

The Last Lecture

Literary Texts II 10

12.09.2020



الجدول الدراسي

HELLO EVERYONE!

Today we are going to finish the course. We are going to talk about literary criticism.

What is literary criticism?

It is an art of discussing works of literature. It is like when you read a poem or a novel or an essay, and then you write something about it. It is not just expressing an opinion. We have four phases or steps to what we call literary criticism.

1. We should know how to describe the work of literature. So, the first step is description. You have to give a summary of the work, to sum up.
2. The second step is to analyse; which means study relations.
3. Interpretation: which means, generally speaking, figuring out symbols. That is to try to understand what symbolism means.
4. The last step is to evaluate, which means judging the work whether it is bad or good. It is like expressing opinion.

It is hard to write an essay that deserves to be called literary criticism. So, let's take a novel or a story for example, if we want to write literary criticism about it. The first thing you should talk about it is that you should give the reader a summary of it. For example, the story (The First Confession) that we talked about last time, you should give the reader a summary, it is a story about a child who was about to go to church to deliver confession, but then we have a trouble communicating with his surroundings, his grandmother, his sister in particular, finally at the end of the story, he succeeded to make a good very confession.

The second step is to analyse, it is when we talk about the relationship of one episode and another. It is how Jackie's grandmother arrival causes problem to him, then one conflict led to



another conflict which is his sister. And to make things worse we have another conflict with another old lady who is Miss Ryan. So, this is analysing; to study relations or connections, one episode that lead to another episode.

Now, interpretation is different from description. It is talking about symbolism. When the writer in our story said "*hell had the first place in her heart*", this is symbolism which means that miss Ryan doesn't really know how to be happy, or to express some kind of happiness. She is fully occupied with punishment. Hell is a symbol of punishment. Likewise, when Jackie describes himself as the last Adam, he speaks about darkness and sunshine, this is also symbolism. So, this is what we call interpretation. It is different from analysis.

The last step is to judge the work, to say for example: the story is very interesting to read, or very instructive from my own point of view. So, you express anything you trying to judge if the story is good or bad.

This is what literary criticism is all about.

Let's read from the book:

Literary Criticism is the discussion of literature, including description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works like literature, criticism is hard to define. One of the critic's tasks is to challenge definitions of literature and criticism that seem too general, too narrow, or unworkable for any other reason. Whatever it is, literary criticism deals with different dimensions of literature as a collection of text through which authors evoke more or less fictitious worlds for the imagination of readers.

We have three types of literary criticism.

1. **Historical:** we talked about the general background of the work, we focus upon the writer's age. Not age how old he or she might be, no, it is like 20th century, 21st century, 19th century or something like that.

2. **Rhetorical:** here the focus is on language. This type of criticism

doesn't care about history. Critics choose only to talk about language. The background and the history has nothing to do with this type of criticism.

3. **Reader's response theory:** some critics focus mainly in reader's response. They study the response of each one of us to a particular work. It is the response of the audience, the reaction of the spectators, of the readers to a work. Some readers might like Miss Ryan for example, other may say that she is unlikable person.

Read from the book:

We can look at any work of literature by paying special attention to one of several aspects of its language and structure, its intended purpose, the information and worldview it conveys, or its effect on an audience. Most good critics steer clear of exclusive interest in a single element in studying a text's format characteristics. For example, critics usually recognize the variability of performances of dramatic works and the variability of readers' mental interpretations of a text.

Studying an author's purpose, critics acknowledge that forces beyond a writer's conscious intentions can affect what the writer actually communicates. In studying what a literary work is about, critics often explore the complex relationship between truth and fiction in various types of storytelling. In studying literature's impact on its audience, critics have been increasingly aware of how cultural expectations shape experience.

Because works of literature can be studied long after their first publication, awareness of historical and theoretical context contributes to our understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of them. Historical research relates a work to the life times of its author. Attention to the nature, functions and categories of literature provides a theoretical

framework joining a past text to the experience of present readers. The tradition of literary criticism surveyed here combines observations by creative philosophers, more recently, trained specialists in literary, historical and cultural studies.

Do you have any question about that?

Student: The examples of literary criticism are required?

Professor: No, they are not. From page 113 to 146 are not required.

Let's move to the chapter that talks about drama page 147. This chapter is very important.

First of all: what is drama?

Drama is like the novel, like poetry, like a short story, is a form of literature. It is written either in prose or verse. It is unlike the novels, novels are always written in prose. Poems are always written in verses. Whereas works of drama can be written in both prose and verses.

The work of drama comes from Greek language; which means "to do" or "to act". That's when you see people on stage, people are moving on stage.

Drama is a form of literature-either prose or verse, usually in dialogue form intended for performance.

Continue reading:

Dramatic arts are the components necessary to writing and producing the drama, such as playwriting acting and costume and scenic design.

This is what we call the text. So, drama is both a text and a performance.

It is as you know, unlike the novel; the play depends exclusively on dialogue. We have no description in drama. We have stage direction before the dialogue.



The word drama comes from a Greek word meaning "to do", and thus drama is usually associated with the idea of action. Most often, drama is thought of as a story about events in the lives of characters.

It is like every book, it is about people, it is about human characters.

When you say drama, we have things like conflict. There is no play is successful without the idea of conflict. The conflict needs tension. The tension is highlighted through the idea of contrast, when you compare good with evil, black with white, the opposites in general. These contrasts create tension, and this is drama. Drama is about conflict, tension, contrast and passion. Passion is stronger than emotion.

Drama is connected with actors, with somebody moving on the stage. That's why there is something called dramatic performance. Performance which include conflict, tension, contrast and passion.

As the adjective dramatic indicates, the ideas of conflict, tension, contrast and emotion are usually associated with drama.

Now we have three types of theatres.

Drama is performed in a place that we call a theatre.

1. The first type is very common which is commercial, it is usually written for *entertainment*. Usually *commercial* theatre are private, funded by private groups or companies.

2. The second type is *mainstream public activity* or literary theatre. This one is serious. It is not just for entertainment, it is also for instruction, you entertain and you acquire a new knowledge. It addresses the mind.

3. The last type is called *elitist art of form*. It addresses elite theatre. It is about something that is postmodern. Something that is highly symbolic and difficult to understand. It is written by highly gifted people and only highly educated audience can understand it.

Read the related section of the types of theatre from your book:

If theatre is viewed simply as a branch of literature or only as a form of narrative, however, then large segments of theatre history are inevitably slighted. Some periods of cultures have emphasized dramatic literature - plays - but others have stressed aspects of theatrical production. Some cultures see the theatre's value as a means of storytelling, others see it as religious spectacle, or entertainment.

Theatre has been used as an extension of religious festivals, as a means for spreading political ideas or propagandizing mass audiences, as entertainment and as a form of art.

Through much of history, theatre has existed on three levels simultaneously as loosely organized popular entertainment, as a mainstream public activity, and as an elitist art form.

At the level of popular entertainment, it consists of individuals or small groups, usually working outside established theatrical channels, performing anything from circus skills to farcical plays for a mass audience. This form predates the oldest known plays and is exemplified today by commercial television.

Theatre as a mainstream public activity is most commonly literary drama performed at public theatres, it is usually commercial or else state supported for the general public. Greek tragedy, medieval morality plays, and contemporary Broadway theatre all fall into this category.

Theatre as an elitist art form is most simply defined by its intended audience, a limited group with specialized tastes. This form ranges from the court performances of the Renaissance to modern avant-garde théâtre.

Now what are the main elements of theatrical performance? What

do we need to have a play? A play that deserves to be called theatrical performance.

You have to differentiate between drama as a text that written to be read just like a novel and the drama that is written to be performed inside the theatre.

First of all what is performance?

A performance has two elements. It needs a performer and an audience. So, a performance relies basically on two major elements; audience; the people who attend, and somebody who is acting in front of them, the performer.

A performer cannot perform without an audience. So, it is so important for a performance to have audience.

A performance can be silent and can be verbal. Silent like there is no words just body language or body gestures. And verbal means with language.

We have what we call a puppet theatre. Here we don't have characters or people acting. We have a door and there is someone behind the door and make some movement. It is very popular in Japan.

Performance requires other elements, like light, furniture, customs, scenic designs. It needs background music sometimes.

Look at your book:

A performance has only two essential elements: a performer and an audience. The performance may be pantomimed or may use language. The performer need not even be human. Puppet drama has been popular throughout history, and mechanical or machine plays have been presented. A performance may be enhanced by costume, makeup, scenery, props, lighting, music, and special effects. These are used to help create the illusion of a different character, place, and time or to enhance the special quality of the performance and differentiate it from everyday experience.

That's all for our course.

Exam Notes:

Let me remind you of what is required and what is not required.

Your book begins with page 11.

The pages that are required are: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, on to 50. The first fifty pages are all required.

The third part is not required, just the five definitions that we talked about in the lectures.

Page 72, the short story that we discussed is required. Read it more than once. Familiarize yourself with the characters and everything.

From 95 to 111 is not required.

The last thing is the stuff that we discussed today. 111, 112, 147, 148, 149.

In the exam you have four options. Sometimes the options are very close to each other. You have to pick up the more accurate option.

**«THANK YOU»
WISH YOU ALL THE BEST**



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Group

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