and the global market was its adoption and celebration of popular culture. The direction of cultural populism in cultural studies was, according to During (1999), to turn away "from the highly theoretical attacks on hegemony so important in the 1970s, this time by arguing that at least some popular cultural products themselves have positive quasi-political effects independent of education and critical discourse" (p. 15).

During has made a point of explaining that the original introduction to *The Cultural Studies Reader* (1993) was written in 1992. With the advent of the latest edition, he has seen fit to expand upon this introduction in light of what he terms a shift in

emphasis in the discipline. These areas of emphasis which he deems noteworthy are science, sex, and cultural flow. Because of an intensification in science and technology, During (1999) sees a specific involvement of cultural studies in what he terms "science's colonization of the lifeworld" (p. 22). Secondly, he sees sex as having displaced gender as an area of debate and contestation, the shift in focus being attributed to queer theory. Thirdly, and finally, he notes the most profound change in cultural studies has been its focussing on cultural flow where he now views the field as "much less focussed on discrete, filiative national or ethnic cultures, or components of such cultures, than it was in its earlier history.... Cultural studies objects are decreasingly restricted or delimited by distance at all. Rather, they move across national borders.... [T]hey are products of fluid, transnational regions ... " (p. 23). This type of cultural studies addressing such issues, is often referred to as transnational cultural studies.

During (1999) makes one final though very crucial distinction concerning what he terms "engaged cultural studies" and the cultural turn:

> As to the cultural turn: most, maybe all, humanities and social science disciplines have increasingly emphasized culture over the past decade or so. Cultural history has become the hot area in history; the cultural construction of spaces in geography; within criminology, representation of crime (i.e., crime's cultural face) has flourished. Cultural anthropologists are almost as likely to do fieldwork in urban, metropolitan communities (on shopping, say) as in the world's outposts, leaving little space to distinguish them from cultural studies ethnographers. Books with titles like *From Sociology to Cultural Studies* raise few eyebrows. In many of the most exciting research areas of the last few years ... historians, literary critics, anthropologists and geographers collaborate and compete with minimal disciplinary or methodological differences apparent – more often than not they are all doing "cultural studies" as far as publishers and bookshops are concerned....
>
> The general turn to culture has helped to disseminate cultural studies as a form of knowledge with its own histories, methods, and programs ("engaged cultural studies") but it also threatens to overwhelm and dilute it. (pp. 24-25)

In order to avoid this dilution, During (1999) believes that those with a commitment to engaged cultural studies must perform the following three tasks: to clearly articulate engaged cultural studies' specific project; to analyse the conditions of the general cultural turn; and to develop strategies to maintain engaged cultural studies as a discrete discipline.

It is only within such diligent work of the engaged culturalist that the discipline begun a half century ago will continue its work in studying, disseminating and reaffirming the sense of life known as mass culture; that it will continue to adopt, encompass and explicate new forces within this realm; and that it will secure the life force of cultural studies as it was and should be known.

QUEER THEORY

William Pinar's introduction to *Queer Theory in Education* (1998) states that the intellectual revolution of Queer Theory in curriculum theory began approximately twenty-five years ago. He specifically cites Peter Taubman's 1979 doctoral dissertation, which destabilized gay and lesbian categories, as an anticipatory work of what was to become Queer Theory. His own work in this area during the 1980s provided a further intellectual buttress for the field and he cites as well the work of Meredith Reiniger, James Sears, Deborah Blitzman, Mary K. Bryson, Suzanne de Castell, Jonathan Silan and Elizabeth Ellsworth as being key contributors to the formation and growth of this study. Additionally, Jane Goldman's introduction (cited in Wolfreys, 1999) to the section of formative essays on Queer Theory states that the manifestation and formulation of such a theory owes much to the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Jonathan Dollimore and

Judith Butler. Aside from this work of the academe, it is with apparent consensus from the field that Queer Theory owes a great deal of its legacy to Oscar Wilde and his iconic queer status. Goldman (1999) specifically notes that "Oscar Wilde, in the twentieth century, has come to personify for many a transhistorical and transcultural model of homosexual or queer identity ..." (p. 525). Further to this, in Dollimore's essay "Post/modern: On the Gay Sensibility, or the Pervert's Revenge on Authenticity – Wilde, Genet, Orton and Others" (cited in Wolfreys, 1999), the figure of Oscar Wilde is dominant as is the creative work of Jean Genet, *The Balcony* (1965) and *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1966); and Joe Orton's *What the Butler Saw* (1969). The final contributory work, though far from the least, is Michel Foucault's founding work on sexuality, these works thus situating a particular exploration of homosexuality.

Specific organizations and agencies have also laid the historical groundwork for Queer Theory. Sears (1999) specifically notes the Mattachine Society formed in 1953 by Harry Hay and whose modus operandi was to champion the homosexual cause through the formation of secret groups of homosexuals, organized into cells. Though these earlier movements were largely homophile in nature, he cites female groups led by Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, Barbara Gittlings and Barbara Grier who organized the Daughters of Bilitis (Bilitis being the contemporary of the Greek poet Sappho and a lesbian) as well as a magazine, *The Ladder*, devoted to their cause. Sears (1999) also highlights the impact of pioneering research in this field, particularly that of Donald Webster Cory's (pseudonym of Edward Sagann) *The Homosexual in America* (n.d.), Alfred Kinsey (1947; 1953) and Eliza Hooker (1956).

During the 1970s, forces of the Gay Liberation and Feminist Movements further anchored, gave voice, and made visible the gay and lesbian cause as did agencies such as Stonewall, ACT UP and Queer Nation. According to Carlson (1999), by the 1990s, the term gay had lost much of its radical connotation and the newer and younger generation of gays and lesbians began to adopt the term "queer" as "an identity matter of choice" (p. 110).

The term queer itself is not without contention within the homosexual community. Those who embrace it feel according to Carlson (1999) that "Queerness … has challenged the gay credo, "We're just like you," and proudly and defiantly asserted the right and even importance of being different" (p. 110). As well, it has been viewed as uniting the gay and lesbian community which, as noted by Pinar (1998) and others, suffered a breech and became separate and disunified due in part to this separate labelling. Others in the community view queerness as an assimilation tactic while still others such as Butler (1993) have the concerns enunciated below:

> … The temporality of the term ['queer'] is precisely what concerns me here: how is it that a term that signalled degradation has been turned – 'refunctioned' … – to signify a new and affirmative set of meanings? Is this a simple reversal of valuations such that 'queer' means either a past degradation or a present and a future affirmation? Is this a reversal that retains and reiterates the abjected history of the term?… If the term is now subject to reappropriation, what are the conditions and limits of that significant reversal? Does the reversal reiterate the logic of repudiation by which it was spawned? Can the term overcome its constitutive history of injury? Does it present the discursive occasion for a powerful and compelling fantasy of historical reparation? When and how does a term like 'queer' become subject to an affirmative resignification for some when a term like 'nigger,' despite some recent efforts at reclamation, appears capable of only reinscribing its pain? How and where does discourse reiterate injury such that the various efforts to recontextualize and resignify a given term meet their limit in this other, more brutal, and relentless form of repetition? (pp. 570-571)

From history and terminology, one must now move to meaning. Morris (1998), in asking "What is queer?", suggested "a self-naming that stands outside the dominant cultural codes; queer opposes sex-policing, gender-policing, heteronormativity, and assimilation politics" (p. 276). Weeks (1995) suggests that queers may include "radical self-defined lesbians and gays ... sadomasochists, fetishists, bisexuals, gender-benders, [and] radical heterosexuals" (p. 113). Morris (1998) adds transgendered peoples (transsexual or cross-dressers), hermaphrodites, and eunuchs to the list, as well as offering her definition of queerness which contains three ingredients:

> (a) Queerness as a subject position digresses from normalized, rigid identities that adhere to the sex=gender paradigm; (b) Queerness as a politic challenges the status quo, does not simply tolerate it, and does not stand for assimilation into the mainstream; (c) Queerness as an aesthetic or sensibility reads and interprets texts (art, music, literature) as potentially politically radical. A radical politic moves to the left, challenging norms. (p. 277)

From meaning it is but a short step to theory. Meiners (1998) states that "Queer theory questions the foundations and formulations of sexual identities or sexual identifications" (p. 122). Morris (1998) sees Queer Theory as an "attempt to examine oppressive categories such as sex-gender by discovering how these categories came to be constructed and how certain individuals have been produced by them" (p. 277). Tierney and Dilley (1998) state that "Queer theory seeks to disrupt and to assert voice and power [while] queer theorists seek to disrupt "normalizing" discourses"(p. 59). They also quote Duggan (1995) as to the work of queer theorists:

> Queer theorists are engaged in at least three areas of critique: (a) the critique of humanist narratives that posit the progress of the self and of history, and thus tell the story of the heroic progress of gay liberationists against forces of repression; (b) the critique of empiricist methods that claim directly to represent the transparent "reality" of "experience," and claim to relate, simply and objectively,

> what happened, when, and why; and (c) the critique of identity categories presented as stable, unitary, or "authentic." (p. 61)

As well as highlighting the work of Queer Theory, the above quotes also make evident the connection between critical theory as well as its connection to cultural studies.

The final step takes one from a queer theory to a queer pedagogy. Luhman's essay "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing" (cited in Pinar, 1998) offers the following suggestions for a queer curriculum:

> The pedagogy at work is one where the desire for knowledge interferes with the repetition of both heterosexual and lesbian/gay normalization.... I suggest that a queer pedagogy exceeds the incorporation of queer content into curricula.... I also suggest a queer pedagogy that draws on pedagogy's curiosity toward the social relations made possible in the process of learning and on queer critiques of identity-based knowledges. (p. 141)

Additionally, Sumara and Davis (1999) in "Telling Tales of Surprise" present the following outline for a queer curriculum:

> First, we suggest that a queer curriculum attempts to come to some deeper understanding of the forms that curriculum might take so that sexuality is included not as an object of study but as a necessary valence of all knowing....
>
> Second, we believe that instead of focusing on the elaboration and interpretation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered identities, a queer curriculum wonders about the unruly heterosexual closet and seeks to render visible the always known but usually invisible desires and pleasures that circulate throughout it.... [Q]ueer curriculum forms invite persons to participate in structures that create surprising (and often troubling) moments of contact and revelation....
>
> Third, because a queer curriculum practice understands forms such as sexuality, identity and cognition as relations rather than objects, and believes these to be entangled in and through one another, it tries to create situations where the complexity of these is made available for study.... [A] queer curriculum understands that all knowing is sexualized and all sexuality is cognitive....
>
> Fourth, queer curriculum practices are interested more in understanding differences among categories of persons....

> Fifth, a queer curriculum is always interested in questions of desire, of pleasure, and of sexuality – and, most importantly, in wondering how we might continue to interrupt our understandings of what constitutes each of these and how they make themselves known....
>
> Finally, events where curriculum is queered are always heterotopic. As locations where unusual juxtapositions are made, these heterotopic spaces are meant to function as interruptions to the familiarity of normalized perception and cognition – and, as such, are intended to create possibilities for new understanding. (pp. 215-217)

The above section constitutes the birth and journey of Queer Theory and the point to which it has come. As of yet, it is still mainly a subject of theorization and some like Bredbeck (cited in Pinar, introduction, 1998) are not optimistic about the prospects for a queer pedagogy and describe it as a "bleak project." Others, such as Pinar (1998) himself, believe that "Perhaps for now it is enough to assert difference, to theorize queer curriculum and pedagogy, and to watch the horizon" (p. 44).

NEW HISTORICISM

New Historicism may be viewed as a direct reaction against previous schools of thought and paradigms such as formalism, New Criticism, structuralism and deconstruction which, with their exclusive emphasis on language, negated notions and influences of historical position and context and, as such, were ahistorical. New Historicism is also unlike those critical practices in that it does not identify itself with any particular philosophy, social movement or theorist. As its seminal proponent, Stephen Greenblatt, has declared, it actually has "no doctrine at all" (cited in Colebrook, 1997, p. 24). It was Greenblatt himself who has been credited with the birth of New Historicism though he prefers the term "cultural poetics."

As a textual interpretive practice, New Historicism treats literary texts as a product of special historical conditions with specific regard to power relations, these being viewed as the most important context for all texts. It is through a critical interpretation of a text that these power relations are made visible. As Brannigan (1998) points out, the New Historicism is most concerned with "the role of historical context in interpreting literary texts and the role of literary rhetoric in interpreting history" (p. 4). As he also indicates, the latter part of the definition contains another key elemental belief of New Historicism (developed and borrowed from both historians and Marxists) concerning the construction of historical narrative:

> Historicism understands the stories of the past as society's way of constructing a narrative which unconsciously fits its own interest. Marxist critics ... see history as the procession of stories favourable to the victor, the ruling class, with literary texts as much as historical texts, taking part in that procession. (pp. 4-5)

Walter Benjamin (1992), who in relation to particular literary theories such as Marxism and cultural materialism, has been afforded almost iconic status, has put forth this view in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History:"

> All the rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. Historical materialists know what that means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds who created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. (p. 248)

Quite obvious in the above quotations is the distinction between the role of history and the role of historicism, history being viewed as the objective procession of events, all

history simply being an imitation or reflection of such events. However, historicists believe, like Marx, that "Men make their own history." Essentially, the historicist point is "that the past structures and organizes the present, and is an immensely powerful determinant of possibilities for action and thought... [and that] the practice of history can never be separated from the interests of the individuals or groups practising history ... (p. 29).

A further aspect of New Historicism is that it does not privilege literary texts over historical texts (history is not merely background) but gives each weight in the process of interpretation. Barry (1995) believes that since these historical documents are not subordinated as contexts, they should perhaps be referred to as co-texts.

A final aspect of New Historicism is its belief that literature plays an active role in the formation of history or, as Howard (cited in Brannigan, 1998) states: "Literature is an agent in constructing a culture's sense of reality" (p. 3).

A synthesis of these features results in a New Historicist methodology which operates through the side by side examination of literary and non-literary texts with the interpretative intent to disclose the power relations and dominant ideology of the past; through revealing the crucial nexus between these stories and those of the present; and through examining the effects of literary texts on society, politics and culture. Succinctly, it is therefore not the role of history in literature which is important but, conversely, the role of literature in history.

The movement itself began in 1980 and there is good evidence to support this – the publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and of Louis Montrose's essay "Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes." These seminal works contain the

explication and application of New Historicism methodology, the authors themselves being viewed as the founders and leaders of this new movement.

The origins of this literary theory or what Wayne (1989) refers to as the "historicizing of historicism" (p. 791) can be traced back to the realm of the ancient Greeks, particularly Plato and his *Republic*. This work argued against poetry because of its power to influence and change people's attitudes, i.e., to change history. Its more recent manifestation may be found in the work of several key contextual areas and in the thinking of certain theorists.

New Historicism, as can be ascertained from the descriptor "new," has evolved through and been influenced by history or, as referred to by some critics, "old history." History's primary function was to use historical data and documents as an approach to literature. According to Colebrook (1997), modern history can be seen in the literary-historical consciousness of the eighteenth century (Enlightenment era history). It was during this time that the clubs and coffeehouses and literary journals promoting literary criticism proliferated. These vehicles sped criticism quickly to its destination where it was strongly linked to a sense of nationhood and a realization of the literature's specific history. It was also during this time that the first acknowledged work of literary history made its appearance, it being Thomas Wharton's *History of English Poetry from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century* (1774-81). Colebrook (1997) sees a continuity between this eighteenth-century historiography of enlightenment that gave rise to a historical consciousness with an emphasis on rationalization and the role of nineteenth-century historiography. However, she cites one crucial difference: the nineteenth century's emphasis on empathy and interpretation. That

particular emphasis looked to the past not as a catalogue of failures and mistakes but as a time possessing its own meaning and understanding, thus history became an act of understanding, the era consequently being referred to as nineteenth-century hermeneutic historiography. Modern/old history was therefore built strongly upon these foundations with its emphasis on literature and history and the interpretative role of history for literature.

Sources (Wolfreys, 1999; Brannigan, 1998; Colebrook, 1997; Barry, 1995; Davis and Schliefer, 1994; and Wayne, 1991) cite several distinctions between New Historicism and old historicism. These may be summarized as follows: old historicism regarded history as mimetic or reflective whereas New Historicism sees it as expressive; old historicism emphasised progress whereas New Historicism emphasises power; old historicism subordinated historical texts to literary texts whereas New Historicism gives each equal weighting; old historicism views its historical role as interpretative whereas New Historicism views its role as descriptive; old historicism views the past in terms of epochs with their trends and order (e.g., the Renaissance) characterized by a single dominating system of explanation and belief whereas New Historicism views the past as full of diverse beliefs, values and trends often coming into conflict and contradiction with each other; and old historicism viewed history as a series of events, actions, etc. whereas New Historicism views history as textual, there being nothing outside the text, and whatever is there has been remade. To use Barry's (1995) phraseology "... the word of the past has replaced the world of the past" (p. 175).

A second contextual root of new historicism lies in Marxist Theory. At the very basic level, Marxism posits that all history is a history of class struggle. The interests of

the dominant group are represented as society's interests in general while the proletariat are not represented or whose views are simply regarded as that of the minority. In Marx's words, "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of the ruling class" (Marx & Engels 1991, p. 50 cited in Brannigan, 1998, pp. 23-24). Therein lies one founding practice of New Historicism – the examination of literary texts to make visible these power relations. A second contribution of Marxism to New Historicism is in the function of cultural representation. For Marx, culture functioned as a means of control, the ruling class employing cultural forms to represent its interests but propagated these forms as the interests of all humanity. The ruling class came to believe that their interests were truly those of all and this, what Marx termed "false consciousness," is how ideology (a third Marxist principle used by New Historicism) came to be a determining factor in the construction of economic interests. This condition is what Antonio Gramsci referred to as hegemony. Referring to Gramsci, Brannigan (1998) states that the task of Marxist criticism "is to engage with capitalism on an ideological level, representing the interests of the working and peasant classes and exposing the contradictions and "false consciousness of the bourgeoisie" (p. 25). According to Colebrook (1997), the notion of production ideology of the Marxist-Leninist, Louis Althusser, is an essential component of New Historicism:

> … [C]ritics have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which texts produce the positions of the readers. If subjects are ideological effects, it follows that the modern individualist subject of capitalism would have to be actively produced in the superstructure. The novel, on this argument would not *represent* the individual who 'emerged' with modernity or capitalism. Rather, novels could be seen as ideologically productive in their 'hailing' of individuals: both explicitly (in their addresses to individual readers) and implicitly (in their representation of subjects who are putatively 'just like us'). In Romance novels, for example, a certain female subject is produced.… From an Althusserian perspective these novels

> would not be read as mystifications (inaccurate or stereotyped representations of women) nor as structures of feeling (articulations of real women's values and experiences); nor would such novels be seen as ideology in the traditional sense (as distorted representations of actual economic conditions). As ideology, such literary forms produce those individuals they seem to represent. 'Femininity' would be read as discursive production....
>
> [Thus] the value of Althusserian criticism lay in its ability to see texts as active and productive forces, as events in themselves, rather than as expressions or reflections of prior contexts. (p. 158)

The third contextual root of New Historicism lies in the discipline of anthropology. Once Claude Levi-Strauss had discovered Saussure's sign systems through intellectual discussions with Roman Jakobson, he immediately applied structuralist theory to anthropology resulting in his structural anthropology. The New Historicists borrowed this idea of approaching sign systems of another culture and changed it to approaching sign systems of the past. New Historicists are also notorious for their use of "thick description," another analytic practice of anthropologists.

It is generally agreed that the precursor theorists of New Historicism were Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault. Williams is synonymous with cultural studies/cultural materialism in Britain though the conceptualized idea and emergence of New Historicism are basically parallel. Cultural materialism, like New Historicism, regards power relations as the most important context for interpreting texts, the distinction residing in the fact that New Historicism deals with the power relations of past societies whereas cultural materialists explore literary texts within the context of contemporary power structures. Colebrook (1997) does distinguish between the two but remarks that they cannot be clearly separated from each other. She affirms that cultural materialism is not simply the British name for New Historicism even though they both

draw upon each other's interpretative practice of using literary texts as historical or cultural artefacts as well as including material from the other in their respective anthologies.

The Welsh scholar, Raymond Williams, is one critic who has completely dominated literary studies in Britain since 1950. Brannigan (1998) has outlined three important distinctions in the work of Williams which have also become fundamental constructs of New Historicism. Firstly, Williams sees literature not as the highest form of human expression but as only one of many, and as part of a system of culture which is constantly shifting as opposed to the Leavisite notion of self-perpetuating "great" traditions. Secondly, Williams believes these shifts are due not to individual genius, insight and wisdom but to shifting economic, political, societal and cultural conditions (this in turn leads to the practice of analysing the cultural conditions that produce and receive texts rather than analysing the content, form, etc. of the text itself). Thirdly, and most significantly, was Williams's emphasis and belief in the Marxist conception of power and ideology particularly in relation to literature. For Williams, analysis of a particular ideological system involved three key elements: the dominant (the dominant cultural group); the residual (elements of a previous group residing in the present one); and the emergent (the tendency of a new cultural group emerging within the current system). It is the adoption of these theoretical constructs of Williams that drive New Historicism and give it its exploratory power as a literary theory.

Michel Foucault is the other theorist who has had a profound and pervasive influence on New Historicism. The constructs of Foucaultian thought that premise New Historicism are located in the terms archaeology, geneology and power. According to

Colebrook's (1997) interpretation of Foucault's archaeology, it pertains to a historical method which is neither interpretative nor hermeneutic but rather is descriptive. Foucault himself in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) described this method as a "pure description of discursive events" (cited in Colebrook, 1997, p. 40). Geneology refers to the focussing on the connection between history, use and power. In Colebrook's (1997) words "... whereas the conventional history would show all events leading naturally and logically to the present, the geneologist shows the chance, the heterogeneity and the forces of power (including accidents) which have produced the present ... (p. 58). In Foucault's words, "Geneologist ... seeks to establish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations" (cited in Colebrook, 1997, p. 58). Foucault's powerful conception of power is that it is not at the control of individuals or groups but is a general force visible in events and actions and is omnipresent. It is exemplified in his use of the term panoptic. The Panopticon was a circular prison of the nineteenth century, its design allowing the warden to survey all from the centre of the circle, thus apropos to Foucault's concept of power and hence the "panoptic" state. Thus, these three concepts, archaeology, geneology and power are the Foucaultian concepts that have been integrated into New Historicist methodology.

Having established the contextual and theoretical basis, the characteristics of the movement remain. Wayne (1991) has itemized the following salient methodological features of New Historicism:

> (1) a shift from ideas to power relations as the fundamental units for analysis and interpretation in cultural history...; (2) a tendency to refuse hierarchies and dichotomies among texts of different kinds (canonical/non-canonical; high culture/mass culture; documents/fictions; (3) the assumption that in a given historical moment, different modes of discourse (such as law, theology, moral

> philosophy, literature, art, architecture, cartography, chorography, choreography, costume, stage design, science of various types, etc.) are rarely if ever autonomous, that by studying the permeable boundaries of the discourses constitutive of a given cultural field, the scholar can arrive at an understanding of the broader ideological codes that order all discourse in that particular culture; (4) the symptomatic reading of this wider cultural field by means of an attention to rhetorical devices and strategies, and a consequent revival of interest in the history of rhetoric, though from a critical, rather than a merely descriptive perspective...; (5) related to all of the above, the governing assumption that discourse and representation form consciousness rather than merely reflecting or expressing it, that culture is therefore an active force in history. (p. 793)

The movement of New Historicism has introduced a fundamental change in literary studies. This is not so much as its application and integration to literature and history but the idea of literature as history. This latter phrase encapsulates the theories and methodologies behind New Historicism: to use historical documents and literary texts side by side in order to arrive at an understanding of discursive practices; to learn how these practices control and maintain power structures; and to discover the crucial nexus between literature and history and history and literature.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing theoretical approaches are collectively known as literary theory, the umbrella term premising an exploration of the complexity of meaning, text, and interpretation and their related concepts and practices.. Theories and interpretative practices change with time and reflect changing world views, each perspective tending to find fault with the preceding one. Thus, the current era of literary theory is a changing of the paradigm guard, so to speak. Barry (1995) offers the following concise summary of the positions of literary theory:

1. Politics is pervasive,

2. Language is constitutive,

3. Truth is provisional,

4. Meaning is contingent, and

5. Human nature is a myth (p. 36).

The ultimate question remaining is what has literary theory accomplished? Cain's (1994) succinct answer follows:

> It enables critics, teachers, and students to illuminate anew the structure of texts, to write literary and cultural history with greater richness and depth, and to understand social and institutional relations more intricately. Theory defamiliarizes literary studies, resystematizes and reorganizes it by inserting new texts among the old and fashioning inventive discourses for them....
> Theory has enhanced and enlivened the study of literature...and preserved its value in the midst of a media-dominated society in which critical reading and thinking appear to be lost arts. (p. 12)

Thusly put, are the expanded concepts, varied and diverse, delivered through the deeds and discourses of literary theory.

CHAPTER SIX: DERIVATIVE THEORETICAL APPROACHES FOR AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

There are those who will argue that literary theory with all its trappings is best suited and situated within the realm of academic intellectualism and that the ordinary and everyday folk will still survive admirably without benefit of its sage enlightenment. Like all things under the sun, there are at least two sides to every coin, the other side encompassing views, such as those of Terry Eagleton, which argue that theory in some way, shape, or form influences and informs all thoughts and actions. It is to this latter cadre of individuals that the precepts espoused in this chapter will adhere.

With the new literary theory's tenacity and grip quite evident by the early 1980s, there were those who surmised and speculated that its influence might even trickle down to inform high school curriculum. From thence, the wheels had been set in motion and those of visionary and innovative mind began to adopt and adapt, mix and moderate literary theory to arrive at derivative approaches applicable to the student.

This chapter will examine two of these approaches, each underpinned and purporting dichotomous theoretical positionings yet, for all that, with some noticeable commonalities (such as supporting a constructivist view of knowledge and emphasising the role of semiotics). It is to the frames of critical literacy and transactions through multiple signs that this chapter will now turn.

CRITICAL LITERACY

Background

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Gordon (1999) has noted that the current definitions of critical literacy are far from uniform, some scholars tending to emphasise cognitive and developmental concepts (literacy and critical thinking), others focussing on the social and political (literacy and critique and emancipation) while still others stressing the sociocognitive, a combination of the two (literacy and the ability to "read the world"). Gordon (1999), in tracing the historical threads of emergent critical literacy, has employed aspects of each definition encompassing both these private and public domains. He reiterates as well that this history does not assume that schooling alone teaches critical literacy and does emphasise that it is difficult to discuss the history of a subject in which relatively few people could take part. Nevertheless, by emphasising a not so rigid definition of a concept he deems flexible and fuzzy, he forges ahead with the history of emergent critical literacy.

Not surprisingly, the earliest practitioners of critical literacy were the ancient Greeks and Romans. Notwithstanding alphabetization and the literary tradition, Gordon (1999) uses the example of a logograph as illustrative of critical literacy in action. The specific case was that of the logographer (logographers being first, speechwriters secondly, teachers and thirdly, publishers and authors), Antiphon, whose speech "On the Murder of Herodes" was written as a defence of Euxitheus, the accused in the murder trial. Gordon (1999) has included the following excerpt from the trial speech which he deems to be "an excellent example of "critical literacy" in action" (p. 5).

> But you [the prosecution], for personal reasons, are trying to deprive me, and me alone, of a privilege accorded to every Greek by framing a law to suit yourself. Yet everyone would agree, I think, that the laws which deal with such cases as this are the finest and most hallowed of laws. They have the distinction of being the oldest in this country and always remained the same concerning the same matters; and this is the surest sign of laws well made, since time and experience show mankind what is imperfect. Hence you must not use the speech for the prosecution to discover whether your laws are good or bad, but you must use the laws to discover whether or not the speech for the prosecution is giving you a correct and lawful interpretation of the case.... The laws on homicide are excellent and no one has ever before dared to change them. (Cited in Gordon, 1999, p. 5)

The inherent elements of critical literacy are quite obvious in Antiphone's text: the emphasis on the close examination of the prosecution's speech in order to reveal the not-so-obvious; the powerful political aspect of language itself; the reference to the hegemony and dominant ideology of those who make laws to suit themselves and the concomitant statement of its existence; and the spoken social critique of the laws and the reference to challenge them.

In tracing the history of critical literacy during Medieval and Renaissance Europe, Gordon (1999) notes specifically the rise of vernacular English in Anglo-Saxon England, the times of Martin Luther and his Germany, and France's *cahiers de doléances*. Regarding the first, it may be said that Latin was no longer as familiar to most Anglo-Saxons; it may also be said that the use and spread of the vernacular may be due to the use of language as a powerful tool for the secular classes against the dominant class. In other words, a subversive tactic of the subalterns against the hegemonic control of the dominant ideology of the church (Gramsci and Williams before their time).

Luther played a significant role in promoting conventional literacy in northern Europe. He argued:

> Without any doubt, I should not have come to this if I had not gone to school and become a writer. Therefore go ahead and send your son to study ... your son and my son, that is, the children of the common people, will necessarily rule the world, both in the spiritual and worldly estates ... the born princes and lords cannot do it alone. (Cited in Gordon, 1999, p. 11)

However, his Reformation also points to the crucial role of language and literacy as a social and political tool of change and emancipation.

The *cahiers de doléances* (records of grievances collected by lawyers in France on the eve of the revolution) are further examples cited by Gordon (1999) of the social and political power of language and literacy. He refers to them as "examples of critical literacy in action" and reflecting "the power of writing" (p. 11). The *cahiers* also raise an interesting question for intellectual debate about the nature of critical literacy: "If a person can neither read nor write, but has access to someone who can, has this person acquired critical literacy, at least in some sense" (Gordon, 1999, p. 11)?

Gordon's trek through history culminates in the nineteenth century American south. The role of critical literacy for the African American slaves can be succinctly summarized with a phrase from an 1867 *Harper's Weekly* editorial that stated "the alphabet is an abolitionist" (cited in Gordon, 1999, p. 14). J.P. Cornelius' "When I can Read and Write: Literacy and Slavery in the Antebellum South" (1991) gives the following insightful perspective of the role of critical literacy in this era of American history:

> Southern African Americans' rights to literacy were restricted in the 1820s and 1830s, but as sectional tension accelerated with the Mexican War and the nation's two great popular churches, the Methodists and the Baptists, split over slavery-related issues, "Bibles for Slaves" became an appealing cry. It merged nicely with the benevolent societies' and educational reformers' belief that a reading and writing public was essential for a Christian and democratic nation. To offer "Bibles for Slaves," though, was also divisive. Every gesture which reminded the

> nation that blacks were humans and threatened slaveowner "property" rights stimulated southern opposition. In the 1850s the south became more defensive than ever about slave rights vs. slaveowner property rights. Ironically, "Bibles for Slaves" also divided antislavery forces. Those who believed a focus on slaves' religious and literary rights would divert efforts from the fight for black freedom contested with others who saw literacy as the first step toward freedom and "Bibles" as an attractive way to gain broader support among whites for a black liberation. (Cited in Gordon, 1999, p. 14)

The more recent and modern strains of critical literacy are heard in the philosophy of critical theory and the practices of critical pedagogy. As noted in Chapter Two, modern critical theory's birth was due to the (re)productive efforts of the Frankfurt School. The theory itself has several definitive features, one being the concept of negative philosophy. Lenin stated that this determinate negation was the foundation of Marxism as Marx advocated the "merciless criticism of everything existing" (cited in Torres, 1999, p. 88). Smith (cited in Torres, 1999) explained it as follows:

> The logic of 'determinate negation' is the principle of development which exhibits the movement from one category or form of consciousness to another. It constitutes a method of moving from one stage to another that is not externally imposed.... The logic of determinate negation has both a critical and constructive aspect. It is critical because it does not merely accept what a body of thought, a philosophical system, or even an entire culture says about itself, but is concerned to confront that thought, system, or culture with its own internal tensions, incoherences, and anomalies. It is constructive because out of this negation or confrontation we are able to arrive at ever more complete, comprehensive, and coherent bodies of propositions and forms of life. (pp. 88-89)

Another central tenet of critical theory is its link with social theory, particularly neo-Marxism, and based upon the argument of Marx that:

> In the social production which men carry on they enter into definitive relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which rises the legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and

> intellectual life in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (Cited in Torres, 1999, p. 91)

Torres (1999) further offers the following concepts as being crucial to critical theory and neo-Marxism: contradiction, dialectics, exploitation, domination, and legitimation. Wink (1997), as well as many others, also traces the roots of critical theory to the contextual ideas of Antonio Gramsci. Of particular import and influence in critical theory's philosophy is Gramsci's notion of hegemony, its operation, and the recognition of this structure in all aspects of society and culture.

Morrow and Brown (1994) offer the following three distinctions inherent in the term 'critical' in critical literacy:

> ... [O]ne sense of critique in critical theory, ... [is] its concern with unveiling ideological mystifications in social relations; but another even more fundamental connotation is methodological, given a concern with critique as involving establishing the presuppositions of approaches to the nature of reality, knowledge, and explanation; yet another dimension of critique is associated with the self-reflexivity of the investigator and the linguistic basis of representation. (p. 7)

Additionally, Torres (1999) believes critical theory implies the following dimensions: "It is a *human science*, hence providing a humanistic, anti positivist approach to social theory. It is a *historical science* of society, hence it is a form of historical sociology. Finally it is a socio-cultural critique that is concerned with normative theory" (p. 92). Regarding the last point, Morrow and Brown (1994) state: "Critical imagination is required to avoid identifying where we live here and now as somehow cast in stone by natural laws" (p. 11).

Quite possibly the roots of critical literacy lie most deeply in the work of Paulo Freire. McLaren (cited in Steiner, 2000) had this to say of the man, his work and his legacy:

> Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is a clarion call to unhinge established structures of capitalist exploitation. It offers teachers a powerful context from which to consider rebuilding democracy and living and struggling for a qualitatively better life for the oppressed, for the non-oppressed, and for the generations to follow. Freirean pedagogy poses the challenge of finding new ways of facing up to our own frailty and finitude as global citizens while at the same time searching for the strength of will and loyalty to hope that will enable us to continue dreaming utopia into reality. With a liberating pedagogy such as Freire's, educators and cultural workers in the United States and elsewhere – both male and female, and from different ethnic backgrounds – have an opportunity to engage in a global struggle for transforming existing relations of power and privilege in the service of greater social justice and human freedom.... Freire achieved far more than he had reason to expect, and he did so because he was able to give concrete shape to a pedagogy that enhanced personal and collective responsibility. (p. 18)

The North American context for critical literacy is strongly tied to the work of education pedagogues, particularly those associated with the progressive movement in education. It goes without saying that the work of the eminent philosopher and progressive educationist, John Dewey, forms an integral part of critical pedagogy and hence, critical literacy. Stone's essay "Reconstructing Dewey's Critical Philosophy: Toward a Literary Pragmatist Concern" (1999) sets forth to examine the contingent facets of Dewey's critical philosophy. The form and substance of Stone's treatise may be revealed through her use of a particularly enlightening quotation from the work of Dewey:

> Philosophy is criticism; criticism of the influential beliefs that underlie culture; a criticism which traces the beliefs to their generating conditions as far as may be, which tracks them to their results, which considers the mutual compatibility of the elements of the total structure of beliefs. Such an examination terminates, whether intended or not, in a projection of them into a new perspective which leads to new surveys of possibilities. (Cited in Stone, 2000, p. 215)

Other key ingredients in Dewey's philosophy that ring true with the current criticalist movement are those of his belief in a true democratic vision for society (this being the premise and goal of his thought); his belief in child-centered education; his belief in the educational model of experience as opposed to a transmissive or banking one; and his belief in the social transformative role of education.

From Dewey, the move is made to the current American frontrunners of critical pedagogy namely McLaren, Giroux and Shor, each having taken critical theory and, through cohesion, coalescence, and synthesis, arrived at their own formulation of what critical pedagogy should be. In McLaren's critically-acclaimed work, *Life in Schools* (1998, 3rd edition) he has laid forth foundational principles of a critical pedagogy, McLaren-style. His first foundational and major tenet is politics and he believes critical pedagogy must disclose and challenge the political and cultural role of schools. Furthermore, the criticalist must analyze the political and cultural role of schools on two planes: "as sorting mechanisms in which select groups of students are favoured on the basis of race, class, and gender; and as agencies for self and social empowerment" (p. 164). As such, he vehemently states that classroom instruction as a neutral process is neither viable or credible as the concepts of power, politics, history and context are influences much too strong and ubiquitous to be ignored. A second foundational principle espoused by McLaren (1998) is the notion of culture or rather cultural politics and cultural capital. He states that: "Critical theorists maintain that schools have always functioned in ways that rationalize the knowledge industry into class-divided tiers; that reproduce inequality, racism, and sexism; and that fragment democratic social relations through an emphasis on competitiveness and cultural ethnocentrism"(p. 14). The third

foundational tenet is economics and McLaren (1998) sees its manifestation in a number of ways:

> ... [S]tudents are viewed as the prospective vanguard of America's economic revival.... Critical pedagogy [however] is founded on the conviction that schooling for self and social empowerment is *ethically prior* to a mastery of technical skills, which are primarily tied to the marketplace....
>
> In their attempts to explode the popular belief that schools are fundamentally democratic institutions, critical scholars have begun to unravel the ways in which school curricula, knowledge, and policy depend on the corporate marketplace and the fortunes of the economy. Their goal is to unmask the inequality of competing self-interests within the social order that prohibits equal opportunity from being realized....
>
> ...[C]ritical scholars refuse the task capitalism assigns them as intellectuals, teachers, and social theorists, to passively service the existing ideological and institutional arrangements of the public school. These scholars believe that the schools serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful, while simultaneously disconfirming the values and abilities of those students who are most disempowered in our society already: minorities, the poor, and the female. In short, educators within the critical tradition argue that mainstream schooling supports an inherently unjust bias, resulting in the transmission and reproduction of the dominant status quo.
>
> Central to their attempt to reform public education is a rejection of the emphasis on scientific predictability that has been tacitly lodged in models of curriculum planning and in other theoretical approaches to educational practice.... In addition to questioning what is taken for granted about schooling, critical theorists are dedicated to the emancipatory imperatives of *self-empowerment* and social *transformation*.
>
> Critical pedagogists would like to pry theory away from the academics and incorporate it into educational practice....
>
> Critical educators argue that we have responsibility not only for how we act individually in society, but also for the system in which we participate.... Critical theorists attempt to go beyond the conventional question of *what* schooling means by raising instead the more important question of *how* schooling has come to mean what it has....
>
> Critical educational theorists argue that Marxism has not been taken seriously in this country as a means of social-historical analysis. ...
>
> Critical educators question the very basis of school funding. ... In fact, some critical educators ... challenge the very foundations of the global capitalist social order. (pp. 164-168)

Conceptual to the critical pedagogy of Giroux is the idea of concrete utopianism. Giroux (1983) believes that: "[R]adical pedagogy needs to be informed by a passionate

faith in the necessity of struggling to create a better world. In other words, radical pedagogy needs a vision – one that celebrates not what is but what could be, that looks beyond the immediate to the future and links struggle to a new set of human possibilities. This is a call for concrete utopianism" (p. 242).

Shor's *Empowering Education* (1992) provides seven self-explanatory values which he believes are crucial to a critical pedagogy: participatory, affective, situated, multicultural, problem-posing, dialogic, and desocialization (desocialization referring to questioning the social behaviour and experience in school and daily life). Thus, the work of McLaren, Giroux and Shor constitute the dominant American version of critical pedagogy and its endowment to critical literacy.

One final postscript to critical literacy's history and background has been noted by Schlib (1992) who directly credits his teaching pedagogy to the influences of Freire, Giroux and Shor. However, he states he has been influenced even more so by the models of feminist teaching propounded over the last two decades and believes that: "Of all the current schools of literary theory, only feminist criticism has consistently sought to develop a democratic pedagogy, in particular calling for a greater recognition of how women students actually respond to texts" (p. 51). For him, Francis Maher has summarized best the principles of feminist pedagogy when she writes:

> A pedagogy appropriate for voicing and exploring the hitherto unexpressed perspectives of women must be collaborative, cooperative and interactive. It draws on a rich tradition going back to Paulo Freire, John Dewey, and even Socrates, of involving students in constructing and evaluating their own education. It assumes that each student has legitimate rights and potential contributions to the subject-matter. Its goal is to enable students to draw on their personal and intellectual experiences to build a satisfying version on the subject, one that they can use productively in their own lives. Its techniques involve students in the assessment and production, as well as the absorption of the

> material. The teacher is a major contributor, a creator of structure and a delineator of ideals, but not the sole authority. (Cited in Schlib, 1992, p. 51)

It is therefore from such theoretical positionings, the work of Paulo Freire and American progressive educators and criticalists, and the philosophy of certain European schools of thought and movements such as the Frankfurt School that critical literacy arose. It may also be argued, as Gordon (1999) does, that the central idea of critical literacy was born during ancient times and was fed or fettered according to the political climate of the time and according to subaltern actions such as those of Luther and the American slaves. It was through such times and actions that the politics of language and the power of the word as a social, cultural, and political tool capable not only of hegemonic control but of self-emancipation and social transformation was recognized, embraced and forged.

Literacy, Text and Intertextuality

Perhaps because of the impetus of critical literacy, perhaps because of rapidly changing and strongly influential technologies, perhaps because of the power, pervasiveness and persuasiveness of media, perhaps, simply, because of the advancement of time and perhaps because of a combination of these and other factors, the traditional concept of literacy is undergoing change. The conventional definition of literacy was simply the ability to read and write, a singularly neutral process. This view of literacy – what Street (1995) referred to as the autonomous model of literacy – has dominated Western thinking up to and including the present.

> A great deal of the thinking about literacy ... has assumed that literacy with a big "L" and a single "y" [is] a single autonomous thing that [has] consequences for

> personal and social development.... One of the reasons for referring to this position as the autonomous model of literacy is that it represents itself as though it is not a position located ideologically at all, as though it is just natural. One of the reasons I want to call the counter-position ideological is precisely in order to signal that we are not simply talking here about technical features of the written process or the oral process. What we are talking about are competing models and assumptions about reading and writing processes, which are always embedded in power relations. (pp. 132-133)

Street (1995) does note, however , that viewing literacy ideologically does not mean that the conventional, cognitive form no longer exists; it has simply become part of the ideological model.

The New London Group (1996) states it thusly:

> What we term "mere literacy" remains centered on language only, and usually in a singular national form of language at that, which is conceived as a stable system based on rules such as mastering sound-letter correspondence. This is based on the assumption that we can discern and describe correct usage. Such a view of language will characteristically translate into a more or less authoritarian kind of pedagogy. A pedagogy of multiliteracies, by contrast, focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects. (p. 64)

The views of Kelly (1997) and Meek (cited in Bryan & Westbrook, 2000) are similar in tone and intent. Kelly (1997) states that: "The project of multiple literacies is not to move beyond print but to move along with print into broadened notions of what it means to read and what it is that can be read" (p. 81). While Meek (cited in Bryan & Westbrook, 2000) believes: "Literacy itself ... has to be redescribed, at least as literacies, to match the new emergent contexts and kinds of literate behaviours that are prevalent in modern societies" (p. 76).

It takes little insight, intuition or even intelligence to realize that the greatest shift in the changing definition of literacy is that it has taken the plural form – literacy has

become literacies. Yet what are these multiple literacies? This concept has been explored by Gallego and Hollingsworth (2000) and has taken shape for them in the divisions given below:

- *school literacies* – the learning of interpretative and communicative processes needed to adapt socially to school and other dominant language contexts, and the use or practice of these processes in order to gain a conceptual understanding of school subjects
- *community literacies* – the appreciation, understanding, and/or use of interpretative and communicative traditions of culture and community, which sometimes stand as critiques of school literacies
- *personal literacies* – the critical awareness of ways of knowing and believing about self that comes from thoughtful examination of historical or experimental and gender-specific backgrounds in school and community language settings, which sometimes stand as critiques of both school literacies and community literacies.

Wink (1997) has expanded upon and provided an enumeration of these literacies:

> [F]unctional (languages of the streets and of life); academic (languages of schools and universities); workplace (languages of our jobs); information (languages of technology); constructive (languages we construct with the printed word); emergent (languages we construct with the text before we are really decoding); cultural (language that reflects the perspective of one culture – guess which one); and critical (languages that take us deeper into more complex understandings of the word and the world); and, finally, literacies as a new type of literacy that provides a foundation reflective of multiple experiences. Literacies are reading, writing, and reflecting. Literacies help us to make sense of our world and to do something about it. (p. 44)

Departments of Education, such as those under whose auspices the APEF was formulated, have already begun to incorporate such broadened and expanded notions of literacy into curriculum statements and documents. In Australia, the Department of Education for the State of Queensland has also embraced such definitions and divisions of literacy as evidenced in "Literate Futures: Report of the Literacy Review for Queensland State Schools" (2000). According to this report, to become a literate member of society students must master the following literacies:

> *Oral*: the systems of spoken language. This may be spoken English but also includes ... other community languages spoken by their families and peers.
>
> *Written*: the systems of alphabetic writing and print culture. This includes traditional 'basics' of reading, writing, handwriting and spelling. It also includes those other formalised codes that have developed in parallel to spoken and written language, such as braille and sign language.
>
> *Multi-mediated*: the blended systems of linguistic and non-linguistic sounds, and visual representations of digital and electronic media. These require so-called multiliteracies that entail the processing, interpretation and critical analysis of online and on-screen sources of information that blend print information with visual, audio and other forms of expression (The New London Group, 1996). This includes what have variously been called media literacy and computer literacy over the past decade. (p. 3)

It is clearly evident that what constitutes literacy is being reshaped. Some have speculated upon the context of this reshaping while others have attempted to formulate a version or vision of the new literacies. Leu and Kinzer (2000) believe that important cultural forces of today will reframe and reshape the literacies to come. They state that these forces are as follows:

- global economic competition within a world economy based increasingly on the effective use of information and communication

- public policy initiatives by governments around the world to ensure higher levels of literacy achievement
- literacy as technological deixis. (p. 112)

Hartman (2000) has taken the role of the futurist and, premised upon present patterns, has offered an image of the literacies of the future based upon three areas: conceptions, materials, and methods. In the area of conceptions, he, as do most, sees literacy moving into literacies where the singular conception of literacy will no longer prevail but will be replaced by a more pluralistic conception that will be more inclusive and include meaning-making practices of iconography, movement, sound and other forces of production and reception. The conceptual area of literacy will also witness a shift from the monolingual to the multilingual when national, cultural and linguistic borders will be crossed with the aid of media and technological tools. His second area of change, materials, will see movement under three headings: from the linguistic to the semiotic (reading no longer being restricted to fixed print but would include reading images, icons, sounds and a host and mix of other sign systems, digital included); from the textual to the intertextual; and from the bundled to the distributed (commercial material previously available in kits or "bundles" will now be replaced by a more distributed means of locating material such as Web sites). The final area, methods, will see movement in two fields: from assignments to workshops and projects; and from intramediation to transmediation. The traditional pen and paper assignments will be extended to include the composition of projects using various literacy tools and modes of research while the traditional literacy methods of working back and forth from reading to writing within the print medium will be expanded to working back and forth across media

"from print to video to sculpture, to iconic notations to music and so on" (p. 282). These are the contexts of changes envisioned and even underway – as will be duly documented in Chapter Six dealing with the philosophy, implications and applications of the APEF.

As already gleaned from the scenarios of Hartman and others, the traditional concept of text is also undergoing change. Text has traditionally been conceived of as an object to be read, a book or the printed word. However, text is no longer limited to such notions. Prentiss (1998) offers the following extrapolated definition:

> Text includes both linguistic and non-linguistic signs such as art, music, gesture, or utterances. Text is any sign that communicates meaning (Saussure, 1966). It need not be tangible ... and may include what Pearson and Tierney (1984) termed *inner* texts, such as ideas, experiences and memories. Also, text need not be a specific length, size, unit, or level of semiotic and can include "chunks of meaning" (Rowe, 1987, p. 107) ranging from a single word to an extended discourse, idea, theme or function. (p. 111)

This extended notion of text has also aided the rise and popularity of critical literacy's catch phrase – "reading the world." Wink (1997) distinguishes between "reading the word" and "reading the world:"

> Reading the Word means:
> -to decode/encode those words
> -to bring ourselves to those pages
> -to make meaning of those pages as they relate to our experiences, our possibilities, our cultures; and our knowledges.
>
> Reading the World means:
> -to decode/encode the people around us
> -to decode/encode the community that surrounds us
> -to decode/encode the visible and invisible messages of the world. (p. 45)

One final notion to be discussed is the idea of intertextuality. This concept rests upon the notion that any one text is composed of other texts or elements from other texts. As such, all texts are intertextual as all contain filaments, threads, echoes and strains of

others that have gone before and, therefore, are linked through time. Bloome (cited in Prentiss, 1998) believes that linking texts alone does not constitute intertextuality, it being dependent upon three criteria: it must be interactionally recognized; acknowledged by the participants; and have social significance.

The question that now remains is how these concepts of critical literacy should be incorporated into the lives of adolescents and how they can provide a reconceptualization of literacies for this group. Phelps (1998) has identified four themes which speak to adolescent critical literacies:

1. The full range of adolescent literacy is much more complex, dynamic, and sophisticated than what is traditionally encompassed within school-sanctioned literate activity. Adolescents have multiple and overlapping literacies.

2. As adolescents have multiple literacies, they also draw on multiple texts. Adolescents can and do immerse themselves in literate activities that transcend adult-sanctioned themes, forms and limits. In addition to popular fiction, an expanded concept of "text" must also include film, CD-ROM, the Internet, popular music, television, magazines and newspapers, and adolescents' own cultural understandings.

3. Literacy has an important function in the development of individual, cultural, and social identities. Adolescents take cues on how to act, interact, and understand from their literate experiences, and cues taken from past literate experiences influence new literate activities.

4. Adolescents need spaces in school to explore multiple literacies, to experiment, to critique, and to receive feedback and guidance from peers and adults. Such spaces are not provided by schools and curricula, that area designed to teach an idealized (technical) literacy to idealized (adept and compliant) adolescents. (pp. 1-2)

Media and Technological Literacy

Because the text for "reading the world" is often an electronic or technological one, critical media literacy has become an essential component of critical literacy. C. Luke (1997) provides a working definition of media literacy although she notes many variations abound. "At its most rudimentary, media literacy includes the study of all forms of media but is primarily concerned with making students critical of TV's messages, its conventions, genres, and technical features, audience demographics, and their own viewing habits" (p. 33). She also notes that it includes four broad aspects: the study of texts; political economy; audience; and production. She further details specific features and components of media literacy such as the application of semiotics with its signs, symbols, codes, language, narrative and genres; its "analytic focus on how differences (gender, cultural, racial, national, etc.) are culturally constructed" (p. 35); its analysis of technical aspects according to the rules of semiotics (for example, she notes the use of soft and slow techniques aimed predominantly at females while primary colours, quick, fast-paced and hard techniques are aimed at males); the way "TV texts can be analyzed for their syntagmatic and paradigmatic features: how relations and signs are selected to hold the narrative together across a particular scene or set of scenes (paradigmatic) and how the semiotic structure of particular bits of text are associated to the other in order to bind the narrative historically (syntagmatic)" (p. 36); the political economy is analyzed and would "include the study of media ownership, legislation, electronic and print media as industry, industry regulations, censorship, viewer classifications, and so forth" (p. 37); an examination of technology which would raise critical questions centred upon production, control selection, exclusiveness and

distribution; and the study of audience which would include "how audiences are made and sold, the social and personal uses of media, and reader positioning" (p. 38). These are a sample of the integral ingredients that go into the mix of media literacy.

Gordon et al. (1998) have provided the following questions that help to inform and construct critical media literacy as well as providing the context which frames that perspective.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do electronic image media construct reflections and representations of the world?

2. What meanings (implicit and/or explicit) are encoded in electronic image media and how are these meanings communicated?

3. What is the relationship between your personal values and those promoted by the electronic image media?

4. Whose agenda does today's electronic image media industry serve? ...

Concepts that Frame a Perspective on Literacy:

1. All media are constructions.

2. The media construct reality.

3. Audiences negotiate meaning in media.

4. Media have commercial implications.

5. Media contain ideological and value messages.

6. Media have social and political implications.

7. Form and content in media are closely related.

8. Each medium has a unique aesthetic form. (pp. 304-305)

C. Luke (1997) firmly believes that media literacy is a crucial aspect of continuing literacy development. If literacy is continued to be conceived by its narrow print definition "then teachers and teacher educators will be teaching a generation of kids conceptualized according to an outdated concept of the child – kids who no longer exist in our classrooms, homes, and on the streets" (p. 47).

With the above sections having established the terminology and concepts that are vital to critical literacy, one now must turn to examine the perspective of critical literacy, its philosophy and its relation to English language arts programs.

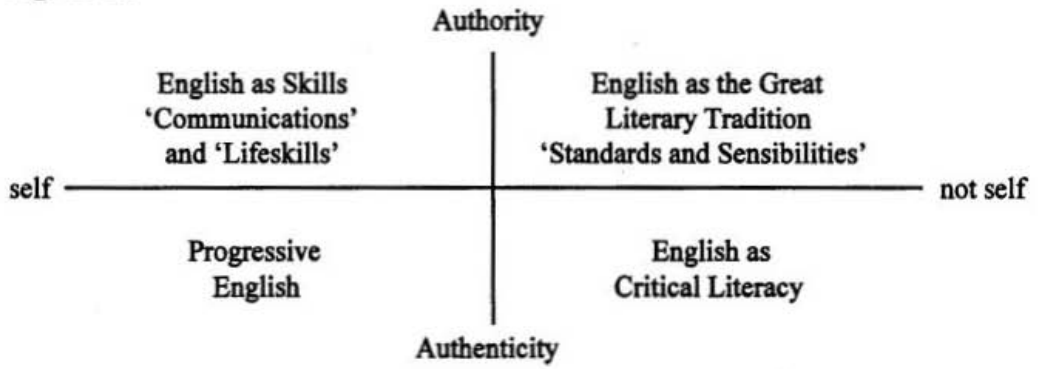
THE PERSPECTIVE

Critical literacy's historical and theoretical underpinnings and its terminologies of emphasis are the linchpins for its perspective. This perspective allows and enables a view of its intellectual prospects and offers a meaningful interrelatedness of its ideas. Oftentimes, perhaps for clarity, cohesion and spatial perception, it is advantageous to view a particular perspective in conjunction with its associated and neighbouring forms or, as Morgan (1997) states, its "competing or complementary versions" (p. 2).

As noted in Chapter Two, Ball et al. (1990) have proposed four main versions of English studies: English as Skills; English as the Great Literary Tradition; Progressive English; and English as Critical Literacy. They have also provided a schematic (see Figure 5.1 below) which admirably situates the perspective of all the Englishes. They note that the English as Skills version of the subject emphasises: the functional literacy of the individual and the acquiring of skills for the marketplace; the relation of state to education by providing the tools for the continuation of capitalism; the provision of

"docile and effective workers" (p. 77); the "behaviourist notion of motivation by reward" (p. 77); and the "latter-day ideology of meritocracy" (p. 78). English as "Great Literature" emphasises: the sense of a shared culture and common literary heritage; the works of the "great writers" and the institution of the canon; a particular view of history and society which should be disseminated to the masses; and the authority of the text. Progressive English emphasises creativity and self-expression; child-centred education; and imagination and aesthetics. Ball et al.'s (1990) fourth version, critical literacy, has already been detailed in Chapter Two.

Figure 5.1



As is evident from Figure 5.1, the horizontal axis concerns the relation between people, its continuum moving from individual needs to collective needs. The vertical axis concerns sources of power, the continuum moving from top down or bottom up conceptions of power, succinctly, from dictatorial to democratic (Davison, 2000).

Morgan (1997) includes in her story of English four groups which she notes sometimes overlap. They are the aesthetic; the ethical; the rhetorical; and the political. She defines them as follows:

> The aesthetic takes an often conservative approach to a bookish cultural heritage; the ethical concerns itself with the personal and literary development of readers and writers; the rhetorical has a functional emphasis on appropriate or correct expression and use of genres; and the political centres on the effects of power in texts and society. (p. 17)

As is obvious and evident there are commonalities of characteristics between these definitions while Kelly (1997) highlights another point of interest and pertinence (which emerged in Chapter Four as this study progressed): "Further, within forms of literacy are also competing theoretical positions. Critical literacy, for example, may encompass a variety of perspectives, i.e., Marxist, feminist, and post-structural, etc., each of which would lay claim to a specific direction for critical literacy" (p. 9).

This notion of nuances and hybridization of literacies and Englishes is echoed in another work as well. Peim (1993) reflects upon the incorporation of the new theories, specifically post-structuralism, into the context of English studies:

> Post-structuralism itself is a loosely defined theory and might include many different kinds of writing and different ideas. It's possible, though, to identify particular ideas and trends of thought in post-structuralism that provide the basis for an unqualified critique of English, at the same time proposing more powerfully explanatory models of language and textuality.... Social theories of meaning might be usefully provided by sociolinguistics and other elements of sociology, social theory and cultural theory....
>
> Semiotics and post-Saussurian linguistics, for example, can be made to take the familiar stuff of English beyond the level of assumption and assertion. Semiotics and linguistics provide theoretical groundings for understanding basic and complex operations of language.... Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, as a general theory of meaning and culture, commands powerful ideas of subjectivity and language. (p. 211)

In "The Cultural Politics of English Teaching: What Possibilities Exist for English Teachers to Construct Other Approaches," Peim (2000) has expanded upon the sources of theory which he believes should significantly inform English. In addition to

poststructuralist theories of language, meaning and subjectivity, he has included 1) media studies and cultural studies and 2) sociolinguistics. He reiterates the work and possibilities of poststructuralism stating that it questions the very idea of textual identity as texts are not entities unto themselves but operate according to codes, language and conventions that are exterior to the text; he believes it disallows the notion that meanings are contained within stories or that meanings are the product of creativity and "personal response;" he repeats the poststructuralist relativistic view of the universe; he states that poststructuralism, through deconstruction, will reveal the operation of power in institutions, traditions and society and that this social and political aspect of English cannot be kept separate; and he states that the "very (liberal) idea of the creative individual mastering language and their environment is also brought into question by post-structuralist theory. Language uses us more than we use language" (p. 171).

Regarding cultural studies and media studies, Peim (2000) states that it has a significant and demanding theoretical content and contribution for English studies which has been, for the most part, neglected in the teaching of the subject. For him, media studies "is about much more than teaching pupils to be skeptical about adverts, stereotypes and media manipulation. Theories of popular culture and audience-oriented work in media studies, for example, propose alternate models of communications theory and challenge the centrality of literature in educational practice" (p. 173). Furthermore, he views canonical literature as exclusive, restrictive and politically questionable.

Peim (2000) believes that the final theoretical influence should be that of sociolinguistics and critical language awareness. He notes that the realities of language practices had entered the classroom consciousness in the 1960s and 1970s "but only

partially and without shifting perception at the constitutive level" (p. 124). Following the publication of Britton's *Language and Learning* (1970), Bernstein's *Class, Codes and Control* (1971) and Labov's *The Logic of Nonstandard English* (1973), there was a renewal of interest in language practices that Peim (2000) terms most "democratic ... aim[ing] to embrace warmly all the varieties of language found among the pupil population [which was] critical of the systematic devaluation of non-standard forms of English in schools" (p. 174).

Morgan's (1997) theoretical concreteness and practical suggestions for critical literacy and a reconceptualized English discipline are strikingly similar to Peim's ideas and echo his three foundational tenets. For her, critical literacy must be informed by sociopolitical views of language (such as feminism and politics or "resistant" poststructural work of educators such as Colin Lankshear, Pam Gilbert, Allan Luke, Bronwyn Davies, Roy Morrison, Bill Corcoran and Jack Thomson); cultural studies, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies having influenced the Australian culturalists; and sociolinguistics underscored by the work of Gunther Kress (1985), Terry Threadgold (1987) and Barbara Kamler and Claire Woods (1987) who in turn have been directly influenced by M.A.K. Halliday's functional grammar and the sociolinguist, Norman Fairclough. Davies (2000), in reference to Halliday, believes that the concept of Hallidayan grammar introduced :

> ...[A] sociolinguistic perspective to secondary-school English teaching, especially for those children who made up the bulk of the comprehensive school population. The chief emphasis in this, and other work developed for use in schools around the same time, entailed 'rejecting the notion of correctness' and replacing it 'by the concept of appropriateness' (see Mathieson, 1975: 147-8, for a more detailed account). This concept of appropriateness involved, above all, the argument that language use is inevitably influenced by the *context* in which it is being used. On

> this basis, all choices about aspects of language use, such as vocabulary and syntax, do not in reality involve reference to the exact requirements of a fixed and unvarying 'standard English,' so much as locate what is being written or said in terms of the varying degrees of formality that the English language so uniquely allows, and within the richly varied registers and dialects of the language. (p. 107)

Davies (2000) notes that this concept of Hallidayan grammar was attacked, one principle attacker being John Marenbon and his *English Our English* (1987). Ironically, Davies (2000) believes Marenbon actually succeeded in presenting "quite a convincing case *for* the notion of appropriateness, in trying to characterize what was wrong with it:"

> Different circumstances call for different types of language. The grammar and vocabulary used in casual conversation will be different from that required for an interview or public speech; biographical reminiscence or a short story will be written in a different manner from a piece of technical description, a business letter or an advertisement. The English teacher should help children to use the type of language appropriate to each of the various common situations of life; and he should judge each use of language 'in its own context of use, and not by the standards of other uses which it was not intended to satisfy.' (Marenbon, 1987, p. 11, cited in Davies, 2000, p. 107)

Davies (2000) further cites the work of other sociolinguists such as David Crystal's *Child Language, Learning and Linguistics* (1976), Donald Trudgill's *Access, Dialect and the School* (1975), Michael Stubbs' *Language, Schools and Classrooms* (1976) and Dwight Bolinger's *Language: The Loaded Weapon* (1980) noting that they:

> ... did indeed see dangers in an unbending emphasis within formal education on the prescriptive teaching of standard English, [but] there is no evidence that they were interested in abandoning it as a language form. Rather, their concerns were with the long-term harmful effects on working-class pupils that might arise from the negative attitudes to their non-standard uses of language that they might encounter in school, and more widely in society. They argue against the validity of such negative attitudes by trying to point out that all varieties of English – i.e. standard and non-standard – can be viewed as equally elaborate, rule-governed, and flexible. In other words, non-standard forms are not linguistically inferior: they are merely accorded inferior prestige. (p. 108)

Bolinger (cited in Davies, 2000) expresses powerfully a similar viewpoint:

> The desired uniformity could be achieved by adopting the forms used by the underprivileged, but it never is – they are the ones who must demote their own language and learn a new one, replacing the threads that join their minds and feelings to reality – like the operation of reconnecting the flesh and nerves of a severed limb. (p. 108)

The perspective of critical literacy as a reconceptualized form of English Studies would thus offer a view encompassing the "new" theories such as Feminism, Marxism, Queer, etc. with a decided emphasis on poststructuralism and its inherent forms of semiotics and deconstruction. Additionally, the work of the sociolinguists would be well within sight and range and the terrain of cultural studies and media and technological studies would also be part and parcel of the panorama of critical literacy. Kelly (1997) succinctly defines it as a "poststructural literacy" (p. 19).

THE PROPOSAL

Having espoused the perspective of critical literacy through the eyes of its advocates and proponents, it now remains to examine the proposal for a reconceptualized English Studies through the medium of critical literacy. Most obvious of critical literacy's philosophy is its view of reading, as it no longer views reading for interpretation of literary terms; neither is it to glean the "meaning" within the text; neither is it to decode words and phrases; and neither is its purpose creative or aesthetic. Moon (2000) offers three classes of reading.

- Dominant or preferred readings – these are readings which the text is designed to favor, and which represent the beliefs and values which are most powerful in a culture.

- Alternative readings – these are readings which are less common but acceptable, because they do not challenge the dominant reading.

- Oppositional or resistant readings – these are readings which are unable [unavailable?] in terms of the dominant cultural beliefs, and which challenge prevailing views. (p. 73)

Morgan (1997) further believes that a critical literacy would engage in readings of the other – not simply a distancing of but an embracing of – that would allow for a less discriminatory society. She speaks specifically in terms of reading to embrace the sexual self but notes, as did Pinar (1998), that "such a curriculum is presently improbable, certainly impossible in many school contexts" (p. 45). And again, like Pinar (1998), she reiterates: "But critical literacy teachers must continue to imagine otherwise" (p. 45).

On the practical and more probable side of reading, Morgan (1997) has developed four principal ideas to be incorporated into actual high school English language arts units.

1. Any text is made in a particular society at a particular time. This influences the form it takes and the ideas it represents.

2. Any text gives you a particular version (or part of) a story: it emphasises certain things; and it has gaps and is silent about certain things.

3. Texts don't contain one fixed, definite meaning put there by the author. Different kinds of readers in different societies and times can produce different meanings for the same text because of what they bring to it.

4. Any text offers you a way of seeing and valuing things and invites you to accept its version as the truth, the way things are meant to be. What comes to be accepted as the truth, as knowledge, comes to serve someone's interest. (pp. 39-42)

The idea of a reconceptualized English Studies would see cultural studies and media studies as an integral and central aspect of its teaching. The following is Peim's (2000) idea of the powerful proposition of media studies.

> Media Studies actually has important ideas to offer English teaching, in a number of ways. A dynamic sense of meaning is central to the sense of textual encounters in Media Studies, deriving from linguistics and communications theory. Media Studies have reworked the idea of textual relations through the idea of the

> audience, reviewing the significance of varying interpretations and valuation of texts – once more making the business of meaning and interpretation more mobile, dynamic, and at the same time more socially rooted. Media Studies is alert to the social forces that actually determine meanings, and that set the limits on the meaning in the public sphere. In relation to obvious social issues like gender, or race, for example, it is easy to see how ideas and practices might be of great significance in teaching about the generation and reception of meaning in the social sphere, and how these might be questioned, modified or resisted. A range of reading techniques – derived from semiotics and narratology, for example – are intrinsic to Media Studies approaches, and might usefully migrate into English to extend its range of textual encounters, in order to make them more rational, visible and coherent. If English teaching is to make its textual dealings systematically beyond the limits of personal response, character and themes, and to extend its textual aspirations beyond the limits of literature, Media Studies has a great deal to offer – usefully and positively challenging the premises of the subject's textual orientation. Once again, it promises a wide range of texts and of reading techniques and procedures, beyond the current remit of English. (pp. 173-174)

Additionally, Gordon (1998) suggests that critical inquiry into electronic image-texts would allow for understandings and explorations of the following:

1. Knowledge and knowing are constructed by individuals and community.
2. Reality is multidimensional and multiperspectival.
3. Truth is grounded in everyday experience.
4. Life is a textual expression and thinking an interpretive act.
5. Facts and values are inseparable.
6. Every human activity is value-laden.

Hlynka and Yeaman (cited in Gordon, 1998) indicate that thinking and engaging critically in electronic image-texts would require:

1. a commitment to a plurality of perspectives, meanings, methods, values;
2. a search for an appreciation of double meanings and alternative interpretations, many of them ironic or unintended;

3. a critique or distrust of "big stories" meant to explain everything, including scientific theories, religious myths, and the accepted knowledge of professions; and,

4. a plurality of perspectives and ways of knowing, a recognition that there are multiple truths. (p. 308)

Finally, Hlynka and Yeaman (cited in Gordon, 1998) believe that those learners involved in critical media studies of electronic image-texts must:

1. Consider concepts, ideas and objects as texts. Textual meanings are open to interpretation;

2. Look for binary oppositions in those texts, for example, good/bad, progress/tradition, science/myth, love/hate, man/woman, and truth/fiction; and,

3. "Deconstruct" the text by showing how these oppositions are not necessarily true. (p. 308)

What critical literacy proposes is often best clarified and actualized through what it does not propose. Peim's *Critical Theory and the English Teacher* (1993) provides the attestation for this antithetical thinking by reviewing current tenets of English and literature teaching. The traditional version views literacy as individual competence, not as something which is socially constructed; the traditional model of literacy is "punitive and exclusive" (p. 176) thus restrictive; traditional concepts of what it means to be literate are similarly restrictive; the literary canon is, as such, anachronistic as it has a narrow view of text and does not address the social and political and operates to maintain a particular dominant ideological concept of culture and society; the tradition model emphasises one set of cultural values and promotes these values over those of other cultural groups; traditional versions of English reify the division between literature and popular culture and the twain rarely and, in some cases, never meet; and that the

traditional discipline of English serves the hegemonic function of schools which is to reproduce the dominant order, to inculcate the acceptance of hierarchy and to reinforce social stratification. Suffice to say, all that the traditional version upholds, critical literacy does not propose.

Willinsky's "Postmodern Literacy: A Primer" (1992) has proposed and detailed seven guiding principles inherent in critical literacy's pedagogical concept. These principles are:

> *First Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Approach cultural movements strategically, with an eye to taking hold of its forms, combining them in ways, that tell a new story....
>
> *Second [P]rinciple of [P]ostmodern [L]iteracy*: Observe with care how the realm of text defines the world within us and without us....
>
> *Third Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Participate in the broader circulation of meanings as reader, writer, and critic....
>
> *Fourth Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Appreciate the moral economy invoked by acts of representation....
>
> *Fifth Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Prepare to make yourself over through acts of appropriation and assertion....
>
> *Sixth Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Look for new stories to add to the shelf of master narratives by which we live....
>
> *Seventh Principle of Postmodern Literacy*: Ask after language in public forums: what is it up to, what does it make us, how could it be turned to different purposes? ... (pp. 35-49)

The last word on the proposal of a reconstructed English will go to Robert Scholes (1985) who likens the traditional role to:

> ... the attitude of the exegete before the sacred text; whereas, what is needed is a judicious attitude: scrupulous to understand, alert to probe for blind spots and hidden agendas, and, finally, critical, questioning, skeptical....

> And textual studies must be pushed beyond the discrete boundaries of the page and the book into the institutional practices and social structures that can themselves be usefully studied as codes and texts. This is what a *re*constructed English apparatus ought to do. (pp. 16-17)

THE PRACTICAL

Having established its genesis, its perspective and its proposition, what remains to be addressed is critical literacy in action, in other words, practical classroom application. A number of scholars have risen to the challenge of the practical and have laid forth workable classroom components, units and curriculum. Bomer (2000) has composed a standard set of questions, the aim of which is to foster critical literacy, thinking and practices:

- Is this story fair?
- How does the purpose or point of this text address what people like me care about? ("People like me" are members of the same social groups.)
- How does this text address the perspectives of other groups, especially those who usually don't get to tell their side?
- How does this story make us think about justice in the world?
- What perspective is missing in this text (one that could be there)? What would it be like if we put it back?
- How does this story deal with individuals and groups? Are the people alone and in contests with each other, or does this story help us imagine people getting together?
- How does money work in this story?
- How different are people allowed to be in this story? Does it assume everyone's happy and good in the same ways? (p. 114)

He also offers particular lenses to spot the political potential of student writings, lenses which are equally applicable to reading practices:

- Embedded ... might be issues of *fairness and setting things straight*....
- Some entries lend themselves to *trying on the perspectives of others*....
- Some entries may lead the writer to think about questions of *what people need for happiness and well-being*....
- It is more frequently possible than one would think to find opportunities to *follow the money* in student writing....
- Naturally, a critical habit of mind involves *questioning authority*....
- *Feelings of anger and indignation* often contain implicit critique beneath them.... Feelings of empathy and compassion are the positive face of social critique....
- One could probably read every entry in a writer's notebook as embodying a theme of *identity and affiliation*....
- Seeds of social action can be found in any entry that involves getting people together to do something. Thinking about *collective action* ... can help students ... to imagine coming together with others to explore and pursue more complex common social agendas....
- Personal entries often, implicitly, carry themes of *difference*. (pp. 118-119)

Moss (2000) believes that some of the terminology of structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction and narratology can be incorporated into classroom practice. He provides the following list:

- binary oppositions ...;
- differance ... (Derrida, 1967);
- narrative codes ... (Barthes, 1970);
- structural bundles of character/action relations (Levi-Strauss, 1963);
- different discourses operating within a single text (Foucault, 1975);
- the focalisation of narrative (time perspective on events; the distance and speed of narration; the knowledge of the narrator(s)) (Genette, 1972);

- rhetorical and stylistic overcoding (the use of convention and cliché as a signal to the reader);
- plot and character types (Propp, 1928);
- textual gaps and silences (Iser, 1978).

Key distinctions worth addressing include those between:

- denotation and connotation;
- signifier and signified (de Saussure, 1974);
- monological and polyphonic texts (Bakhtin, 1929);
- open and closed, readerly and writerly texts (Barthes, 1970);
- 'fabula' (story; events in sequence) and 'sjuzet' (plot; finished arrangement) (Todorov, 1977). (p. 208)

Moss decisively concludes by noting practical examples of such terminological frameworks in existence and cites one to illustrate his point: Exton (1984) who utilized "Barthes' narrative codes to inform his teaching of a short story in a manner that extended the semiotic repertoire of his pupils" (cited in Moss, 2000, p. 208). Exton (1984) realized that "the class were beginning to think about *how* a narrative worked rather than what it meant and how they felt about it" (cited in Moss, 2000, p. 208). This practical approach by Exton emphasised the structure of the text rather than the author's message and emphasized and accessed sociolinguistic and cultural issues of the story. Exton's work, incidentally, is cited in J. Miller's *Eccentric Propositions: Essays on Literature and the Curriculum* (1984), a most practical read for the English language arts teacher of the twenty-first century which, as the jacket suggests "... charts some important changes brought about by teachers in the way literature is read and written about in schools; ... concentrates on real classrooms, real lessons, and real children; ... shows how

particular ideas can be put into practice; [and] ... approaches theories of reading and of literature through specific examples of lively and successful practice."

Moon (2000), as an example of critical literacy practice, takes the age-old story of "Cinderella" and details the dominant or preferred reading as well as supplying a resistant or oppositional one. Here are the two readings of "Cinderella."

a. The story presents an ideal image of romantic love. It shows that true love will prevail no matter what the odds, and it encourages people to believe that dreams can come true. The story encourages an optimistic outlook on life.

b. The story is about the shallowness of men who judge women solely on the basis of physical attractiveness. A man who will marry a woman on the basis of a few hours dancing is likely to leave her just as quickly. No wonder most of the women in the story are bitter. This should be read as a cautionary tale against the idea of romantic love. (p. 74)

Further to this, he notes that the dominant reading contains numerous gaps and silences which can be recognized by a critical reading stance.

Morgan's *Critical Literacy in the Classroom: The Art of the Possible* (1997) is, as the title suggests, an attempt to illustrate the theoretical influences and aspects of critical literacy but at the same time demonstrates the possibilities of a workable pedagogy and curriculum that can be embraced by high school teachers and students. Particularly worthy of note is her detailing of specific units for teaching English language arts, the units, of course, being propelled, directed, and informed by the philosophy of critical literacy. Her practical example of the broadened concept of text is derived from the work of Maureen LaMar and Emily Schnee (1991) of the United States, who, in a literacy program, had students "read" a cotton tee-shirt. Research and discussion as to where the shirt was produced led to an investigation of working conditions and hourly wages,

particularly of third-world countries; to an exploration of internal structures of industry; to questions about unionization; to questions regarding globalization and commodification; and to questions that attempted to uncover further hidden agendas such as who bears the costs and who reaps the benefits. As Morgan (1997) points out, this type of unit is in accordance with the philosophy of Paulo Freire and utilizes a student-centred and student interest approach.

She details a second unit, developed during her high school teaching career when she selected Douglas Stewart's verse play *Ned Kelly* (1943) because it seemed "the least dreary" (p. 36). She was able to incorporate into the unit a wide array of texts "from poems to beer coasters, films to postage stamps, cartoons to editorials and police records ..." (p. 36). The lessons of the unit were informed by the tenets of critical literacy.

> I saw that with this diversity of materials and viewpoints my Year 10 students (aged about fifteen) and I could explore something of the ways texts work: their content (what they include and therefore what they leave out, what they emphasise and what they underplay); their use of language, codes and conventions (their generic features that suggest how a text is to be read); the role of the readers in their interactions with the text; the various ways in which texts relate to one another; and the historical and cultural factors which affect the possible meanings of a text. All of these texts in their contexts construct and deconstruct a single 'truth.' Some speak with the weight of historical (police, legal and bureaucratic) officialdom. Others speak out of the discourse of the English-oriented middle class whose social control and respectability were challenged by this larrikin descended of Irish convicts. Yet others drawing on discourses of heroism elevate him into a Robin Hood or Christ figure. (p. 36)

Morgan's (1977) unit employing semiotics, deconstruction, discourse analysis, relativism, intertextuality and the social, cultural, historical and political power of texts could equally and easily be transferred to other texts for classroom teaching and learning.

In a final unit, she explores the leisure industry, particularly a tee-shirt message: "When the going gets tough, the tough take a holiday" (p. 37). Again, students were to "deconstruct the binaries and essentialisms of the 'other'" (p. 38) in terms of racial identities; to examine oppositional terms such as "leisure industry" as well as how language sets up these binary oppositions; to deconstruct each text's version of reality; to "challenge and break down some of these oppositions" (p. 38); and to examine gaps and silences in texts. It is thus within such constructs and frameworks that Morgan has made critical literacy "the art of the possible."

Concerning media studies, Leggo (2000) offers a critical perspective on television. He states that "Television literacy is about learning how to interrogate the meanings of the images that help construct our sense of reality, as well as learning how to imagine a wide range of diverse images" (p. 163). Furthermore, he believes that "television literacy promotes interrogative, resistant, self-reflexive viewers who revel in the power of meaning-making as they interact with programs" (p. 170). Leggo (2000) also believes that a text is created from the interaction of the sign systems of the TV program with the active participation of the viewer. These signs and codes are identified below:

> The constructed reality of television is an intricately woven tapestry of codes, conventions and rules through which meaning is made and transmitted, including technical codes (for example, camera angles, editing, and sound effects), social codes (for example, gesture, speech and appearance), representational codes (for example, conflict, setting, and narrative), and ideological codes (for example, race, class and gender. (p. 171)

Because of the pervasiveness and complexity of TV, Leggo (2000) believes that students must develop critical skills of TV literacy. He proposes the following questions that would prove useful in developing these self-same skills of critical viewing:

1. Who is the audience?
2. What are the purposes of this kind of text?
3. Is this pleasurable? Why or why not?
4. What is left out? What is silent?
5. What are the conventions that govern this kind of text?
6. What are the qualities of this kind of text?
7. How is this kind of text shaped and crafted?
8. What patterns and signs and terms and codes are characteristic of this kind of text?
9. How is this kind of text used?
10. Who writes/directs/produces this kind of text?
11. Who views this kind of text?
12. Who is served by this kind of text? Who is not well served by this kind of text?
13. Who is included and who is excluded by this kind of text?
14. How is this kind of text valued or not valued by others?
15. How is this kind of text communicated and transmitted?
16. How does this kind of text appeal to reason, emotions and values?
17. How is reality presented in this kind of text?
18. What perspectives of philosophy, knowledge, values and human experience inform this kind of text?
19. What are the contexts in which this kind of text is written, read, published, transmitted, and communicated?

20. What type of relationship is established between writers, producers, directors, and advertisers, on the one hand, and viewers, on the other, in this kind of text?

21. How is contact established and maintained between the viewers and the text?

22. How do different viewers respond to this kind of text in different situations?

He affirms that critical discussion and perspectives can be fostered by asking such questions about a single episode of one TV series such as *Xena, Warrior Princess*.

Peim (2000), like Leggo, explores textuality by juxtaposing contrasting texts such as printed matter and film. He illustrates how the use of Barthes' (1970) narrative codes may be used in examining perspectives on the narrative context and structure of *Hamlet* and *Terminator 2*. But first the narrative codes:

- **the proairetic** – actions, sequence, development;
- **the semic** – components, constituent elements;
- **the symbolic** – theme, symbol, contrast, echoes;
- **the cultural** – knowledge, references, implied information;
- **the hermeneutic** – questions, enigmas, answers, gaps. (p. 176)

He then supplies a concrete translation of these codes into exercises with which students can readily work.

> The proairetic code can be activated simply by asking: 'How can we divide this text into sections? how does one section relate to another?' This kind of exercise gives rise to a consideration of narrative sequencing, and may be considered in relation to questions about text and time and textual editing – the gaps that are left, where they occur, their effects and how we, as readers or spectators, fill in or interpret those gaps. The proairetic code can provide some consideration of the idea of action and agency in texts and how it is distributed.... The proairetic code can operate at a very simple level, as a teaching technique for indicating

> fundamental narrative sequencing – from disruption, through action towards resolution – or can be used to ask fundamental questions about how texts work, about editing, reading and the activation of codes and conventions.
>
> The semic code might ask pupils to identify the key places, objects, identities and events in a text. This approach tends to deal with the elements of meaning in narrative texts and offers a simple and direct way of examining the relations between meanings that circulate in relation to identifies, and how these get caught up in textual threads. Ophelia, for example can be understood only if we already have some field of knowledge about feminine identity, and exactly the same is true of John Connor's mother in *Terminator 2*.... Another approach might concentrate on different places in these texts and how they constitute elements of a symbolic landscape – identifying the symbolic meanings of place in each text. ...
>
> The hermeneutic code could be easily explored ... by asking questions like: 'What questions does the text ask? What questions are answered and unanswered? What information are we given? What information does the text not provide? ...'
>
> The cultural and symbolic codes similarly provide techniques for analytic work on texts. The cultural code provides useful material for identifying frames of reference and context.... [It] can also serve to identify how texts of different types deploy different languages, and can also be a useful way of indicating how textual meanings constantly refer outside of themselves to meanings that are current (or not, as the case may be) in general cultural practices and discourse. The symbolic code also addresses the relations between texts and the systems of ideas they refer to and operate within. Contrasts at work in *Hamlet* and in *Terminator 2* – between action and inaction, between the human and the technological, for example – connect with some of the powerful binary oppositions that shape our thinking in general and that form part of the world of meaning that we inhabit. (pp. 176-177)

In *Critical Thinking and the English Teacher* (1993), Peim (p. 77) has supplied a table delineating conventional and alternative ideas about text and textual analysis. The table is reproduced below as Figure 5.2.

Further to this, he has developed a set of questions, reproduced below as well, the sole purpose of which is to develop alternative readings of texts and ultimately to reconstruct the discipline of English.

Figure 5.2

Conventional/established ideas	Alternative ideas/views
– Status and identity	intertextuality and institutional ordering
– independence, uniqueness	genres, discourses
– characters setting places objects	symbolic codes – elements and identities interplay of presence and absence
– story	syntactic/narrative structure – opening/closure
– development	hermeneutic code
– time - of the text	cultural code/reading practices
– meaning or meanings	phenomenology and reading practices
– response, empathy, identification, enjoyment	interpellation, symbolic order; addressing and positioning the subject of discourse, pleasures
– truth to life, realism	regimes of truth

Questions designed to promote alternative readings (Peim, 1993):

Identity
What kind of people read this text?
Where? Within what institutions?
What would they do with this?
What kind of text is this?
What social activity or activities is it associated with?
What other kinds of texts is it distinguished from?

Context
What places are represented in the text?
What interiors are there? What exteriors?
What public places are there?
What era is the text set in?
What tense is the text represented in?

What social relations are evident in the text?

Time
What era is the text written in?
What era is the text being read in?
How does the era of the text's reading represent the era of its setting?
What movements in time does the text signify?
What movements in time do readers have to assume?

Symbolic structure
What identities, or 'agents' are there in the text?
What are their different roles and functions?
What objects are there in the text?
What symbolic meanings can be given to these objects?
What places are represented?
What is the symbolic meaning of these places?

Narrative structure
From what situation does the narrative begin?
What changes are there?
What instigates each of these changes?
What direction is the text moving in at its moment of change?
Are there any changes in direction?
What kind of ending does the text have?
How does the ending organize the movement of the text?

Questions and gaps in the text
What questions does the text leave open?
What possible answers are there to these questions?
What answers are most likely to be given?
What assumptions are these answers based on?
Are there any unanswerable questions?
What gaps are there in the text – in terms of details/descriptions, actions, location and time?
How are these gaps likely to be filled in?
Are there gaps that cannot be filled in?

Textual ideology
What ideas about the way people behave does the text seem to promote?
Does the text represent people differently according to – race, class and/or gender?
How does the text organize its different identities?
What ideas and attitudes about the world does the text assume?
How does the text seem to address the reader or audience?

What assumptions does it make about the reader or audience? (pp. 81-83)

Peim (1993) does not only explore and exemplify critical reading's philosophy, techniques and practices but explores the concept of intertextual analysis in his Chapter Three; his Chapter Four delves into developing a critical writing perspective and techniques while providing similar organizational features and guidelines; and his Chapter Six follows suit with its emphasis on developing critical oracy and drama.

It is within such a redefined, reconceptualized philosophy, pedagogy and practice that the proponents of critical literacy map the new direction of English language arts. To use Peim's (1993) apt conclusion of his work "If this means that the subject of English is no longer recognizable as itself, then so be it" (p. 216).

AESTHETIC TRANSACTIONS THROUGH MULTIPLE SIGN SYSTEMS

Background

The theoretical basis for the following English language arts approach is that of Reader-Response Theory, specifically Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. Transactional theory, as do all theories of Reader-Response, emphasises the role and importance of the reader in any transactional engagement. Because of this focus, a textual piece is often viewed as an activity of the mind, an interaction between text and subject, an experience, a transaction or a "poem" (Rosenblatt's term). As such, this theoretical stance is supportive of the concept of meaning as being a product or creation of the individual reader and does not objectively reside in the text nor is it subject to "free play."

Freund (1987) states:

> By refocusing attention on the reader, reader-response criticism attempts to grapple with questions generally ignored by schools of criticism which teach us how to read; questions such as *why* do we read and what are the deepest sources of our engagement with literature? What does reading have to do with the life of the psyche, or the imagination, or our linguistic habits? What happens – consciously or unconsciously, cognitively or psychologically – during the reading process? Reader-response criticism probes the practical or theoretical consequences of the event of reading by further asking what the relationship is between the private and the public, or how and where meaning is made, authenticated and authorized, or why readers agree or disagree about their interpretations. In doing so it ventures to reconceptualize the terms of the text-reader interaction. A by-product of these investigations is a renewed attention to the different aspects and implications – rhetorical, political, cultural, psychological, etc. – of critical style.... It undertakes, in short, to make the implicit features of 'reading' explicit. (pp. 5-6)

As noted in both Chapters One and Two, the use of this literary theoretical position coupled with specific theories and notions of intelligence speak to an expanded version of transactional theory as well as to its application in educative and innovative ways. The resultant manifestation is an English language arts approach that is harmonic with particular philosophic chords of the APEF.

THE PERSPECTIVE

The aim of transactional theory utilizing broadened notions of intelligence, made concrete through the tool of multiple signs, is the evocation of aesthetic response which is ultimately the creation of meaning. Before this perspective can be explored several distinctions or dualistic concepts of terms must be noted. The first concerns the concept of aestheticism; the second deals with the notion of experience. The objective or purist form of aestheticism viewed art primarily as objects in possession of a special internal status. As such, this formulation did not account for nor give credence to the idea of any

interaction between the artistic object and the perceiving subject. The idea of a human emotive response as an inherent component of aestheticism was also untenable. The definition of the word knowledge itself, with it dualistic nature, was also problematic, having endured centuries of controversy and debate. Williams (cited in Faust, 2000) argued that past uses of the word produced this fundamental controversy over two distinct and seemingly opposite and irreconcilable meanings of the word. He summarized it thusly as: "(1) Knowledge gathered from past events, and reflections; and (2) a particular kind of consciousness, which can, in some contexts, be distinguished from reason and knowledge" (p. 216). The first simply characterizes experience in a purely objective, functional, and analytical form while the second deals with the subjective and emotive connotations of the word. This troubling dualistic nature of aestheticism and experience was examined, addressed and theorized by two of the most eminent education theorists of all time: John Dewey and Louise Rosenblatt. Their respective work posited a continuity within each term and a more holistic perspective involving the object and the subject. Faust (2000) states that:

> ... their [Dewey and Rosenblatt] positions overlap to suggest a useful way of theorizing literary reading as aesthetic experience that does not rely on a surreptitious distinction between experience in general and literary experience in particular. While reader-response theorists characteristically rely upon traditional axioms to portray literature as a special category of art objects that demand to be appreciated in certain ways, Dewey (1934) and Rosenblatt (1938/1984, 1993/1994) propose a more holistic conception of literary reading as they endeavour to find out what a work of art is as an experience; the kind of experience which constitutes it." (p. 14)

Berleant (cited in Faust, 2000) notes that "a clear alternative to the dualism of the empiricist tradition ... lies in the claim for a continuity of experience, joining perceiver with the world in complex patterns of reciprocity" (p. 12). Furthermore, Shusterman

(cited in Faust, 2000) believed that Dewey's philosophy was instrumental in transforming the aesthetic tradition into a more radical concept of experience that was active, subjective, and productive. According to him, "Dewey's philosophy amounted to an 'assault' on dualistic thinking based upon rigid dichotomies of body and mind, material and ideal, thought and feeling, form and substance, man and nature, self and world, subject and object, and means and end" (p. 13).

Dewey was one of the first to postulate and explore this holistic conception in *Art as Experience* (1934). This work, written while he was in his 70s, has been, until recently, relatively unknown and unexplored. However, due to a current interest of researchers and scholars who want to reform literary instruction and bring some sense of cohesion to its apparent disarrayed state, the last decade has witnessed a surge of interest in *Art as Experience* (1934) and its propositions for aesthetic theory. A parallel development is occurring regarding the work of Louise Rosenblatt as well. In essence, both scholars have proposed that the aesthetic response is the result of the interaction of art object and perceiving subject. The following analogy from *Art and Experience* (1934) captures the quintessential nature of this idea:

> By one of the ironic perversities that often attend the course of affairs, the existence of the works of art upon which formulation of an esthetic theory depends has become an obstruction to theory about them.... In common concepts, the work of art is often identified with the building, book, painting or statue in its existence apart from human experience ... [this] result is not favourable to understanding.... When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals.... [The] task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. Mountain peaks do not float unsupported. ... (p. 3)

> The man who poked the sticks of burning wood would say he did it to make the fire burn better; but he is none the less fascinated by the colourful drama of change that is enacted before his eyes and imaginatively partakes in it. He does not remain a cold spectator. What Coleridge said of the reader of poetry is true in its way of all who are happily absorbed in their activities of body and mind: "The reader should be carried forward not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, not by a restless desire to arrive at a final solution, but by the pleasurable activity of the journey itself. (p. 5)

Dewey (1934) believed that every "experience is constituted by interaction between "subject" and "object," between a self and its world;" that "there is no experience in which the human contribution is not a factor in determining what actually happens;" and that in an experience (an aesthetic response), "things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it" (p. 246). However, he is quick to note early in his work the difference between mere perception and aesthetic or experiential response.

> Bare recognition ... involves no stir of the organism, no inner commotion....
>
> The esthetic .... involves surrender ... adequate yielding of the self....
>
> .... [T]he object may be physically there, the cathedral of Notre Dame, or Rembrandt's portrait of Hendrik Stoeffel. In some bald sense, the latter may be "seen." They may be looked at possibly recognized, and have their correct names attached. But for lack of continuous interaction between the total organism and the objects, they are not perceived, certainly not esthetically. A crowd of visitors steered through a picture-gallery by a guide, with attention called here and there to some high point of interest, does not perceive....
>
> For to perceive, a beholder must *create* his own experience. (p. 53-54)

Thus, Dewey's (1934) reconceptualization of aesthetic theory and the aesthetic experience was an interaction between object and subject, the "junction of new and old" (p. 60) where a "recreation" occurred, this recreation acquiring both a "form and order that they did not at first possess" (p. 65) and ultimately created "an experience of which the intrinsic subject matter, the substance, is new" (p. 108).

Rosenblatt's seminal work, *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and her transactional theory it delineates and espouses, has been one of the most influential works in the teaching of English language arts this century. In a recent issuance by the Modern Language Association (MLA) of the top ten most influential works in English teaching, *Literature as Exploration* (1938) has been accorded second place. This in itself is indicative of a particular turn regarding the scholar and her work. In many of the recent works citing Rosenblatt, there is a predominant and recurring point: the fact that as a literary scholar she has been all but ignored, oftentimes being reduced to simply a footnote in many anthologies of literary theory and at other times completely absent. This point is raised by many of the contributors to Clifford's (1990) collection of essays on Rosenblatt. The American Reader-Response theorist, Richard Bleich, has, of late, tried to reconcile this lapse by crediting her as one of the first to advance such a theoretical position. There has been much speculation as to the reasons for this virtual absence and lack of acknowledgement in the literary field. This speculation has run the gamut from the hegemony of the New Criticism (*Literature as Exploration* (1938) was, coincidentally, published shortly before Brooks and Warren's inaugural work on the New Criticism, *Understanding Poetry* and during the same year as the Reader-Response work of Wolfgang Iser (Purves, 1988)); to the role of politics – sexual and academic (Temma Berg's essay "Louise Rosenblatt: A Woman in Theory" (cited in Clifford, 1990) does a marvellous job in developing and detailing the theme of exclusivity regarding women in theory since the time of Plato and provides both historical and anecdotal evidence to reinforce the suspicions of a male-dominated academy); to the notion that the work did not tow the academic discourse line, avoided the tendency to create new terminology and,

most decidedly, eschewed jargon in favour of a more straightforward style; to the idea that it was published in an era earmarked by a fascination with scientism, empiricism and objectivity, individual emotive response thus not being high on the agenda; to the selection of publishing houses and methodology of the intellectual community (Salvotori (1990) notes *Literature as Exploration* (1938) was first published by the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association while the latest edition has been published by the MLA which "seems to indicate a readiness on the part of the intellectual community the MLA represents to retheorize the function and place of pedagogy" (p. 57)); to the idea that she was an American philosopher which is far less theoretically fashionable than being a continental one; and, along similar lines of Berg (1990), the notion of a phallic plot (Allen, 1990). Be that as it may, she has finally and belatedly been given due recognition as a pioneer in the field of Reader-Response theory and, particularly during the last decade, has been increasingly gaining influence.

In advancing a Reader-Response Theory, *Literature as Exploration* (1938) insisted that:

> there are in reality only the potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of literary works.... The reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence, involving the mind and emotions of some particular reader. (p. 32)

From *Literature as Exploration* (1938), the following quotes should prove insightful into the perspective of Rosenblatt and her transactional theory:

> The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition.... These, and many other elements, interfacing with the peculiar contributions of the work of art, produce a unique experience. (p. 37)

> Sound literacy insight and esthetic judgement will never be taught by imposing from above our ideas about what a work should mean. (p. 41)

> [A]ll the student's knowledge about literary history, about authors and periods and literary types, will be so much useless baggage if the student has not been led primarily to seek from literature a vital experience. (p. 72)

> *Fundamentally, the process of understanding a work implies a recreation of it, an attempt to grasp completely all the sensations and concepts through which the author seeks to convey the quality of his life. Each of us must make a new synthesis of these elements with his own nature, but it is essential that he assimilate those elements of experience which the author has actually presented.* (p. 133, italics in original)

As is evident from the above quotations, Rosenblatt's conceptions of the aesthetic experience is, like Dewey's, holistic, incorporating a synthesis of the object and subject resulting in a new experience, an experience to which her famed term "poem" became synonymous. Again, similar to Dewey, emphasis is placed upon prior experience and memories as being a crucial element of aesthetic response, this, however, being the bane of the New Critics such as I.A. Richards as indicated by Purves (1988) below.

> One of Richard's major findings was that his student readers tended to approach the works they read with what he calls "stock responses," "mnemonic irrelevancies," "doctrinal adhesion," "technical preconceptions," or "general critical preconceptions." To Richards, the idea that half of the topologies of "failure in reading and judging poetry" came from the fact that readers were not blank slates when they read a poem was a matter of some concern, particularly because their particular slate did not match his. They tended not to be the "objective" readers that he had hoped the universities were training. (p. 68)

Further to this, Purves (1988) states that: "The idea of the active use of prior knowledge in reading literature, a main theme of *Literature as Exploration*, is the point of the Reader-Response critics whom Rosenblatt anticipated by some thirty years"(p. 68).

Rosenblatt's conception of text as evidenced in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978) is also noteworthy.

> "Text" designates a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols. I use this rather roundabout phrasing to make it clear that the text is not simply the inked marks on the page or even the uttered vibrations in the ear. The visual or auditory signs become verbal symbols, become words, by virtue of their being potentially recognizable as pointing to something beyond themselves. Thus, in a reading situation "the text" may be thought of as the printed signs in their capacity to serve as symbols. (p. 12)

In the work of Karolides (1999), Rosenblatt not only credits the influence of Dewey on her thought but also that of Charles Sanders Peirce and the role his "semiology" played in her thinking and how it permeated the formulation of her transactional theory. She states in Karolides (1999) that because she had assimilated Peirce's triadic concept of language – sign, object, interpretant – that she was "immune" to the notion of meaning as being self-contained in text and separate and apart from the human context.

Perhaps, as noted by Willinsky (1991) and Purves (1988), her only concession to theoretical jargon and discourse was the coinage of three terms: transactional theory, aesthetic reading, and efferent reading. Purves (1988) provides a distinction between the latter two:

> The distinction refers to seeing the text as primarily referential or as primarily poetic. A referential text is to be read efferently; one is to take the information in the text and internalize it as knowledge about something, or as a set of injunctions to belief or action. Aesthetic reading, by contrast, focuses not on the message of the text, but upon the text itself as a self-contained artifact. In such an artifact, message and form are totally incorporated, and the reader attends to and contemplates the totality without seeking knowledge or determining consequent action. (p. 70)

Rosenblatt's second monumental work was *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978) which was as formulative in scope as her previous work. Critics, however, note one essential difference: whereas *Literature as Exploration* tended to be a pedagogic-

oriented work, *The Reader* was viewed as a work of literary criticism. This no doubt stems from her doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne, *L'Idee de l'art dans la litterature anglaise pendant la periode Victorienne* (1931), a work of artistic criticism which enjoyed influence in the world of art for over fifty years. Concomitant with this thought, is the speculation that arose as to why, with her intellectual ability and renown, she did not choose the path of the art critic or the literary theorist but chose instead the path of pedagogy.

McCormack (1990) notes that *The Reader* (1978) further advanced her theoretical stance emphasising the role of the reader and eschewing the construction of ideal reading models; it reinforced the "transactive experience" where "readers and texts are produced by the reading context" (p. 128); and it legitimized "pleasure" as a goal for student reading of literature. As further noted by McCormack (1990), this concept of pleasure was later addressed, adopted, and adapted by a number of Reader-Response theorists, most notably Norman Holland and Roland Barthes.

It is within this perspective of transactional theory, with its emphasis on the active role of the reader, the pleasure of the reading experience, and aesthetic response as a recreation and production (a "poem") of meaning-making that the work of Rosenblatt may once again prove innovative, insightful, and useful in an approach to teaching language arts.

The next perspective to contribute to an integrative whole is that of Howard Gardner and his theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). This Harvard professor first posited his theory of MI in *Frames of Mind* (1983) and, since publication, it has found its niche in the arena of education, particularly as it theoretically purports an expanded

notion of intelligence. A recurring theme throughout his works is the idea that humans are faced with a stark choice: "either to continue with the traditional view of intelligence and how it should be measured or to come up with a different, and better, way of conceptualizing the human intellect" (Gardner, 1999a, p. 5). He proposes the latter. In his proposition he, as well, offers a definition of intelligence (redefined from his *Frames of Mind* (1983) definition) as "a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 34). In *Frames of Mind* (1983), Gardner proposed the existence of seven separate intelligences. His description follows:

> *Linguistic intelligence* involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn language, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals....
>
> *Logical-mathematical intelligence* involves the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically....
>
> ... *Musical intelligence* entails skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns.... *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body (like the hand or mouth) to solve problems or fashion products.... *Spatial intelligence* features the potential to recognize and manipulate the patterns of wide space (those used, for example, by navigators and pilots) as well as the patterns of more confined areas....
>
> ... *Interpersonal intelligence* denotes a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people and, consequently, to work effectively with others.... Finally, *intrapersonal intelligence* involves the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself – including one's own desires, fears, and capacities – and to use such information effectively in regulating one's own life. (pp. 40-42)

Since *Frames of Mind* (1983) an eighth intelligence has come to be recognized – naturalistic: that of being nature-smart (*Globe and Mail*, April 21, 2001). As well, in *Intelligence Reframed* (1999), Gardner theoretically toys with the notions of a spiritual, moral, and leadership intelligence.

In terms of pedagogy, Gardner (1999b) contends that a multiple-intelligences perspective can enhance understanding in three ways; three ways admirably suited for transactions through multiple signs. They are: 1. By providing powerful points of entry, 2. By offering apt analogies and 3. By providing multiple representations of the central or core ideas of the topic. *Frames of Mind* (1983) also provides seven entry points which are aligned with the seven intelligences and can "engage the student and ... place her centrally within the topic" (p. 169). The entry points are:

1. *Narrational* – The narrational entry point addresses students who enjoy learning about topics through stories....

2. *Quantitative/Numerical* – The quantitative entry point speaks to students who are intrigued by numbers and the patterns they make, the various operations that can be performed, and insights into size, ratio, and change....

3. *Logical* – The logical entry point galvanizes the human capacity to think deductively....

4. *Foundational/Existential* – This entry point appeals to students who are attracted to fundamental kinds of questions....

5. *Aesthetic* – Some people are inspired by works of art or by materials arranged in ways that feature balance, harmony, and composition....

6. *Hands-On* – Many people ... most easily approach a topic through an activity in which they become fully engaged – where they can build something, manipulate materials, or carry out experiments....

7. *Social* – ... Many people learn more effectively ... in a group setting, where they can assume different roles, observe others' perspectives, interact regularly, and complement one another. (pp. 169-172)

Thus, the value of MI theory rests upon its advocation of a broader, more pluralistic conception of intelligence, its value and emphasis on performative understanding as opposed to an accumulation, memorization, and recitation of facts

(which does not always equate with understanding) and the potential to open up innovative and creative avenues for the classroom teacher.

Aligned with the work of Gardner is the thinking of Elliot Eisner. Eisner (1994, 1999), like Gardner, believes that the traditional concept of intelligence is too narrow and limited and has resulted in a general acceptance of intelligence as verbal and mathematical skills. He believes that such a view of cognition leaves out far more than it includes and that emphasis and development of these concepts result in an atrophization of the other areas. Again, like Gardner, he calls for a reconceptualization of intelligence utilizing what he refers to as forms of representation.

> Forms of representation are the devices that humans use to make public conceptions that are privately held. They are the vehicles through which concepts that are visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile are given public status. This public status might take the form of words, pictures, music, mathematics, dance, and the like. (1999, p. 47)

Eisner (1999) also sees the value of forms of representation as a meaning-making tool. He states that: "The selection of a form of representation not only functions as a vehicle for conveying what has been conceptualized, but forms of representation also help articulate conceptual forms" (p. 49). Furthermore:

> If the individual wishes to express the meanings secured from his interactions with those qualities [qualities of the environment], he must use some form of representation to do so. The particular form of representation chosen will be influenced by his skills as well as his purposes. Once he makes the transformation from the conception to the representation, the qualities he creates in these represented forms become a part of the environment upon which he can reflect further. (pp. 54-55)

Like Dewey and Rosenblatt, he particularly emphasises and re-emphasises the relationship between the individual and the environment in this process, noting

specifically that it is an interactive one. "Each factor makes its own contribution, and out of the interaction experience is born" (Eisner, 1999, p. 55).

Eisner (1999) also speaks to the manner in which the components in the forms of representation are arranged. These arrangements of forms he terms "syntax." For him, there are two syntaxes placed on a continuum. He states:

> At one end of the continuum are those forms of representation whose elements must be arranged according to a publicly codified set of rules.... At the other end of the continuum are those forms of representation that use a syntax that is more *figurative* than rule governed. The forms of representation about which I speak are exemplified, but not exhausted, by the fine arts, free verse, literature. What the arts make possible – indeed, what they tend to elicit from those who use them – is an invitation to invent novel ways to combine elements." (pp. 63-64)

It is this figurative syntax which he advocates in the expression of the forms of representation and which, as well, is the vehicle for creating transactions through multiple sign systems.

Thus Eisner's reconceptualized notion of intelligence emphasising forms of representation and figurative syntactical arrangement are also brought to bear and foreground a derivative theoretical approach for the English language arts classroom.

The transaction from language to experience, be it aesthetic response or forms of representation, does not occur unaided but requires an intermediary or catalyst. Vygotsky's (1962) transmediation supplies this mediating function between sign systems. Siegal (1995) also addresses this concept. "Transmediation, the act of translating meanings from one sign system to another, increases student opportunities to engage in generative and reflective thinking because learners must invent a connection between the two sign systems, as the connection does not exist a priori" (p. 455). Suhor (cited in Siegal, 1995) defines transmediation as the "translation of content from one sign system

to another" (p. 460). Implicit in this definition is the idea that movement from one sign system to another is a generative process in which new meanings are made, echoing Dewey, Rosenblatt and Eisner.

Siegal (1995) further believes that verbocentrism in schools is problematic. She cites Langer's (1942) inaugural work which, in the current context of MI theory, multiple signs and their integration into the curriculum, was, quite conceivably, ahead of its time. It posited multiple ways of knowing and insisted that reliance on language failed to recognize other distinctive ways of making meaning such as music, dance, the visual arts, etc. Siegal's (1995) treatise also explores the semiotic basis for this meaning-making and delves into the complex work of famous semioticians such as Peirce, Saussure, Eco and Jakobson with the emphasis on Peirce's triadic model of language and Jakobson's communication model and expression planes. Regarding Jakobson, she states that his theory of translating or mapping from one expression plane to another is particularly insightful.

> Transmediation involves a process not unlike the one Jakobson associates with the poetic function of communication. Learners must rotate the content plane and the expression planes of two different sign systems such that the expression plane of the new sign system conveys the content of the initial sign system. But because the expression plane is that of a new sign system, the connection between the two sign systems must be invented, as it does not exist prior to the act of transmediation itself. This is how transmediation achieves its generative power. (p. 463)

In summary, the perspective of this approach focuses on the human role in the artistic experience, transactional theory, the theory of MI, forms of representation and the generative power of transmediation that will allow for a proposal and practicum for both the English language arts teacher and student.

THE PROPOSAL

The combining of the above constitutive theories and positions will allow for the utilization of multiple sign systems with its grounding in MI theory and semiotics as a transactive tool to generate aesthetic response and meaning-making in the English language arts classroom. Before further exploration, a brief definition of multiple sign systems is in order. Short and Harste with Burke (1996) define multiple sign systems as many ways of thinking and responding to set phenomenon such as text. These many ways of thinking and responding strike a harmonious chord with Langer's (1942) multiple ways of knowing, Eisner's (1994, 1999) forms of representations, the intelligences of Gardner (1983, 1999a, 1999b) and are, bar nomenclature and perspective, cut from the same cloth. These ways, forms, or signs systems themselves are music, art, mathematics, kinesthetics, drama, and language and provide the student with a multimodal means to take what he/she has read or understood and, through transmediation, transform these understandings and generate new meanings within a different sign system. As Eisner (1994) states: "Because each sign system has a different potential for meaning, students do not transfer the same meaning but create new ideas, and so their understandings of a book become more complex. They are not simply doing an activity or presentation from a book, but instead use these sign systems as tools for thinking" (p. 160).

The proposition also entails a move away from the verbocentrism of school, this theme of over-reliance on language being dominant throughout Gardner's work as he believes it limits the development of other intelligences. Gardner (1994) and Short et al. (2000) speculate on the role of the school in this limiting aspect, Gardner noting that children appear to display more of the intelligences than adults while Short et al. (2000)

have noted that outside school, children move more naturally across the sign systems such as kinesthetics, music, dance, drama, etc. Eisner (1994) addresses this as well: "As long as schools operate on an essentially linguistic modality that gives place of privilege to a kind of literal, logical, or mathematical form of intelligence, schools limit what youngsters can learn" (p. 37). In keeping with a sociolinguistic basis, transactions through multiple signs would give broader scope to semiotic theories. Halliday (cited in Leland and Harste, 1994) argues that our "culture is itself a semiotic system, a system of meanings or information that is encoded in the behaviour potential of the members" (p. 339). From this point of view, Leland and Harste (1994) build their argument that as the language system is but one part of a culture's semiotic system, other sign systems should be utilized and emphasised. Here the critical literacy and cultural studies advocates would be in agreement also, as ability to interpret other sign systems and cultural entities is an essential component of the stances of these two groups.

This idea leads naturally to another feature as proposed by such an approach. As stated by Leland and Harste (1994): "A good language arts program is one that expands the communication potential of all learners through the orchestration and use of multiple ways of knowing for purposes of ongoing interpretation and inquiry into the world" (p. 339). As such, it provides the tool for an interpretative framework and allows the interpretative form to be broadened which in turn should generate new perspectives, meanings, and aesthetic responses.

This classroom approach also speaks to the philosophy of critical literacy regarding notions of text and literacy. Transactions through multiple signs would entail an expanded concept of text as it would now encompass dance, artwork, movies, songs etc.

and would underwrite and rewrite the notion of the literate individual, he/she now having competencies in "reading" other sign systems of society. Studies by Harste et al. (1984) support this position as their findings indicate that instances of literacy were indeed multimodal and engagement in even conventional literacy activities such as writing involved other modes of expression.

Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and *The Reader* (1978) legitimized the aesthetic response as a goal of English language arts programs. Roland Barthes' "The Pleasure of the Text" (1976) developed and extended this theory of reading pleasure using specific terms and qualifications. Two of these qualifications were between "pleasure" (*plaisir*) and bliss (*jouissance*), the bliss or *jouissance* being equated to Rosenblatt's total transaction between the reader and the text resulting in the evocation of the aesthetic response while Barthes' version was a complete unification of text and reader as one (the reference to *jouissance* is sometimes viewed as a sexual one as is its idiomatic translation – a fact which Barthes utilized in his typology of reading). Therefore, transactions through multiple signs proposes to emphasise the aesthetic stance of the reader rather than the efferent one. As noted by Purves (1988) and Rosenblatt (1938, 1978), as schooling progresses the aesthetic stance is further delimited and curtailed and, upon reaching high school, appears almost non-existent, most, if not all, textual encounters employing the efferent mode of reading. They have also noted that overall, our culture does not seem predisposed to aesthetic reading and has afforded the efferent mode a privileged position in society. It may be that through a transmediation of text and sign that older students will be able to recognize, recapture and appreciate the *jouissance* of reading.

To summarize and reiterate, this is what the approach is proposing to do: it will enable meaning to be generated through varied sign systems; it will encompass a semiotic turn and multimodal expression and interpretation; it will provide some measure of relief from the verbocentric position of schooling; it will allow for innovative, interpretive frameworks and perspectives; it will provide more emphasis on aesthetic reading and "the pleasure of the text" while allowing a slight reprieve from the efferent mode; and it will provide for an expanded notion of text and literacy.

THE PRACTICAL

Armed with a little theory and a little imagination, practical applications for transactions through multiple sign systems abound. For example, drama has always had a powerful, cathartic and aesthetic effect on the human mind; its influence as a learning medium is no less. As a sign system it offers a powerful tool to transact meaning between the reader and the text. For those whose strengths lie in the area of kinesthetics, signs involving movement, dance and physical activity may be used to transact with text as kinesthetics would naturally be incorporated into drama. Readers Theatre and process drama are two forms of drama as a sign system that allow a transaction and meaning-making process between text and student. Readers Theatre is a concept whereby an oral presentation of a piece of text is performed, the performance being centred upon and derived from, again, the connection or bridge created between text and student. In other words, it is the students' version of meaning which is performed. Jasinski-Schneider and Jackson (2000) define process drama as "a method of teaching and learning that involves students in imaginary, unscripted, and spontaneous scenes" (p. 38) and "the structure of

process drama interactions result[s] in the participants "ideation" of mental images" (p. 38). Wagner (1998) notes that "drama in education or process drama practitioners transform texts, sometimes using them as starting points, but always exploring the spaces between episodes in a story to create an imagined world and change the story into something quite new" (p. 7). This "something new" reverberates strongly with Dewey's concept of the artistic experience and Rosenblatt's "poem" or transaction. O'Neill (1994, cited in Wagner, 1998) states that "the aim [of process drama] is to explore a particular experience through a nonlinear layering of episodes that cumulatively extends and enriches the fictional context" (p. 7). This extension and enrichment is the meaning created by the reader through the transactive process. Thus, drama as a sign system for textual exploration can, as Jasinski-Schneider and Jackson (2000) note, provide "a context for demonstrations of student's actual 'lived through' experiences" (p. 38).

As with drama, music seems elementally a part of the aesthetic stance. Students whose intelligence is particularly strong in this area naturally bridge text and subject to formulate the "artistic experience," to use Dewey's term. Music, since time immemorial, is an incredibly powerful sign system and, in all its form (if the world is indeed logocentric and textual) is purely a transactive process. Appendix A provides a local perspective and a testament to the influence and power of music as a sign system.

Math is possibly the one sign system where most people would assume there is little or no connection to textual encounters and transactive responses. Actually, the literature seems to indicate the exact opposite. Academic treatises, theoretical constructs linking the two disciplines, as well as practical applications, abound. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) states that: "it is the interaction of written

and oral language that provide students opportunities to build their reading and mathematical abilities in meaningful ways" (NCTM, 1989, p. 27). Peter Taylor (1995), who teaches both mathematics and poetry at Queen's University, has some distinctive ideas about incorporating mathematical concepts into literary units for junior and senior high students. He believes that the important mathematical concepts of analogy, context, symmetry, transformation and recursion are ideas equally important to poetry. These concepts, no doubt, could prove equally useful and applicable in a cultural studies or media literacy approach. Whitelaw and Wolf (2001) believe that graphics can present a powerful argument that such representations involve logical-mathematical modes of thinking including sequencing skills and analysis and synthesis of information thus opening an avenue for textual transactions through the mathematical sign system.

Artistic expression to explore, conceptualize and transmediate transactive meaning can take many forms. Drawings, paintings, posters, collages, models and dioramas are all forms of representation which present opportunities for responding to text as well as being tools for understanding and interpreting. Whitelaw and Wolf (2001) decided to introduce such an approach to a reading class using *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. As a classroom teacher and university researcher respectively, both sought ways to enhance English language arts classrooms and, having studied particular theories and theorists, settled upon Rosenblatt's transactional theory as a method to engage students in an aesthetic approach to text. Various modes of representation such as drama, dance and the visual arts were examined as a way of "expanding the richness of every students' intelligence" (p. 57), the visual arts becoming the focus of the unit approach. Students then became engaged in transforming their textual encounters with *The Giver* and

generated meaning through the sign system of the visual arts. Whitelaw and Wolf (2001) conclude that transactions in literature using the sign of the visual arts resulted in (1) "an awareness of multiple forms of literacy, different languages for interpretation and expression of information" and (2) it "allowed students to see beyond the words on the page, to encompass a larger vision" (p. 66). Ultimately, this sign system could be applied to any piece of text to generate meaning through an expression plane other than a linguistic one.

It is through such a synthesis of literary and pedagogical theories that would allow both teachers and students to be introduced to, to participate in, and to experiment with an English language arts approach that emphasizes an aesthetic response to texts through multiple sign systems. It is also approaches such as these that would enable teachers to put theory into practice; those self-same theories, notably semiotics, multiple intelligences, and transactional theory, that are contained within the pages of the APEF.

It is those who have made their mark on the world through a non-linguistic sign system who truly know the value of its meaning and expression. The words of the famous dancer, Isadore Duncan, say it all: "If I could explain it, I wouldn't have to dance it."

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND SUMMATIONS

INTRODUCTION

"Secondary English education is undergoing deep and systematic change in English Canada", according to Barrell (1999a). This change entails a broad reconceptualization of the traditional discipline informed by aspects of literary theory that are based upon expanded and broadened definitions of text and literacy; features of particular theories such as semiotics and poststructuralism; a movement away from and de-emphasis of the canon and literature per se; the role of information technology and communication in the English language arts classroom; and the place of cultural studies and media studies in this redesigned and reproduced concept. It is these threads of change that have created the tapestry that portrays the new version or vision of English language arts, its formulation being contained in two particular documents: the WCPCCP in Western Canada and the APEF in Atlantic Canada. It is to the APEF that this study will now turn.

IMPLICATIONS

The APEF

As indicated by the APEF and its curriculum guides, its *raison d'etre* was based upon assumptions of and in response to change, perceived or otherwise, in Atlantic Canada's society. The forces behind these changes, according to the rationale of the

document, were the pervasiveness and influence of information technology and communication, societal changes and attitudes that necessitated broader literacy abilities, and the need for students of the twenty-first century to have a broader range of ability and flexibility in literacy for their daily interactions with the changing world.

The introduction to the APEF speaks quite clearly to this when it states that: "Students need to read and use a range of texts [text being defined as "any language event whether oral, written or visual ... a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a television program, and a multimedia production ..." (p. 1)] ... and that particular skills will be required in 'reading' a film, interpreting a speech or responding to an advertisement or a piece of journalism" (p. 1). This extended concept of literacy with its "multiple pathways to learning" (p. 1) does indeed ring with the philosophy of literary theories inherent in critical literacy. For instance, the chimes of deconstruction can be heard (or, more appropriately, the clang of deconstruction as it is not a genteel creature but a discordant one) in the "reading" of films, speeches, and other media-produced texts and the chimes of personal construction of meaning as opposed to a transmissive one are heard as well. The document describes five key features of the curriculum, two of which speak to the importance of the role of critical literacy. They are as follows:

- This curriculum emphasizes the importance of students' active participation in all aspects of their learning....
- This curriculum emphasizes the personal social and cultural contexts of language learning and the power that language has within those contexts. (p. 2)

The explication of the last key feature given above is literary theory in all its undisguised glory:

> This curriculum encourages students to recognize the power of language to define and shape knowledge, self and relational positions in society. This curriculum encourages students to explore how forms of language are constructed by particular social, historical, political and economic contexts. (p. 2)

The structural pillars of the APEF consist of six essential graduation learning outcomes (EGLs): (1) Aesthetic Expression (2) Citizenship (3) Communication (4) Personal Development (5) Problem Solving and (6) Technological Competence. As an EGL, Aesthetic Expression states that: "Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts" (p. 6), while using "various art forms as a means of formulating and expressing ideas, perceptions and feelings" (p. 6) is provided as an example of the EGL. A Key Stage Outcome for the end of grade nine (Key Stages being at the end of grades three, six, nine and twelve) states that students will be expected to "demonstrate commitment to crafting pieces of writing and *other representations*" (p. 6, italics mine). It is difficult to imagine a much stronger case for Rosenblatt's transactional theory with its aesthetic stance and the incorporation of multiple sign systems to generate such expression, representations and experience. Such work will also, no doubt, provide the approach, philosophy, and theoretical constructs to achieve this outcome. The EGL of Communication states that: "Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading and writing modes of language(s) as well as the mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn and communicate effectively" (p. 7). The example provided for this EGL states that students will be able to "critically reflect and interpret ideas presented through a variety of media" (p. 7). Inherent in this example are particular literary theories that are incorporated under the aegis of critical literacy. For example, deconstruction, semiotics

and cultural studies would provide the theoretical basis and practical tools that would enable students to meet this EGL. The EGL of Technological Competence states that: "Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems" (p. 9). This EGL addresses both the expanded concepts of literacy and text (though many may argue, and have, that such an outcome is purely functional and amounts to a "skill and drill" approach in the English language arts classroom). This EGL provides examples of specific technical competencies that students should be able to demonstrate as well as including as a Key Stage Outcome the ability to "make informed responses to challenging media texts (by the end of grade 12)" (p. 9). This opens up a wide expanse of literary theory to be utilized such as and to name a few: feminist theory to examine and explore gender positings; Marxist theory to analyze and deconstruct dominant ideologies and to analyze ways and means of hegemonic control which make "certain views seem 'natural' or invisible so that they hardly seem like views at all, just 'the way things are'" (Barry, 1995, p. 165); and Queer Theory to explore issues of homophobia, the role and construction of gays and lesbians as seen through, for example, the lens of the Hollywood movie camera, and the marginalization of the other.

In the section of the APEF, "The Nature of English Language Arts," words and phrases such as "extending the range of strategies ... to construct meaning," "the power of language and literacy and other texts" and "the contexts in which language is used" (context being defined as "the relation between reader/author/text and other contexts – historical, social, cultural, political and economic" (p.11)) are dominant. Such

terminology is indeed indicative of the theoretical underpinnings of this document and speak clearly for themselves.

The organizing strands of the document, Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing also reverberate and resonate strongly with aspects of literary theory. "Respond critically," "range of texts," "range of strategies" and "ways of representing" are repeatedly used phrases in the explication of these organizing strands. The strand of "Writing and Other Ways of Representing" specifically states: "to explore, construct and convey meaning ... [which] will include, in addition to written language, visual representation, drama, music, dance, movement, media production, technological and other forms of representation" (p. 13). Succinctly, this is Rosenblatt's transactional theory utilized through multiple signs. As well, it makes direct use of Eisner's phrase "forms of representation" thereby encompassing and advocating its inherent hypothetical constructs.

Literary theories of Marxism, Feminism, semiotics, Queer theory and cultural studies with the philosophical base in issues of power, ideology and identification; the role of signs, signifiers and interpretants; and the social constructiveness and politics of language are all evident in the following excerpts under the Speaking and Listening strand of the APEF:

1. reflect critically on and evaluate their own and others' uses of language in a range of contexts, recognizing elements of verbal and nonverbal messages that produce powerful communication

2. listen critically to analyze and evaluate concepts, ideas and information

3. demonstrate how spoken language influences and manipulates and reveals ideas, values and attitudes. (pp. 17-21)

The Reading and Viewing strand speaks similarly to such theoretical stances as well:

- critically evaluate the information they access
- show the relationships among language, topic, purpose, context and audience
  - note the relationship of specific elements of a particular text to elements of other texts [intertextuality]
  - describe, discuss and evaluate the language, ideas and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genres
- respond critically to complex and sophisticated texts
  - examine how texts work to reveal and produce ideologies, identities and positions
  - examine how media texts construct notions of roles, behaviour, culture and reality
  - examine how textual features help a reader and viewer to create meaning of texts. (p. 29)

The final organizational strand, Writing and Other Ways of Representing, again has a definitive theoretical bent as illustrated by the examples below:

- produce writing and other forms of representation characterized by increasing complexity of thought, structure and conventions
- demonstrate understanding of the ways in which the construction of texts can create, enhance or control meaning
  - make critical choices of form, style and content to address increasingly complex demands of different purposes and audiences
- evaluate the responses of others to their writing and media productions. (p. 33)

With the inception of newly designed high school courses for English language arts slated for September 2001, it is to be expected that these courses and curriculum guides espouse the philosophy, tenor, and doctrines of the APEF. For example, *English 1201: A Curriculum Guide* (hereafter referred to as *English 1201 Guide*) opens with the statement that it is "anchored to the essential graduation learnings for Atlantic Canada as

outlined in the Foundation for the Atlantic English Language Arts Curriculum" (p. 5). Echoes, threads, and theories of the APEF resound strongly within the pages of this guide, and phrases such as " respond critically; interpret...a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies; use other forms of representation; and develop effective...media products" (p. 5), reproduce the APEF's tenor, tone, positions and postulates. Specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs) outlined in the *English 1201 Guide* demonstrate the philosophy and practice of critical literacy and transactions through multiple sign systems as illustrated by the wording of the following outcomes: " demonstrate an awareness of the power of spoken language by articulating how spoken language influences and manipulates, and reveals ideas, values, and attitudes" (p. 10); "view a wide variety of media texts such as broadcast, journalism, film, TV, advertising, CD-ROM, Internet, and music videos"(p. 12); "demonstrate an understanding of the impact of literary devices and media techniques" (p. 12); demonstrate an awareness that texts reveal and produce ideologies, identities, and positions" (p. 18); evaluate ways in which both genders and various cultures and socio-economic groups are portrayed in media texts" (p. 18); and "analyse and reflect on others' responses to writing and audiovisual production" (p. 26). As the *English 1201 Guide* concludes its section on the outcomes, it moves into the purposes of the organizing strands. The Speaking and Listening Strand purports to "involve students in exploring the power and resources of spoken English" (p. 38); the Reading and Viewing Strand's purpose is to use literature "alongside a variety of other texts that contribute to the development of literacy and critical thinking in a multimedia culture" (p. 39); "the primary purpose of including **viewing** experiences is to increase the visual literacy of students so that they will become

critical and discriminating viewers who are able to understand, interpret, and evaluate visual messages" (p. 40), as well as to "examine the role and influence of mass media" (p. 40), " to investigate mass media's characteristic way of conveying ideas" (p. 41), and "to examine the complex relationships between audiences and media messages" (p. 41); and, lastly, the purposes of the Writing and Other Ways of Representing Strand are to develop the ability to "create in multimedia" (p. 45) as it is recognized as an important element of literacy development; to encourage " a range of ways to create meaning" (p. 45); and, to emphasise the use of forms and processes of representation such as " visual representation, drama, music, movement, and multimedia and technological production" (p. 46). These stated purposes and the enumerated outcomes show clearly and unequivocally that within the pages of the *English 1201 Guide*, the inherent theories of the APEF are a guiding force and are to be established and developed within the walls of the English 1201 classroom.

The underwritings of theory are, from even a brief examination of the APEF, clearly revealed and strongly resonant throughout its framework thereby providing for a cohesive theoretical matrix. However, as with all facets and features of life, there are concerns and problems of which an awareness is necessary. Absence of such an awareness or simply ignoring its existence would, ultimately, result in a blind, narrow and unquestioning acceptance or, in a word, a thoroughly uncritical stance.

Problematics

The field of literary theory, particularly aspects of its theoretical positings and its role in informing high school or even undergraduate English curriculums, raises some

pertinent, interesting, controversial and highly debatable questions. As mentioned in the "Limitations of the Study," it was not the intent nor within the confines and the scope of this research to address such issues. However, they are singularly and collectively worth noting.

The field of literary theory is indeed strewn with contentious fallout referred to by Graff (1987) as the cold war between the theorists and the humanists. And although this war is fought within the intellectual battlement of the academy, the shrapnel does, at times, fall outside its walls and the sounds of battle are heard and recognized even further afield. One such volley has been fired by Zavarzadeh's essay, "Theory as Resistance" (1992), where he delved into the key issue of the need to connect academic literary theory with the real world and what he terms the obligation to examine the classroom as text. In the same vein, Shumway (1992) states that: "The relationship between theory and the curriculum has remained largely undiscussed and unquestioned" and when integrated devolves into sets of assumptions which are simply "useful approaches, interpretative policy and perennial questions" (p. 94). It is this real, supposed or perceived lack of juncture between the real world and the often abstract, academic and philosophic tenor of theory that is problematic. Derrida's decentring and deconstruction, Iser's phenomenological approach, and the work of Foucault are arguably not the stuff of which the real or ordinary world is made and are far from the pressing concerns of the typical English language arts student. Schilb (1992) notes that what has been written on literary theory has very little to do with the integration of theory into curriculum and even a cursory examination of the literature on literary theory reveals this somewhat obvious and moot point. He further notes that much is devoted to theoretical problems, probings, and

positings yet the cause is often significantly absent. Graff (1987) speaks to this problem when he states that "... literary theory has become accepted as a useful option for graduate students and advanced undergraduates, but something to be kept at a distance from the normal run of students" (p. 248).

Concomitant with this problem is the academic intellectualism, discourse, and jargon that proscribe theory and which often results in an elitism that, due to a burst of literary theory vocabulary, according to Schilb (1992), has served to privilege the discourse and, one might add, create its own hegemony. It is the realizations of such divisions, gaps or gulfs that raise questions with regard to the literary theoretical framework of such curriculum documents as the APEF and how it will play out in the real world of the classroom and in the real hands of teachers and students. This point leads naturally and inevitably to another area of concern noted by several authors: that of teacher training in literary theory. Leach (2000), in a study of student teachers stated that:

> [I]t becomes evident that few, if any students, are able to apply any kind of alternate reading strategy to any kind of literary text, other than the one I have characterized as the dominant liberal/traditional mode, in which, the pinning down of character, theme, plot, authorial intention, meanings and some aspects of writers' use of language, such as imagery and other 'poetic devices,' is the desired objective..... I have not yet seen any convincing evidence that they have had any realistic opportunities ... to develop alternative, theorised, individual views about English. (p. 162)

Barrell (1999b) voices the same concern noting the gap between the preparation of teachers and the perceived reality of the new English language arts curriculum. His examination of course syllabi from a number of Atlantic Canada universities reveals a decided lack of courses in literary theory. Moss (2000) believes the time has arrived to construct teaching programs for pre-service teachers that would support them regarding

literary theory and its direction in English language arts. It is equally important that in-service sessions for those in the field be designed, instituted and made readily available to ensure an informed profession particularly in light of the reconstituted notion of English, its new theoretical directions, and the implementation of curriculum documents adhering to such.

A further adjunct to this problem is that of teacher voice, specifically its absence in how literary theory can/should inform the classroom practices of English language arts. A by-passing of these voices and, what some teachers may believe to be, a blatant disregard of their opinions, may lead to teachers becoming disengaged from theory and result in a belief of its irrelevance to their practice. A qualitative study utilizing questionnaires, focus groups and other such forums would allow these voices to emerge and provide at least some form of ownership and negotiation in their teaching practices in English. School boards and government departments being more responsive to those in the field could also help alleviate and circumvent possible disengagement.

Goodheart's *The Skeptic Disposition* (1984) is quite thought-provoking in that it raises a number of key concerns or skepticisms in relation to the foundational basis of literary theory, particularly the poststructuralist paradigm. His list of theorists themselves is fairly lengthy, noting instrumental movers and shakers such as Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, Bakhtin, Habermas, Adorno, Heidegger, Benjamin, Eco, Kristeva, Iser and Todorov. As most literary theories are founded upon the philosophical work of these European thinkers, he states that this may "constitute a misappropriation of philosophical concerns to literary practice" (p. 134). In a reply to René Wellek's critique of a piece of

his work – "Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry," F.R. Leavis commented upon this point:

> Literary criticism and philosophy seem to me to be quite distinct and different kinds of disciplines – at least, I think they ought to be.... No doubt a philosophic training might possibly – ideally would – make a critic surer and more penetrating in the perception of significance and relation and in the judgement of value. But it is to be noted that the improvement we ask for is of the critic, the critic as critic, and to count on it would be to count on the attainment of an arduous ordeal. It would be reasonable to fear – to fear blunting of edge, blurring of focus, and muddled misdirection of attention: consequences of queering one discipline with the habits of another. (Reply 31-32, cited in Sadoff & Cain, 1994, p. 4)

As Cain (1994) notes, there are still a fair number of people who remain sympathetic to such a position.

From literary theory's roots in philosophy, there arises another problem. Felber (1994) and Campbell (1999) state the difficulty, confusion and disinterest that arises when teaching theory to undergraduate students. Felber (1994) notes other problems associated with trying to "organize such a hodgepodge," trying "to move students from understanding various critical approaches to writing their own theoretically sophisticated literary criticism," to answering such questions as "where can I get a copy of *The Canon*" (p. 69)? Campbell (1999), having taught literary theory to third-year college students, noted that: "Students were complaining that they couldn't see why they were doing it, they couldn't relate it to other things" (p. 136). He paraphrases the concerns of students thusly: "I don't understand this, I feel stupid, what's the point of it? I don't see how it relates to what I really want to do which is reading books" (p. 139). Trying to summarize the work of writers like Lacan or Derrida's theory of deconstruction was tantamount to a "recipe for disaster" according to Campbell (1999).

> Lectures often fly over their heads. They've got a vague sense that there are funny ways of talking about these things but they haven't got much to do with what they have to do in the course of their reading and engagement with literature.... The real teaching difficulty is to get students to see that, as it were, some of these questions being debated here matter, that they come from particular intellectual histories, in turn emerging from wider social and cultural histories, and that people might be fiercely committed to this or that ... and it makes a difference and it has implications. (p. 137)

One can well imagine the difficulty one could encounter in a high school setting particularly in light of the APEF's theoretical underpinnings and its emphasis on thinking, reading, and writing critically.

A further contentious issue as noted by Webster (1990) is that it is the theorist him/herself that is more prominent than the theory proposed. The focal point of college courses and literary theory compendia is the writing of theorists such as Derrida, Barthes and Foucault. Here the battle lines have been drawn between the critical writing of the academy and the creative writing of authors such as Toni Morrison, Jane Austen, William Shakespeare and Gabriel Garcià Márquez. The concern has been raised that the field of literary studies has now become a forum for the work of the theorists as opposed to the study of creative literary works. A natural assumption would be if high school students are expected to analyze, interpret, write and produce using specific theoretical constructs of critical literacy, then this would or should necessitate some form of familiarity with the origins of these "tools" of which they are expected to demonstrate a certain degree of competence.

A final complaint or concern about literary theory, as states Peter Shaw (cited in Cain, 1994), is that, as "Everyone in the profession well understands, 'theory' of any kind is at present a code word for the politicization of literature" (p. 10). Cain (1994) notes

that, as this indictment goes, "theory is essentially an attempt to transform the academy into a leftist stronghold in which students are indoctrinated with "politically correct" texts on, and views about, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation" (p. 10). He further cites from John Gross, former editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* who believes that the appeal of literary theory derives in large part from its political nature and that since the decline of Marxism, modern literary theory has been invented to fill this political void. This opinion of pure politicization and indoctrination of the politically correct is held by such prominent scholars as Roger Kimball, Dinesh d'Souza and Joseph Epstein. It may be summarized by a quote of Hilton Kramer which appeared in the November, 1999 issue of the *New Criticism* where he asserts that politically correct theorists and "'partisans of radical multiculturalism' have ravaged higher education by their insistence that we must import questions of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and the like into the study of the humanities" (cited in Cain, 1994, p. 11).

These points thusly elucidated are some of the issues in the embattled context or the "cold war" between the humanists and the traditionalists. However, they are not to be taken as a call-to-arms to those in the teaching profession but address a professional and intellectual knowledge and acknowledgement of such and may even serve as starting points to smooth over some of the lumps and bumps in this redefined and reconstituted version of English.

Because critical literacy is an approach derived form various literary theories, it follows that it too is not without its problematic areas. One such area is that of critical pedagogy's goal of social transformation. Although books of critical theory and pedagogy abound, there tends to be little direction given as to how one is to lay the classroom

groundwork that moves towards and accomplishes such a vision. The move from critical thinking to an active critically-thinking individual who is engaged in the business of social transformation is far from clearly spelled out, leaving one in somewhat of a quandary as to the process one is to put in place and subsequently follow. Waff (1998) notes that "we tend to know little about how such classrooms [critical literacy ones] operate within school walls" (p. 96).

A key criticism of critical theory, pedagogy and literacy and viewed in tandem with the view above is that its philosophy is simply too idealistic and utopic. The concrete manifestation of its mantra is a society transformed where the marginalization of the other does not exist; where a liberatory pedagogy results in emancipation of the oppressed and annihilates all forms of oppression; where hidden agendas of the dominant ideology are deconstructed, revealed and reconstructed to transform the world into a better place; and in line with the thinking of Giroux, "a critical pedagogy stands in defiance of the conservative forces that are carrying out an agenda of compliance and technocracy," calls for a "politics of difference over conformity" and is developed "through and for the voices of those who are often silenced" (Waff, 1998, p. 86). Waff (1998), preaching the work of Giroux, believes:

> [T]he classroom must be a place where the complacency of students is disrupted, where students cannot be dunned into silence by the pedagogies of oppression, but instead emerge with a literacy that commits them to "the radical possibility of politics and ethics that inform the struggle for a better future." (Giroux, 1993, p. 377, cited in Waff, p. 86)

As Waff (1998) summarizes it, it is an "ideology of liberation for all" (p. 86).

This purported ideological stance, of course, raises questions over the ability of an educational approach to have such transformative power, this in turn leading to the

problematic area of power itself. Arguments on this front abound as well. They range from the concern that the teacher is thus in control of power and, as the agent of change, is elevated to the status of hero or saviour to the argument that emancipation, liberation, and social transformation are things which are *imposed* upon students by an outside agent and as such it is something *done* to students. In a similar vein, Moss (2000) speculates that social and cultural theories emphasising the marginalized may be seen as interventionist and even as a kind of propaganda and indoctrination and he emphasises this point by using the crucial phrase: "All pedagogy is manipulative" (p. 205). Northam (cited in Schilb, 1992), in proposing a case for deconstruction, inadvertently makes a similar point:

> Students who read deconstructively are thus trained to approach a text with *freedom*, to see the text as intertwining threads of signification that they are as *free* to unravel as anyone else (such readings cannot be arbitrary, of course – a deconstructive reading *must* begin with the univocal or logocentric interpretation, which it then proceeds to unravel by a more or less *definable mechanism*. (p. 63, Schilb's emphasis)

One must then wonder if, by adopting a critical literary approach, teaching will amount to training in critical literacy skills and thinking and become a step-by-step, mechanistic procedure. Students would then go through the motions of interpreting signs, use skills to interpret and analyze media, and uncover hidden agendas, thereby exposing the hegemonic, dominant ideology in a how-to fashion.

Possibly one of the strongest attacks launched by the proponents of the new literary theories and critical literacy was that of the phallocentrism, specifically the white phallus, of the "old" theories. However, an examination of the key literary theorists (Derrida, Foucault, Iser, Barthes, Culler, etc.) as well as an examination of the key

criticalists (Freire, McLaren, Shor, Giroux, etc.) reveal a most decided concentration of white phalli. It was this particular point with which Kathleen Weiler took issue regarding the work of Freire: the most noticeable absence of the female in his work. The result of Weiler's hue and cry was an attempt by Freire in his latter years to address this concern.

In a similar vein, the New Critics were criticized and even vilified for their practice of close reading. Yet critics such as Goodheart (1994) view deconstruction as simply another form of close reading. He states that the reader must "pay attention to every mark on the page in a desire to exhibit one's interpretative skill" (p. 108). Battersby (1996) notes that: "In her introduction to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak assures us that the decontructionist's first task is to read 'in the traditional way'.... a traditional way, silently equated more often than not with the New Critical way ..." (p. 104). Semiotic theory also requires such a close scrutiny for the interpretation of signs. The concern is that one is simply exchanging one theory's version of close reading for that of another's version, albeit for different purposes.

With respect to the dialogic technique proposed by critical literacy, Dillon and Moje (1998), both proponents of critical literacy, offer a cautionary note regarding classroom discourse; it being that emphasis on classroom dialogue may serve to valorize student voices at the expense of content. They quote: "How do I negotiate the fine distinction between valuing what adolescent students have to say and moving them toward challenging, disrupting, and reconstructing their experiences and discourses" (p. 222)? It is indeed a crucial area of context and a very fine line to walk.

The expanded notions of literacy and text may also give rise to certain concerns, particularly as they relate to parental expectations. The concerns and questions of parents

over the reading of non-print texts and notions of literacy linked to TV, videos, hypertext, etc. must be addressed. Efforts focussing on such concerns may involve an expansion of parental involvement in curriculum and classroom matters and may amount to educational forums and even parental education "crash courses" in the philosophy behind the approach. Bressler and Siegal (2000) state that efforts (they concentrate on collaborative portfolios) must be made to:

> make visible the differences in the literacy perspectives of teachers, parents, and children as well as the differences in power and knowledge that serve as obstacles to genuine collaboration. Naming these differences and obstacles might enable all stakeholders to develop a conscious awareness of the cultural and political nature of literacy and literacy evaluation and thus achieve a clearer understanding of the ways in which traditional school assessment practices advantage some and disadvantage others especially those who are not part of the so-called mainstream. (p. 169)

Thus, efforts must be made to reconcile the perspective between parental conceptions of literacy and text with those of the critical literacy teacher.

Of crucial and controversial concern in the field of education is the term assessment. Phillips and Sanford (2000) state that: "Specific and thoroughly developed criteria for assessment of the students' learning should be a ready reference for both teachers and students" (p. 290). Following an examination of the assessment procedures provided in the WCPCCF and the APEF, they conclude: "It is our judgement that the Canadian documents do not provide such guidance" (p. 290). To complicate matters further, they note the increasing pressure towards accountability in education yet the APEF and WCPCCF indicate a move away from traditional and conventional practices of teaching and assessment thus placing teachers in "a double bind, a situation in which no matter what they do, they can't win" (p. 292). As an example, assessment practices

involving other ways of representing, concentrating on dialogic classroom discourse, use of anecdotal records, and other forms of representation are difficult to assimilate into formative methods of assessment. This point is particularly apropos in light of the reinstatement of pubic exams in this province with their emphasis on traditional format and assessment measures and would pose problems with a multiple signs approach as a discrepancy and disjuncture would exist between practice and assessment. Rosenblatt (1938) followed by Purves (1988) and Robinson (2000) decry factual testing of content on literature exams. Rosenblatt (1938) noted early that multiple choice exam formats are linked to a transmissive model of learning and as such are anathema to the aesthetic response. To endeavour to teach through a multiple signs perspective emphasising transactions in aesthetic response and engagement in aesthetic reading runs counter to and is the antithesis of many assessment practices. With burgeoning demands of accountability, hefty content-laden course requirements, the pressing constraints of time and the spectre of the traditional format of the public exam, teachers will be hard-pressed to incorporate "other ways of representing" into their classroom practice.

Yagelski (2000) sees assessment practices as problematic as well:

> As Cook-Gumperz (1986) suggest this view of literacy as a set of narrowly defined skills and ways of demonstrating them is built into the structure of schooling and thus unavoidably informs literacy instruction. Even teachers who openly oppose or resist such a narrow view of writing – and there are many – usually are faced with the challenge of preparing their students for standardized tests that grow out of – and reinforce – that view, for these tests are, as Cook-Gumperz points out, "the principal basis of selection" in schools. In addition, despite more progressive pedagogical methods such as portfolio assessment and collaborative learning that can work against this view and open up for students and teachers new ways of understanding writing as social and cultural, most teachers must still assign grades to individual students at the end of a course or grading period, and their students by and large are still required to take large-scale statewide and national standardized assessment.... The very act of assessment,

> which rests on the idea of individual ability defined cognitively, reifies writing as the exclusive product of an individual possessing certain cognitive skills and formal knowledge.(pp. 36-37)

The article of Phillips and Sanford (2000) raises another, though non-related, issue or challenge as they refer to it. They state that what English is and how it will be delivered often rest on the "underlying beliefs of teachers and policymakers [which] remain fixed and unconsidered" (p. 283). "Moreover," they state, "the manner in which reforms are framed on paper is rarely how they are implemented in practice. In the end the choice of one's frame of reference is an informed choice based on one's theory of English, what it is for, and how best to teach and learn it in practice" (p. 283). Thus teachers whose frame of reference was formed and developed over the last ten, twenty or forty years may choose to proceed along this frame of reference due to unfamiliarity with other frames and their theoretical constructs and terminology; due to experience, confidence and success within a particular frame; or simply due to a belief that it works. It would be naive to think that teachers can shift frames with little knowledge of or a grounding in particular theoretical positions and worse than naive to believe that they should have to shift frames. After all, the criticalists stress difference, not conformity.

Flood et al. (2000) note some concerns about visual literacy education. They, along with others, question whether helping students become media literate becomes helping students become literate through media. They note issues that may result as a consequence of the broadening view of literacy such as widespread television and video viewing in the classroom and numerous hours provided for technological aspects of literacy. They state:

> Along with many parents, educators worry about the effects of media on children. They worry about managing time, teaching "the basics," and meeting ever more stringent standards. Thus, before committing time and energy to its use, educators want to be sure that mass media will play a helpful role in the educational process. Even though they realize that many students have a tremendous amount of knowledge about and interest in media, they are still reluctant to embrace media without serious research that unequivocally demonstrates its efficacy in enhancing literacy. Such concerns are valid and important. Answering them will not be an easy task, but by working together as teachers, researchers, parents, and students, we can design inquiry projects to help us understand how visual media supports or hinders literacy development.(p. 79)

Related to visual literacy or media studies is a concern raised by C. Luke (1999) who has noted that the risk with teaching media studies is that it can tend to negate the pleasure associated with such forms of entertainment. Morgan (1997) has noted similar consequences when what were once domains of teenage pleasure become appropriated by the education system, students reacting by responding to such with a complaisant resistance.

Sumara (2000) raises a similar and cogent point regarding reading practices.

> I ... think I am ruined as a reader of fiction. Gone are the days when I can become "lost" in a novel. No matter how much I yearn for that wonderful experience of immersion, my critical education in literacy engagement is an act of critical inquiry. I am, forever it seems, doomed to the "schooled" reading experience." (p. 118)

Morgan (1997) who, in utilizing a critical literacy approach, has noted a very similar response from students who question, "Can't we just say we loved reading the book" (p. 91)?

Of concern to many is the language of critical literacy particularly as it is a language of stridency and conflict. It is one which exalts and glorifies those who struggle for emancipation and liberation in the face of powerful oppressors, the language amounting to one of a revolutionary stance and there is a subsequent call-to-arms and a

vilification of the "enemy" (the enemy having been identified as the canon, white males, white males of the canon, etc.). Morgan (1997) notes that "the older, revolutionary rhetoric still evident in the writing of Giroux, Aronowitz, McLaren, and others might need to be replaced by a less melodramatic agenda for social equality" (p. 9). It may indeed be a solid suggestion that would help detract from the possible notion of a Quixotic bent in the aims of critical literacy.

Another problematic area is critical literacy's political agenda that sets out to challenge established power, values, and attitudes of parents, schools, and society in general. One must question how far will schools, school boards, government departments, parents and society go to support such an approach. As a university professor, Morgan (1997) worked with teachers in the field to develop and implement a critical literacy approach. The same concern was voiced by Lindsay, one of the teachers:

> There is a place where the role of the English teacher has to stop, and we're not necessarily able to take action [with our students] in the outside world – not in Queensland schools anyway.... Nice Anglo-Saxon middle-class parents aren't going to be too happy if their teachers are inciting their students to revolution and riot and overturning or dropping out of society.... At some point the role of the teacher has to stop and the role of outside community organisations and families have to take over. (p. 88)

Additionally, this agenda of question, criticism and challenge may be regarded by some as an abeyance of rules and regulations or even as acts of defiance.

Along similar lines, a concern is raised about "the limitation of a curriculum based on endless critique (it is a point shared by many critics of the postmodern)" (Morgan, 1997, p. 89) and its nihilistic nature. Again, these points are addressed by Morgan's teachers. Spiro:

> I'm worried that we're heading towards a moral negativism.... I think I know in my own mind what the limitations of this [critical literacy critique] are and where we're meant to be headed, but we haven't been told that and it's usually just criticise, criticise. But there needs to be a conceptual or philosophical framework that's embedded ... I think normally when you start criticising, asking questions, you should know what the aim or purpose is. (p. 89)

And Lindsay:

> It does concern me that we throw something out and say, 'Well, we can't believe these values' – but what do we replace them with? You talk about being nihilistic and ... that is a danger, and I try to work out what are the values we're going to bring in through this English. I mean education, let's face it, is about teaching values. (p. 89)

The deconstruction critics would agree as one must continually deconstruct thus seemingly creating a perpetual state of nothingness.

A final area of concern associated with critical literacy is at what stage in a student's education should such an approach be introduced. The literature ranges from teachers employing critical literacy techniques in elementary classes where Columbus is "deconstructed" to reveal the "truth" behind the story perpetuated by the dominant class to the work of Peim obviously directed at older and more mature students. As with much in literary theory and critical literacy, the jury appears to be still out on this one.

With respect to multiple sign systems and multiple intelligences, the problem lies in one of perception. Almost since time immemorial and certainly well established by the time of Plato (another subject of Platonian discourse – the superiority of rationality over the inferiority of the senses), is the well-entrenched doctrine that intelligence is a cognitive ability ascertained and judged in society by two letters – I.Q. – which measure verbal and mathematical ability. The question that arises is can the MI theory of Gardner hope to change or even stem the tide? A most formidable, daunting, challenging and,

many would argue, well-nigh impossible task. Because of this accepted view of intelligence, Gardner's theory has come under attack, particularly from the rank and file of the cognitive coterie whose salvos are charged with: MI measure ability not intelligence; MI are simply talents not intelligence; and MI have wrongfully mistaken action for intelligence. These are just some of the obstacles on the road to a multiple signs and multiple intelligences perspective in the field of education.

Closely aligned and directly linked to the perception of intelligence is the verbocentrism of society. Again, like intelligence, the reliance on language almost to the exclusion of other forms of representation has been socially and culturally deemed doctrinaire and natural. It may have, it is quite conceivable, gained its stature and status through its close relation and association with the cognitive concept of intelligence, the two having marched hand in hand through the eras of time. To disenfranchise verbocentricity is an equally formidable and daunting task, and possibly a most unnatural one.

The concerns elucidated above are an attempt to provide awareness of areas and issues of concern that are specific to literary theory, critical literacy and transactions through multiple sign systems. There are, however, some further concerns that are broader and more general and will be posed in the form of questions. Firstly, are teachers practitioners of theory and, if so, how much credence and space is afforded theory in the typical classroom? Are teachers simply atheoretical, in a specific sense of theory, and follow the belief that theory and real life do not mix? If and when theory is practiced, how are theoretical approaches modified, what factors, multiple or otherwise, mitigate this modification and what are the results of a modified theoretical approach? How is a

classroom teacher ever to make sense of such diverse and competing rationales as exemplified by literary theories? How can teachers accommodate the increasing range of outside school literary experiences which students will bring to the classroom as new technologies invade both home and society? How can policy hope to keep up with this monumental change? How might teachers be given the opportunity to take on approaches to English language arts based on literary theory and critical literacy? How will literary heritage be represented in this new version of English? Will teachers adopt a pluralistic and eclectic approach to theoretically-based teaching or will they lapse into one theory of "truth"? And, finally, with a reconceptualized and reconstituted version of English language arts making inroads, what will now be the role of the English teacher?

It is no doubt that the concerns and questions raised will continue to provide fertile and fecund ground, contentious and controversial debate, thought-provoking and insightful commentaries, profound and persistent change, and intellectual and innovative thinking that will characterize the literary studies to come and will make its presence felt in subtle and not so subtle ways in the teaching of English language arts.

APPLICATIONS

Key introductory statements of the APEF refer to its vision, frameworks, research and theories. For most, dreams and visions need to come to fruition in the form of reality. The following scholars speak directly to a realized version of the APEF's vision.

An article of Lang's, "To Open our Minds More Freely: Educational Drama and the Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts" (1999) was written with the express intent of a curriculum document application. Because of a similarity

between the philosophy and frameworks of the eastern and western consortia-produced curriculum documents (Lang's dealing with the WCPCCF), her article is directly applicable to the APEF. Her treatise explores how the EGLs of the curriculum document may be realized through educational drama. The EGLs of speaking, listening, reading, writing and other ways of representing she believes are directly achieved through drama. By reference to and citations of numerous scholarly works and studies to support her contention, she concludes: "That drama encourages students to use a variety of language forms and experiment with many functions of language, is clearly supported by the theoretical base of educational drama pedagogy" (p. 51). She argues as well that objectives which aim to have students comprehend and respond personally and critically to literary and media texts are possibly best realized through drama as its "power to mediate students' response to text is perhaps its greatest contribution" (p. 51). Again her contention is researched and supported. Additional samplings from her article linking drama to the goals and purposes of the EGLs of the curriculum framework reach such conclusions as: "drama allow[s] the students to enrich and extend their understanding" and is most effective in "generat[ing] and focus[ing] on forms and ideas." Overall her examination of the curriculum framework has provided a specific link and connection between the specific goals proposed by the document and the "theoretical claims put forth by drama theoreticians and practitioners about what drama can do for students" (p. 60). In the context of this study, it further supports, strengthens, and enhances the role of drama as a sign system particularly in light of key features and ideas proposed by the APEF.

There are many proponents of cultural studies who believe strongly that there are many inherent components of the discipline that speak strongly to and can provide shape

and development of curriculum for the new version of English language arts. Giroux (1997) contends that there are: "A number of theoretical elements [that] could shape the context and content of a cultural studies approach that would suggest reforming schools and colleges of education" (p. 238). He then offers the following considerations:

> First, by making culture a central construct in our classrooms and curricula, cultural studies focuses the terms of learning on issues relating to cultural differences, power, and history....
>
> Second, cultural studies places a major emphasis on the study of language and power, particularly in terms of how language is used to fashion social identities and secure specific forms of authority....
>
> The relationship between language and literacy must extend beyond its pedagogical importance as a vehicle of interpretation; it should also be understood as a site of contestation....
>
> Third, cultural studies places a strong emphasis on linking the curriculum to the experiences that students bring to their encounter with institutionally legitimated knowledge.... The pedagogical implication here is that schools and colleges of education should take the lead in refiguring curriculum boundaries. In part, this suggests reformulating the value and implications of established disciplines and those areas of study that constitute mass culture, popular culture, youth culture, and other aspects of student knowledge....
>
> Fourth, cultural studies is committed to studying the production, reception, and situated use of varied texts and how they structure social relations, values, particular notions of community, the future, and diverse definitions of self....
>
> Fifth, cultural studies also argues for the importance of analyzing history not as a unilinear narrative unproblematically linked to progress but as a series of ruptures and displacements....
>
> History is not an artefact, but a struggle over the relationship between representation and agency....
>
> Sixth, the issue of pedagogy is increasingly becoming one of the defining principles of cultural studies.... Pedagogy ... is not reduced to the mastering of skills or techniques. (pp. 238-241)

Although Giroux (1997) affirms this list "offers a beginning for advancing a more public vision for schools and colleges of education" (p. 243), many of its tenets resonate with particular threads of the APEF and its vision.

Similarly Morgan (2000) offers three circuits of cultural studies concerns with a number of features subsumed under each circuit (the three circuits of concern are Movements of Cultural Production, Discursive Practices, and Practices of Space and Place). Integral to these concerns are such issues and questions of "how a specific text or artefact was initially produced and subsequently reframed" (p. 22); internal signifying practices (semiotic analysis); how language can create and enact specific versions of identity; how and why some discourses become dominant while others are subordinated; "the circulation and use of texts, images, and commodities by others" (p. 23); an exploration of the social, ethical, and political influences of culture... [being] crucial to cultural interpretation; and of how "communication practices of English traditionally marginalizes" (p. 30). Morgan (2000) affirms that such concerns can and should "open up a space for Cultural Studies within English" (p. 29). The APEF with its language emphasising critical thinking, media texts, the social construction of ideologies and identities, and the power of language may indeed have provided that space and made the boundaries of traditional English more "permeable" and may represent a more "historically pertinent and creative rethinking of ... [the] subject so that it can address the ethical, political, and pedagogical dimensions of contemporary cultural practices" (Morgan, 2000, p. 31).

Hammett (2000) responds to the APEF's expanded definition of literacy through using technology to enhance and develop critical literacy. By having her students

construct Web pages, utilize e-mail transmissions, etc., she believes that components of critical literacy can be achieved. Hammett (2000) specifically notes the construction of knowledge as opposed to the transmission of such, that is generated through technology projects; the intertextuality of hypermedia; the utilization of popular culture and media and the integration of other forms of media such as videos; the emphasis on "reading" various texts and understanding how "representations are mediated" (p. 207); an emphasis on semiotic analysis; and the use of student-created hypermedia to "engage the class in critical discussion and dialogical thinking" (p. 209). She (2000) concludes:

> [The] ... assiduity and enthusiasm by students further convinces me that broadening the range of texts and the definitions of literacy and creating those six curricula strands of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing is a step in the right direction by the APEF and WCP. If we teachers of English language arts take advantage of opportunities for critical pedagogy presented by media and technologies and the pleasures they offer students, we can achieve some important educational outcomes, envisioned not only by authors of curriculum but also by important liberatory educational theorists like Paulo Freire. (p. 211)

It is thus within such ideas, works, and frames of reference of these authors as well as the practical suggestions offered in Chapter Five, that the theoretical constructs and vision of the APEF can be realized in the English language arts classrooms of this province.

SUMMATIONS

"Why should we trouble ourselves about literary theory? Can't we simply wait for the fuss to die down?" are questions posed by Raman Selden at the opening of his *Contemporary Literary Theory* (1985). Though these questions are meant as food for rhetorical thought, he does ruminate upon possible and plausible answers and

consequences. He believes that: "The signs are there that the graft of theory has taken rather well, and may remain intact for the foreseeable future. New journals have been launched, new courses established, and conferences devoted to theoretical questions" (p. 2). Selden appears to be a scholar with remarkably good powers of clairvoyance. Written that same year, though from the other side of the ocean, Robert Scholes' *Textual Power* (1985) speaks with a similar tone: "In our time, at least, literary theory is hardly influential upon the practice of poets, playwrights and novelists, but it is powerfully connected to the practice of teachers of poetry, drama, and fiction" (pp. 18-19). This powerful relation between theory and classroom practice, he states, is as crucial and essential to the discipline of English as any "pure" theoretical study is related to applications in the same way" (p. 18). Jameson (cited in Cain, 1984) believes that "his and other theorists' discoveries will ... trickle down to the world of practice and cause changes in teaching subject-matter, and undergraduate curriculum" (p. 248). One would assume that the practice of the undergraduate would then be formed and informed by theory.

In discussing the Francophone, specifically Parisienne, origins of literary theory, Wolfreys (1999) states: "Like so many tourists on a trip to Britain and the USA, theoretical discourses arrived, dressed themselves up in Anglo American guise and had the nerve to stay long after the visa expired. What occurred is, as they say, history ..." (p. 4). It is inarguably so that the tourist has arrived, stayed, and, as tourists are wont to do, cause the quaint and curious to adopt a more worldly and *en vogue* air. The literary theory tourist has had much the same effect on traditional English language arts. Yet how is the English teacher to make sense of the complexity, competitiveness, and

multiplicity of these literary theories? Whitelaw's (cited in Cain, 1984) address about the English curriculum is particularly pertinent and relative here: "The best that can be said of it is, that it is a rapid table of contents which a deity might run over in his mind while he was thinking of creating a world and had not yet determined how to put it together" (p. 250). It is particularly illuminating that these words were spoken in 1917 and can still provide the insight into at least one solution to the problem. Obviously out of the disarray of that era came order and expecting the same for this era would certainly not be untoward. And, just as obviously, in reference to Whitelaw's analogy, the entire table of contents proved essential in the creation of the world, thus such a case could equally be made for the literary theories of the 21st century. Finally, and possibly, the only really definitive feature of English through time has been its eclectic nature, so why not continue with this eclecticism?

Since the dethronement and forced abdication of the New Criticism (though it still resides within the walls of the castle), there has been no single theory to take its place – although this is not necessarily a bad thing – and Selden (1989) notes that "none of these interventions (modern literary theory) individually has been decisive in re-shaping critical practice but taken together they have radically shifted the focus ..." (p. 7). In answering the question, "Which theory?" he speculates and surmises that: "It may seem best to say 'let many flowers bloom' and to treat the plenitude of theories as a cornucopia to be enjoyed and tasted with relish" (p. 7). Jefferson and Robey's (1982) introduction concurs that all the various theories cannot "be addressed together to form a single comprehensive vision" (p. 13) noting that the reader is "faced with choice but conflicting theories" (p. 13) and they go as far as to suggest that the solution may not even be found "within the

confines of literary theory alone" (p. 13). Further to this, Wolfrey's (1999) introduction states: "There is no single literary theory ... that there are theories existing in a state of productive tension, rather than in some utopian location ...;" that there are "border crossings ... theories cross[ing] each others' border constantly;" and that one will find the influence such as "the work of Jacques Derrida as an implicit or explicit influence in a number of places including Feminism, Queer Theory, Postcolonial Discourse, Poststructuralism and so on" (pp. 7-8).

In line with the various thoughts expressed above but on a more pedagogic note, Fagan (2000) has proposed the following: "By becoming aware of what exists, we are better able to reorganize, delete, and integrate ideas into a new whole which then becomes a guiding force in our teaching lives, until we repeat the process and arrive at a new synthesis" (p. 298). This eclecticism and "new synthesis" may indeed be the workable and practical solution to the presence of literary theory in English language arts curriculum documents and subsequent programs.

There also appears to be a solution to the problem of academic hegemony and jargon-ridden theory that is laced with difficulty and abstractions. Or as expressed by Selden (1989): "the uncompromising attitude of theorists, who are too often talking to one another in what looks like a private language of forbidden abstractions" (p. 4). Or as Wolfreys (1999) characterized it: "Literary Theory speaks in tongues" (p. 6). Rather than literary theory in all its pure and abstract glory, Battersby (1996) encourages "all theorists to moderate some outsized claims and to consider devoting some attention, especially at the lower levels of instruction, to what works realize at the level of their interests and intentionality ..." (p. 6). This is apparently in synchronization with Morgan's (1997) call

for a less melodramatic and more moderate approach as well as speaking directly to Fagan's (2000) "new synthesis."

If these threads of thought are not sufficient to assuage the conscience of those who doubt, perhaps the following precepts from time and common sense will provide some balm. Selden (1989) summarizes it thusly: "They [the readers] may forget that 'spontaneous' discourse about literature is unconsciously dependent on the theorizing of older generations. Their talk of 'feeling,' 'imagination,' 'genius,' 'sincerity,' and 'reality' is full of dead theory which is sanctified by time and becomes part of the language of commonsense" (p. 3). A current case in point: the football coach whose strategy was to "deconstruct" the defensive play of the opposing team. Graff's (1987) take is similar: "From the vantage point of the history we have surveyed in this book, we can now see that the charges current traditionalists make against theorists are similar to those of an earlier generation against what is now taken to be traditional literary history" (p. 248). Simply, as he notes, the vanguard through time and eventuality becomes the rearguard. Or on a note of popular culturalism, the words of the modern (postmodern?) TV sage, Homer Simpson, are equally applicable: "It goes up, it comes down."

The final word will go to William T. Fagan whose "Reassessing, Reacting and Reflecting" in *Advocating English* (2000) concludes thusly:

> In order to be a successful English language arts teacher, it is important to be able to situate current teaching trends and movements within a holistic context. It is important to know how teaching and knowledge conditions change and how certain movements supposedly fall into disfavour. However, the enlightened English language arts teacher will not be confused or constrained by labels, but will borrow the best and provide a framework in which learners and knowledge are respected, and learning is mediated for the learners through effective methodology or teaching strategies. (p. 307)

It is to this challenge that the APEF and its theoretical constructs hope to rise; a hope also encompassing a vision of the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador intellectually furnished with the new literacies of the twenty-first century allowing them to not only read their world but read of worlds yet to come. Thusly proclaimed is the vision of the APEF document and its literary theories.

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Appendix A

(From Richard, A. (1998). "Thank you Clayton." *The Bulletin*, Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association, Vol. 41/No. 4. Reprinted with permission from the author.)

THANK YOU CLAYTON

by AGNES RICHARD

"Teaching can be difficult and all consuming. What keeps us going is the pride we can take from our student's accomplishments, and like childbirth, the difficult times and the pains are smothered in the remembrances of the joys."

It is January 9, 1990 – my birthday. However, the life of a high school English teacher dictates that celebration must be kept in check so as to allow time for the ever pressing demand of papers to be graded. The pile is particularly daunting tonight – the briefcase is full as well as the plastic grocery bag beside it. It is tempting to walk away from this chore for this one night but the consequences of such an action will lead to a marathon grading session on Saturday and Sunday. So, "like a snail unwillingly to school", I tackle the mountain of papers.

This role of martyr (English teacher) is not resting too well with me tonight. Soft music, fluffed cushions, positioned ottoman – all to make this task more palatable as I settle into my favorite spot in the living room. Let's make this as painless as possible – the Macbeth assignment – the creative project. When students responded well to the teaching of the play I generally offered a creative assignment which could be used to earn extra grades. The completion of such a project was totally voluntary but usually brought some interesting responses. Just the thing for a night such as this.

The hours slipped by as I marvelled at the many clever perceptions of differing aspects of the play. The epitaphs for those killed off by our protagonist were intriguing. The costumes designed for the banquet scene were fascinating. The newspaper stories of the hero's escapades were bloodcurdling. This task is not too bad after all.

11:45 p.m. – I'll do just one more before I head off to bed. I dig out the audio cassette player to play the tape which Clayton had submitted as his creative project. It was a bit of a shock to see that he had undertaken this project at all. Clayton was not going to win the prize for perfect attendance this year. There were great gaps of time when I actually began to wonder just what he looked like. However, during our Macbeth sessions there had been moments – he hadn't looked askance as I did my thing of dressing and acting as a witch to open the play. He had seemed attentive as I donned my Lady Macbeth costume for the sleepwalking scene. He even volunteered to read the part of Ross in one of our dramatized scenes and he had come to class regularly toting his text of the play. But it was still surprising to receive this voluntary assignment which Clayton had dropped nonchalantly into my briefcase as he announced that he had decided to try this creative thing to try to bring up his marks. Totally unexpected indeed in light of past performances.

The cassette player bursts into life – it's Clayton's voice – it is a Macbeth rap. I sit there fixated as the presentation continues. I chuckle to hear the line "So it's off with your head and have a nice day". By the end of the rap I am in tears. This is brilliant, innovative, clever ... adjectives are just not strong enough to describe the work.

Certainly an experience which must be shared, so it's down the hall and into the bedroom to play the whole thing for my husband. At this time of night he thinks I'm a bit touched, but he agrees that yes, it is quite interesting. Next it's into my teacher son's bedroom to let him hear this fascinating creation. A bit more enthusiasm here as he pronounces it a work of art.

Next morning I tote my audio cassette player with me to the staff room to let my colleagues marvel at this astounding work. I can hardly contain my excitement until literature class and time to share with my Macbeth students. Class time arrives. I decide to play it cool. Cassette player is in place, tape at the ready. As they settle down for work I ask them to lay

aside their consideration of the Bartlett biography and listen to a tape to be discussed this morning. The change of pace is welcomed. There are no audible protests – they don't have to write, they don't have to produce – just plain listening is easy enough. Within a few seconds the glazed looks change. There is a spark of recognition. They lean forward in their desks. They look toward Clayton's desk and nod approvingly. The tape ends. There is a burst of applause and cheers as the assignment is classed as "wicked". Clayton beams and grows two inches taller before my very eyes.

Questions from all sectors of the class. Clayton is on the spot. He admits that he had gotten the idea as he watched a television performance of rap music. yet, is had taken quite a while to get all the ideas to flow just right. yes, that was his own guitar and synthesizer used to provide the background music. And yes, he had "jigged" classes for two days to work on getting all the sounds together for this polished and professional finished product.

Now it was my turn for the hot seat as they demanded to know the grade which I had decided for this work. I admitted that indeed I had been generous and given a 24 out of 25 for after all, there were indeed some incorrect spellings in the written text. Mutiny was threatened and I gladly capitulated and readjusted the mark to a perfect score.

For days Clayton walked a little taller and I operated in that special glow which comes with having tangible evidence that you have reached at least one student on one topic. Our next genre for study in this literature class was the biography "Bartlett – the Great Explorer", not at all to Clayton's liking.

Teaching can be difficult and all consuming. What keeps us going is the pride we can take from our students' accomplishments, and like childbirth, the difficult times and the pains are smothered in the remembrances of the joys. This incident was one of the enduring memories which I carry with me from my 30 years of work in the classroom.

Thank you Clayton, wherever you may be, you have left me with a birthday gift which I will forever cherish.

Agnes Richard retired from teaching in 1992. She was formerly an English Literature, Language teacher at St. Paul's High School in Gander.

Macbeth (and it ain't no Shakespeare)

Here we go.
Listen up people, 'cause I'm startin' this story
Macbeth was out looking for some fame and glory.
Spendin' all his time, out fightin' for his land
He was top gun, head dude, Duncan's main man.
Now this is where our story starts to get so serious,
Three witches said he'd be king, and he went delerious.
Duncan had to die, but Macbeth couldn't wait,
Then he found he didn't have the heart, began to hesitate.

Now this is where his lady comes into this thing
Saying' "Hey Big Mac, Don't ya wanna be king?"
She said, "Take this knife go and carve you some roast
And don't you come out until Duncan is toast."
He nodded the affirmative and off he went,
And ten minutes later old Duncan's life was spent.
Old Mac was on a roll an' he said "What the Hell"
An' then he ripped out Duncan's guts as well.

Then he was ruler all over the land
Dealing out justice with an iron hand.
Killin' anyone who got in his way.
it was, "Off with your head, an' have a nice day."
He went to see the witches, they were stirring their brew
And he believed every word that they said was true.
They went and called up, count them, three apparitions
I don't know what it was maybe some kind of tradition.
But he knew that it all was too good to last
'Cause if something catches up on you it's usually your past.

His lady went crazy from imaginary stains,
He watched her life slowly slipping down the drain.
He knew it was over, he knew it was the end,
He had nothing left to win, had nothing to defend.
So he once again went fightin' his silly little war,
But the enemy was waitin' outside his big front door.
He knew for a fact that he wouldn't get far
'Cause someone shot the driver of the get-away car.

I guess you all know just what happened then
Our man got wasted, now that's the end.
Macbeth, the Scottish king, from the year 1057
Was taken out in battle, on his way to bagpipe heaven.
So I hope he's not turnin' and I hope he's not upended.
And if he's spinnin' in his grave, from what I've written here,
Well all I'm sayin' is "Sorry Bill,
But I ain't no Shakespeare".

And that's a wrap.

Clayton Brownlee
St. Paul's High School
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