

Criticism

Dr. Rania Jawad

2021-2012

Tuesday, September 14th

- Some titles help us shape the texts we read.
- Keywords are the ones we choose to identify in a text.
- A structure of a text (grammatically) can help us analyze texts.
- The different interpretations we can see in a text.

How we read:

- Images of things in our society.(Representations) (Reader's Life or Society)
- The (First Person) is it biographical? not necessarily
- Why was the poem written? (Historical,Social Context)
- The Genre shapes how we read.
- Theory→Literary theory→Literary Criticism.
- Our thinking of the world.
(we make the road by walking)

Thursday, September 16th 2021

We make the road by walking.

Opposites< key for making meaning. It also helps us understand different things in life.

Things are a part of our life but we don't actually realize it, it is unconscious to us.

Neutrality< Being on the side of the dominant.

Reading: how we read is not neutral, how we interpret. We get selective with things that relate to our thoughts.

What we read<may be significant, what is valued in terms of texts.

To read: not just texts, but to also read reality.

Neutrality is an immoral act. -Myles

How to read un-neutrally?

- Don't just say, the text says this< quote

- Make connections, to raise questions from the text to outside the text.
- Be conscious of your feelings, emotions while reading.
- Not to accept what you read, question it.
- Be conscious of the life of a text in history.

Tuesday, September 21st, 2021

Introduction to Poetry by Billy Collins

- Identify what is being communicated.
- Look at and analyze how a text is communicated
- Develop an analysis of what and how a text is being communicated.

The speaker of the poem is making a request < “ I ask them”

An assumption < “them” refers to readers of a poem, students of the speaker in a literature class.

- A feeling of disappointment, when he requests them to do something but they do otherwise.
- There is no specific gender of “the speaker”.
- Desire to know, different ways of trying to know < Active.
- How do we know that the request was not fulfilled?
They are doing something else, by “ torturing the poem” < “To find out what it really means”

-How does the text communicate what we just identified?

-Title < gives us a glimpse of a context < I, them.

-First person speaker of the poem.

-The structure of the poem is a request being made that is not met.

- Repetition, Patterns, Metaphors.

- The majority of the text.

-Why is the request made via metaphors?

>Why does the speaker use metaphors to make the request?

- >What does that last line mean? What does it tell us about understanding the meanings of Literature?
- > How we understand what the students are doing.
- < the question that we raise is “ what is real?” the desire to know.
 - The idea of being taught in life.
 - Defining, Naming, Observing, Experiments.

Thursday, September 23rd, 2021

- What is Literature?
- What is Interpretation? > Text: Reader, Author, The Universe.
- The text focus, and the pedagogical value> moral.
- The reader’s response to a text.
- “Ideology in the classroom”

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

A continuation of “ Introduction to Poetry by Billy Collins.
Meaning< Helps us understand, What is the purpose of something, why does it exist? Or to identify facts. To define something.

“This is just to say”- William Carlos Williams,1929.

This is just to say
 That I ate the plums in the ice box
 That you were probably
 Saving for breakfast, forgive me
 They were so cold, so delicious.

I < The speaker of the poem.
 you< someone else living in the house\ or the apartment.
 Taking something from someone.
 Giving Apology< “Forgive me”.
 Title< shows that there is an informal relationship between them, and what is being said is not the most important.

Tools: opposite, similarity, comparison.

-What kind of apology is “Forgive me”?

-Why did the “speaker” take something not his or her own?

-How do we understand the last two lines?

-is the whole poem a metaphor?

Thursday, September 30, 2021

“Ideology in the classroom” -What is ideology?

- What is the teacher’s Interpretation?

>Economic and Cultural Domination

> Highlights the political aspect of the story.

> Context: Ghana, Eve of independence from British Rule.

> 2 White British Settlers who own a beauty salon.

> Conflict: is going out of Business.

> Strategy is making them look like a City Girl.

> City Girl: “European, Modern, Beauty”

- What is the student's Interpretation?

>They did not look at class divisions.

>“How Believable or Likable the two major characters in the story were-449”

>Ending: Solving the conflict: finding happiness by accepting change-449

> Universal: Humanity < how do we deal with conflict.

- Why are they different?

> they focus on generalizations such as humanity.

>they are taught to interpret, and analyze Literature in this way.

> the students' experiences in Canada vs teacher’s experience.

- Explain how an engagement with the text contributes to an understanding of what the course is about.

- Choose a text from the ones we already took in class for next class.

- Content, Writing < ac guide.

- 1 or 2 paragraphs.

Tuesday, October 5th, 2021

Narrative by J.Hillis Miller.

-How does the author J.Hillis Miller define narrative?

-Telling about something that happened, a story> Plot> series of actions. Beginning, middle, end. For example: Jokes, Advertising, movies, literary texts, myths, oral stories, news, history.

-if humans are constantly producing or engaging with narratives, why? Imaginary, "true" events.

- He draws on Aristotle's understanding that stories offer pleasure and learning, we experience new things by telling stories.
- What are the psychological and social functions of narratives?
- Do stories 'create' or 'reveal' (2)
- Telling us about ourselves and the world we live in< it helps us know about life.
- The plot puts an order to things and gives order to the events.

Thursday, October 7th, 2021

Narrative

-What does Imitation mean?

-What does teaching mean?

- Fiction-making that humans are involved in, it is a basic, integral part of our human life.
- Imitation, representation.
- Pedagogical, teaching tool.
- To create or reveal.

It imitates structures, dynamics, relations, in society.

It also imitates human desires and experiences, intentions.

And the imitation of Historical events.

Representation: to portray, copy, reproduce, describe, and to stand in for something.

Representation> does not equal what it is representing.

In Representation>we have the reader, listener, viewer who is someone, and something, and the one who produces the representation.

How does Literature teach us?

- It is exposing us to whatever it is imitating.
- Normal and Abnormal is produced by humans for a specific society. Normalizing> to normalize.

[Tuesday, October 12, 2021](#)

“The Text in the World”

- The relationship between the text and the world.
 - Representation, or that the texts may be able to do things in the world.
- How can we understand the role of texts and the world?
- It implies that there is a separation between the text and the world.
 - So a literary text is not a part of the world.
 - Texts can have an effect or influence on the reader. (Teaching, Feeling, Experience)
 - “Coy Mistress” Representation of a speaker attempting to seduce a woman> only through language and words.
 - Language produces our world.
 - Texts are not separate but are part of the world.
 - References to the world in Marvell’s poem. An interaction with the world.
 - the world of the text is the Text.
 - we access and know through language.
 - ”Fiction of immediacy”

The “ Text in the World” Main ideas sentences:

- 1- The question of the text and the world.
- 2- The questionable distinction between the text and the world.
- 3- Andrew Marvell’s poem “Coy Mistress” introduces us to a seduction that happened in the text’s world.

- 4- The challenges of fiction and reality.
- 5- There is no access to our world except through language.
- 6- The Analysis of Marvell's poem.

Thursday, October 14th, 2021

Content: Very Specific AND refer to the terms, debates, questions of the course.

Terms(Defining): reading, interpretation, literature, neutrality, text, narrative, reader, ideology.

Questions: -What does it mean to separate or not separate the author and the speaker of the text when we interpret the text?

-Can we know without, through the medium of language?

-How do we know what we think we know?

-Why do we need stories?

-How are we taught to read and how social-political implications does that teaching have?

-What do we value, focus on, emphasize in our interpretation of a text? (being conscious of what we value)

Debates: -What does it mean to understand literary texts as representing the world?

-What does it mean to understand texts as being part of the world?

-Is there a real, true meaning of a literary text?

Thursday, October 21st, 2021

"Me"

"Tigers on the Tenth Day" Zakaria Tamer.

Describe> Identify basic actions, basic plot.

Characters> how it was narrated, 1st or 2nd or 3rd person.

Setting.

Tamer> Students of the tamer> Tiger.

- Tamer tamed the tiger in 10 days(Through techniques of starvation)
- 3rd person, dialogue.
- Ending> Quote the last line.
- Process(Tiger being tamed)

- Transformation: How the tiger understands himself, how the tamer describes and forces the tiger to be.

Using **language** to figure out the How's of things.> It Shapes Behavior.

I> Subject. (Me, person, individual)

- Subject to someone else by control and dependency.
- Tied to one's identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.
- Subject to forces and effects both outside or the inside.
- Subject to language.
- Subject to our unconscious.

Tuesday, October 26th, 2021

English Literary Criticism:

Defining Terms: Reading, Interpretation, (reader), Narrative, Me/ Subject.

- How it is defined in the texts we are reading (Supplemented by our class discussions)

1- Explain how the line helps you to understand the term/question/debate.

2- Explain how that contributes to the main idea of the critical text.

Questions:- what is the pedagogical role of Literature?

How is 'universal' reading dangerous?

Debates: Text/ World.

-When we complete the text we have to stay close to the text itself.

-The language we use depends on our writing.

Tuesday, November 2nd, 2021

" What is Literature?

- texts that represent historical periods.
- a description of the real world.
- a body of writing work and a system of language.
- it is Art.

- a category that holds art, history, and sciences.
- a literary work that is valued as a work of art.

Defining terms: relate it to what it is not>differentiate.

- According to what standards literature is valued?
 - What is “Literary”?
- Time, Reality, Language.

Terry Eagleton-”What is Literature”?

- 1- Literature is creative or imaginary writing.
- 2- Literature is a text using literary language> 1916 Russian formalists: unordinary language, estranging.
- 3- Literature is a text that does not serve an immediate purpose or function.
- 4- Literature is a “valued” piece of writing.

Relative terms: there is no fixed understanding of the term.

“Ideology” Not personal interest, we are subjected to people and things in life.

- Values that shape what we say and how we act are connected to power-relations in society.

“The Rise Of English” (15-19)

Thursday, November 4th, 2021

-Definition of Literature in the 18th Century in England.

The whole body of writing that is valued.

England is the world’s first industrial capitalisation.

Values> efficiency, order, reason, money.

Humans turning into machines.

Civil War> between social classes, and aristocratic classes.

The Values> How the text is written, and how it is communicated.

Literature today in Palestine:

- Contributes to the Palestinian cause.
- it represents the beauty of Palestine.
- reflecting Palestinian emotions and experiences.

-Literature is redefined by the Romantics. In the 19th century in England. Literature as fictional/creative writing was invented in the 19th century too.

Contributing to different values:

-Creativity

- Imagination

-The Natural world

- spontaneous

-irrationality

Aesthetics> The philosophy of art.

Tuesday, November 9th, 2021

“ The Rise of English”- Terry Eagleton

-Definition of Literature in England in the 18th Century.

- Because through Literature values are being asserted to challenge oppression in society by the ruling class.

-George Gordon> English Literature to save England? Why?

Because English literature will teach people specific values.

>“ Universal Human values” (22) Humanizing= “eternal truth and beauties”(22) values that promote sympathy, tolerance among all classes(social classes), and accept viewpoints beyond their own commonality, honesty, loyalty.

-Common good.

-the values are distracting from the immediate concerns of living.

- it is an ideology that is “humanizing”, “universal”, to control the people to avoid rebellion> to pacify people.

- “ Failure of Religion”(20)

= lose its influence on the people.

= rise of scientific thinking.

= teaches through texts, interpretation.

-Promoting English Literature: written in English by white Englishmen.

-Promote national pride.

-Discipline of English Literature= colleges. Targeting working classes and women> because they raise and teach children.

Tuesday, November 16th, 2021

“Minute on Indian Education”- Thomas Macaulay.

-How does he speak about Literature?

Literature is a form of Education.

Literature represents the nation >the people of the nation(at a Historical moment.)

It symbolizes the value of people.

Hierarchy> Scale Value System (Civilized, Uncivilized)

-How does he speak about Language:

A form of education, direct link.

Hierarchy of Language.

- Authoritative tone> speaks in facts, from what he calls a place of responsibility.
- Positionality.
- English Superiority.

To justify Colonialism, and normalize it.

To produce a better image of the colonizer.

-How is English Literature connected to Language According to Thomas Malcaulay?

- What is Eagleton’s POV of The Rise of English?

Tuesday, November 23rd, 2021

“Orientalism”- Edward Said

-way of thinking based on differences between The Orient, The Occident> The West, The East> Inventions= Human-made, North American, Western-European, White, Male.

-The inventions were spread due to Media, History, Textbooks, News, Academic Research,etc. Literary texts(French, English, German).

- Literature contributes to the invention of the East and the West.
- he says Orientalism is a “Discourse”> System of knowledge produced through Language that shapes how we think about something.
- The one who produces representation shapes how we look at things as being in a position of power to say so.

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

“Trifles”-Susan Glaspell

2 couples: Henry Peters and Mrs. Peters.

Lewis Hale and Mrs. Hale.

- Case> a crime/ Investigation. Detective genre.
- Men are identified by their work, However, women are identified as wives. (Gender)
- Rural area: farmers.

-Identify what is being communicated.

Opening: Kitchen> “Gloomy”, out of order: things are not put away or organized. “Uncompleted work”, abandoned.

-the 3 men enter first: investigators and the neighbor. Based on their Age.

-Then 2 women/wives enter> Nervous, disturbed.

-the weather is cold.

-How is it being communicated?

>Detailed description: positions of the characters, or the opening scene.

-the dialogue is imitating “every day speech”

-Genre of Realism.

-What is the purpose of what is being communicated and how?

Develop questions: why is the kitchen unorganized and out of order.

Why did the sheriff come to the kitchen of John Wright?

-Where is John?

-Why is the house abandoned?

-Why do they enter someone else’s house without knocking?

- What is the significance of the description of the characters?

-What is the significance of the Kitchen as a setting?

-What is the role of the farmer? Discovered something wrong as a witness.

- Why are the women participating in the investigation?

-What is the significance of the “cold” weather?

- Is J.W married?

- What Information do we learn about John and from whom?

-Sheriff/ county attorney(younger man)

5 Characters:

-Gender distinction.

-Age

-Position

-Physical appearance.

Thursday,December 9th,2021

“Trifles”

>the house is abandoned because John is murdered and his wife is at custody.

>John seems to be honest,disciplined. He follows the law.

Mr.s Wright> she is described as queer: as if she didn't know what she was going to do next.” (2) not in order,potential confusion, odd, and abnormal. It is not equaling her “Guilt”.

> play: description of the characters/opening scene/title.

>priority for the men at first, a place of authority.

>centered on the female characters(kitchen)-gendered.

>Their role is described as being secondary.

>crime solving is primary-3 men.

>The crime was solved by 2 women.

>Seperation of the world of men in the play and the women.

> Kitchen→ you see and interpret what you see→ evidence for why the crime was committed.

>their knowledge gives an understanding of the husband/wife relationship.

>the evidence is a dead bird. He was killed the same way John was.

Which is strangling.

>the bird sings like Minnie used to sing.

> Trifles are things that are considered to be not serious, small.

- > The men consider their work as serious, however, they consider the world of women as Trifles. Not serious and not as valuable.
- > Their job is sewing, making bread and jam.
- > a sense of how men see women.
- They see but do not spend time to interpret, because it is less valuable.
- See: their perspective.
- > the men's way of collecting evidence: direct, tangible, order.

Tuesday, December 14th, 2021

Literary Criticism on Trifles- "Mariana Angel" P.549

- > How does a reading of the play help us understand the law?
- How can the Canary be understood in the court as 'legal' evidence?
- It is telling us about the method of killing.
- > The Quilt: they're tampering/changing and hiding the evidence.
- > Isolation: shows who's a victim=interpret evidence in different ways.
- For the men and women.
- > The inside: what are the limitations of the law?
- The law is not doing justice to the context.
- > The law: there are also limitations because it is all produced by **men**.
- > Rebellion and Nullification: taking or tampering the evidence.
- A moral position, the men focus more on the position of the law.
- Choose one of these above-write a paragraph describing how it functions as a piece of evidence.**
- How Marina uses (blank) as a piece of evidence to make a commentary about the law.**
- quote from Angel's text> highly recommend from page 549.**

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

"Trifles" Feminist By Judith Stevens.

- > Feminist activists in early 20th century America → see their activism in their plays.
- "Separate spheres" for men and women.
- how they solve or understand the crime. > Women solve this crime through observation of small details in the kitchen.

-understanding what crime is.

Men> John's murder

Women>John's treatment of Mrs Wright is a crime.

Karen E.Stein: "interpret the emotional significance of small details."

-Highlight different ways of feminist literary criticism.

>There's no one way of producing feminist literary criticism.

>Explores the lives of women.

>Show a female point of view.

>Showing the relationship to dominant gender ideologies.

-Perceptions of the other sphere: men see women as trivial: occupied by trifles.

-Women see men as not understanding what is 'morally right'. About society and human relations.

-a support system amongst the women.

-A dominant gender ideology= the man is superior to the women but the women are 'morally' superior. A representation that women function in households and raise children.

Argument> they challenge the dominant gender ideology of the time period.

Yet reinforced.

For Thursday>

-Locate one example in the play of separate spheres.

-Quote from the play> explain how it is an example of separate spheres.

-Explain how it relates to the argument(Steven's argument).

Tuesday, February 15th 2022

-Author-Title- Argument.

>Fetterley-Reading about reading.

>Argument: How we read the crime scene, and how it was produced by Mrs Wright.

Minnie wright- left a crime scene=how to read a text.

-Women can read the kitchen and the crime scene as a text, the men cannot even consider the kitchen a crime scene.

> what is the text that Minnie wright left us?

“Men’s systematics institutionalised, and culturally approved violence toward women and women’s retaliatory violence against men.”(153)

> the women hide the evidence of the text, and the men don’t see it.

>people can’t read the story of John’s violence against minnie, but Susan Glaspell is showing us publicly about Minnie’s abusive husband and the murder.

> Look for a moment in the text where we can see that the men cannot read women’s world and minnie wright. Quote it.

Explain how it relates to the Argument of Fetterley.
