

INTRODUCTION TO TEXTUAL SCHOLARSHIP, GENRE AND SOURCE STUDIES

Literature as art – three fundamental Qs

1. Do we have an accurate version of what we are studying?
 - Textual scholarship
2. What are we dealing with?
 - Genre studies
3. Did earlier writings help this work come into being?
 - Source studies

Studying through textual scholarship

The primary goal of the discipline of textual scholarship (or textual criticism) is the investigation of texts. Textual scholars attempt to understand how texts have come to be as they are and, in order to achieve this, they examine the primary sources of a text. There are several different schools of thought within the discipline: some scholars are interested in what the author intended, some others see texts as collaborative products and there are also those who are interested in how a text is transmitted. In many cases, textual scholars produce editions of the texts they have studied.

Do we have an accurate version of what we are studying?

- Sophocles?
- Troy?
- Local romances?
- Macbeth?
- Heer Ranjah?
- James Thorpe - Principles of Textual Criticism
- Authentic text (text which the author intended)

- Problem with older works?
- Corrupted? (omissions and errors)

Studying through textual scholarship

Do we have an accurate version of what we are studying?

- Originality?
- Satisfactory Shakespearian text?
- Healthy respect for textual criticism
- Studying the genesis
- Development of a piece of literature
- E.g., Ezra Pound (Waste Land) in creating a modern classic
- Dickens Great Expectations
- Which is the real???

Studying through textual scholarship: examples

Do we have an accurate version of what we are studying?

- Authentic text (Close editing & proofreading?)
- Skilled in linguistics, literary criticism and bibliography
- Aesthetic (as well as scientific) text
- For interpretation and evaluation
- Indispensable tool for further meaningful analysis
- Textual criticism: combination of artist and scientist

Studying through textual scholarship

Example: Hamlet

- Greatness discovered by the editors
- 400 hundred years and four versions
- Words with changed meanings?

- Richness of interpretation
- 17th century meaning
- O that this too too solid flesh would melt
- (Act 1, Scene, ii) Sallied? sullied?
- James Thorpe - Principles of Textual Criticism
- DC Greetham - Textual Scholarship: An Introduction

Studying through genre studies

Genre means a type of art, literature, or music characterized by a specific form, content, and style. For example, literature has four main genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction.

Matters of genre: What are we dealing with?

- The fountainhead of criticism
- Beginning in the POETICS
- Basic notions [catharsis, tragic hero, formative elements of drama, unity of plot, mimesis,]
- Distinguishing one genre from another
- Followed by critics
- Aristotelian or Neo-Aristotelian
- Revival in 20th C. (University of Chicago)

Genre criticism: criticism of kinds and types

- Traditional way of approaching a piece of literature
- Athenian citizens knew what they were going to see in a play by Sophocles
- Homer (Iliad and Odyssey)
- The conventions of epic
- Mock epic (Pope)
- Examples: pure type, mixed, innovative or unique composition – a new kind
- The Age of Earthquake

Matters of genre: What are we dealing with?

- Terminology and definitions
- Significant development in 20th century
- Northrop Frye - Anatomy of Criticism
- Greek terminology - new distinctions
- WORDS: acted + spoken + sung or chanted + written
- Two more recent works:
- ED Hirsch - Validity in Interpretation (individuality of a given work)
- Robert Scholes - Structuralism in Literature (archetypal and rhetorical)

Genre criticism: examples

- To His Coy Mistress:
 - Lyric: emotion, imagination and subjectivity
 - Proposition: graceful, sophisticated and philosophical
 - Impassioned but?
- HAMLET:
- Revenge tragedy (drama)
- Serious action - Seneca's concept of tragedy - typical ingredients
- Hesitation + intrigue + real or pretended insanity
- Philosophic soliloquies
- Murders and dead bodies

Did earlier writings help this work come into being?

- Genetic approach?
- New historicism?
- Growth and development of a work
- More background Qs

- The art of allusion
- Influence on ‘To His Coy Mistress’
- GB Shaw’s ‘Saint Joan’ – the 16th century event
- What was the basic source?

How did earlier writings, other works of art influence the text?

- Multiple levels of literary dissection
- Provide information about the genesis of a text

Characteristics of Fiction

1. Fiction has three categories that are, realistic, non-realistic, and semi-fiction.
2. Fiction work is not real.
3. Authors can use complex figurative language to touch readers’ imaginations.
4. Unlike poetry, it is more structured, follows proper grammatical pattern, and correct mechanics.
5. A fictional work may incorporate fantastical and imaginary ideas from everyday life.
6. It comprises some important elements such as plot, exposition, foreshadowing, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
7. Popular literary fiction include, James Joyce’s novel A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man, Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities, Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, and Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird.

Characteristics of Non-Fiction

Non-fiction is a vast category that also has sub-genres; it could be creative like a personal essay, or factual, like a scientific paper. It may also use figurative language, however, not unlike poetry, or fiction has. Sometimes, non-fiction may tell a story, like an autobiography, or sometimes it may convey information to readers. Other examples of non-fiction include biographies, diaries, memoirs, journals, fantasies, mysteries, and romances. A popular example of non-fiction genre is Michael Pollan’s highly celebrated book, The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals, which is an account of the eating habits of Americans.