ENGLISH 251B: The Practice and Theory of Criticism 2
(with emphasis on drama and theory)
Sections 04 and 02
Winter, 1980

Rationale

This second part of the Practice and Theory of Criticism continues a training in close reading, applying it to drama, and adds to this a study of the ideas that have shaped and controlled the changing ways in which authors have written, readers have read, and critics have approached the examination of literature.

As for drama, two kinds of tragedy and a prototypical comedy will be examined closely: Sophocles' Antigone (in translation), Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, and Shaw's Arms and the Man.

Among the controlling ideas are those that appear in the seminal works of three ancient writers--Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus--and in the work that domesticated them in English literature, Sidney's Apology for Poetry. These are followed by selected ideas appearing in the works of succeeding theorists in Great Britain and the United States. The final portion of the course is devoted to an evaluating examination of various critical approaches currently enjoying favour and, in particular, the ways in which they are applied.

Work required

Students will read the works assigned and be prepared to discuss them in class. Students will also submit two critiques on drama (each of 1000 words) and will write three tests on theory and its practice. Each of the critiques and tests will be of equal value.
Texts

1. Sophocles, Antigone, trans. Townsend (Harper and Row)

2. Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra, ed. Mack (Pelican)


4. Kaplan, ed., Criticism: The Major Statements, 2nd ed. (St. Martin's)

5. Thomas, The Fuzz Inside (UW Press)

6. Conrad, Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism, ed. Murfin (St. Martin's)


8. Handouts, for which a charge of $1.00 will be made.

Schedule of topics

1. Introduction: three views of reality (Jan. 3)

2. Plato's Ion and Book X of his Republic (Jan. 5 & 8)

3. Aristotle's view of literature in general, in his Poetics (Jan. 10 & 12)

4. Sophocles, Antigone (Jan. 12 & 15) (Particular attention to how the audience's response is directed)

5. Aristotle's view, in his Poetics, of the nature and function of drama (Jan. 17 & 19)

6. Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra (Jan. 22, 24, 26)

7. Submit critiques of 1000 words on directing the audience's response in Antony and Cleopatra (Mon., Jan. 29)

8. Sidney's Apology for Poetry (Jan. 29 & 31)

9. Taking up critique topics in the light of the critiques submitted (Feb. 2)

10. Longinus, On the Sublime (Feb. 5 & 7)

11. Analyzing a sample test question (Feb. 9)

12. Test on three ancient critics and Sidney (Mon., Feb. 12)
13. Ideas in selected passages of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson (Feb. 14 & 16)

14. Reading Week (Feb. 19-23)

15. Theories on tragedy (In handout) (Feb. 26)

16. Shaw, *Arms and the Man* (Feb. 28 & Mar. 2)

17. Submit critiques of 1000 words on directing audience response in *Arms and the Man* (Mon., Mar. 5)

18. James, "The Art of Fiction" (Mar. 7)

19. Taking up critique topics in the light of critiques submitted

20. Test on theories from Dryden to James (Mon., Mar. 12)


22. Introduction to contemporary criticism: proceeding from Formalism to Deconstructionism. Readings: "The Underside of Utopias" (in Fizz) and "What Is Deconstruction?" in Murfin (Mar. 19)

22. Psychological approach. Readings: "Naive and Sophisticated Reading" (in Fizz), "What Is Psychological Criticism?" (Mar. 21)


24. Historical scholarship applied to the close reading of literature (Mar. 26):
(a) in linguistic meaning: "A Tisket, a Casket" and "Mouths and Eyes in Lycidas" (in Fizz)

(b) in playing on previous literature: "Bouncing off the Board" and "The War Sonnets of Rupert Brooke" (in Fizz)

(c) in the author's experience: "Blend and Blur in Grantchester" (in Fizz)

25. Historical scholarship and the New Historicism (Mar. 28):

(a) Conrad's Congo Journal and information on the King of the Belgians (handout) compared to HD

(b) "What Is the New Historicism?" and Brook Thomas on HD
26. Generic and Mythological approaches (Mar. 30):

(a) *The Conquest of Canada: Our Very Own Heroic Tragedy* (in Flizz)

(b) Frye, "The Archetypes of Literature" (in Kaplan)

(c) Frye, "Literature and Myth" (handout)

27. Feminist criticism: "What Is Feminist Criticism?" and Smith on HD (Apr. 2)