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Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, Manchester University Press; 2nd edition, ISBN-10: 0719062683, pp. 320

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Beginning theory is a brief and clear introduction to literary theory, based on relevant bibliography. This book offers a comprehensive literary field, combined with thoughtful ideas, chain of the other theoretical approaches with an appropriate discussion. It is very helpful for higher education students, who are interested to know about various literary theories in detail. At first, students focus on the element that a text contains only authoritative authorial meaning, and they have to find these meanings from the most suitable answers through analysis. With having gradual study, they would reach at the conclusion that texts have multiple and unstable meanings. Each reader provides new dimensions to a text, and a text seems to be the collection of all possible meanings that ever were and could be. This book broads the vision of students, who try to reach on the top of the excellence by understanding the various mysteries of the authors, crossing through the intentions of him, as the unconscious goes away from conscious.

In the introduction, Peter Barry seems to be successful as he overcomes on all possible difficulties of students they have to face with literary theories. He declares that the only element which makes literary theory is its language not its central idea or main concept (7).

Chapter 1 introduces the viewers with a historical view and gradual development of literary theories in early twentieth century. This chapter mainly sheds light on the history and background of liberal humanism and its close relation with literary theory. Barry demonstrates before us “the earliest work of literary theory was Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which, in spite of its title, is about the nature of literature itself”. He points out “Aristotle was the also the first critic to develop a ‘reader-centered’ approach to literature, since his consideration of drama tried to describe how it affected the audience”(21).Barry also explores Sir Phliph Sidney’s approach in *Appology for Poetry* that the function of literature is to give pleasure. As Sidney puts it, a poem is “a speaking , with this end, to teach and delight”. Barry expands the historical view to Romantics and sums up his discussion with blazing star of literature T.S. Eliot whose major work supports to literary criticism include such insight as the objectives and poetic impersonality.

Chapter 1 concludes with a discussion of practical criticism, gives the historical mode of literary analysis during the early twentieth century, which provides a comprehensive review of liberal humanism and literary theory and liberates these approaches from the fetters of traditional historical and social contexts. At the time, the study of English literature was considered to be further a sense of national identity, thereby it decreases class divisions. Barry explains that the purpose of literature is essentially the enhancement of life and exposition of human values. He

refers to the idea that the initial concept is human nature is unchanging and a supreme individual subject (17).

Chapters 2-3 deal with structuralism and post-structuralism, and deconstruction. In the mid twentieth century literary theory pushes to the understanding of social, historical, and linguistic construct and that language forms the possibility of concepts and major aspects of above mentioned literary approaches. Barry describes, "structuralism as an intellectual Claude Levi-Strauss (1980-) and Roland Barthes(1915-1980), which reveal the systematic hidden structures of a language that prevailed over the literature". It deals scientific and systematic aspects of textual analysis, seeking the narrative models, structures, motifs which combine text to cultural approaches. Barry makes a quick discussion that Ferdinand de Saussure was a key figure in the development of modern approaches to language study and historical aspects of language patterns and functions of language, and he focuses on how language patterns and meanings are formed.

Structuralism defines that the meanings of the words are rational and these words become meaningful when they are kept in a specific language structure, that is, words have only meanings in context and in relation to other words. Furthermore, these networks of a language operate through codes which are a system of signs; they can make a statement. This seems to be a fact but educational testing system forms it difficult and complex for students to perform well even in simple concepts. Take the example of Graduate Record Exam, which is generally required for admission to post graduate exam in the United States. This system go up to the extent that there is developed an industry to prepare students for such kind of exams, the main focus is on the element which includes "verbal analogies" based on the pair of closely related words that must be matched correctly. Barry understands that words have no meaning in isolation-they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of. Because of the established principles, no wonder, that only few students in the United States can entertain with poetry let alone write a poem.

Barry points out that structuralists generally believe "language doesn't just reflect record the world : rather, it shapes it, so that how we see is what see" (61). Barry reveals the implications of this understanding by demonstrating the temporary changeable elements of readers conceptual aspects with its categories. He discusses that there is no as such base that why there should be four seasons. The seasons, Barry notes, "Are a way of seeing the year, not an objective fact of nature" (44). In view of Barry that structuralism is traditionally paradoxical since it uses the scientific method even as it "Questions our way of categorizing reality" and focuses to restate the concepts and divisions that readers generally take as a base and for granted (65).

Barry tells how poststructuralism is a more questionable approach to textual analysis, one in which the instability of meaning, which further expands to free play with the text. Barry points out, the distinguishing element between structuralism and post-structuralism: where as structuralists find parallel balanced symmetric and patterns in creating to show textual unity and coherence post-structuralists lead to the sense of creating gaps between language and references, dealing with a profound awareness of the boundaries of knowledge (72-73). Barry quotes Nietzsche to refer briefly poststructuralists view that "There are no facts, only interpretations"(63).

Barry defines deconstruction as “applied post-structuralism” and discusses that its major aim is to highlight “internal consistencies in the text, aiming to show the disunity which underlies its apparent unity”(72). He reveals how deconstruction tries to unpack the unconscious multiple dimensions of a text (71), describing that its overall effects of analysis is angst-ridden, fissured enactments of linguistics and other forms of indeterminacy (76).

Chapters 5-8 focus a lucid and informative overview of postmodernism, psychoanalytical criticism, feminist criticism, queer theory, and Marxist criticism. Barry highlights before the readers with an overview of modernism, with its leading subjectivity, merging of genres, and preference for fragmentation and discontinuity (82). He explores that while the modernism views are the elements in a spirit that pines for lost faith and an integrated world, postmodernism observes these elements as a free escape from the traditional dimensions of a fixed system of belief (83-84). Postmodernism refers to the distinction between the real and non-real, between high and low culture, highlighting the falsehood of representation.

Psychoanalytical criticism is to approach the role of the unconscious in the picture of various characters. Literature can be studied as the motif representation of human unconscious desires. This approach focuses on the exposition of the sexual desires are sublimated. This theory is also a systematic study of self defense and deals with human’s struggle to survive. It is our effort to cope with stress, and how we pay our attention to project our own attributes on to others. As it is truly said, we see others not as they are but as we are. Lacan shares the human psychoanalysis to make framework of the linguistic structure of the unconscious. He goes away from traditional theory and characterization in which individuals were of the view as set of attributes, since identity of man is dynamic rather than static. As the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano opens their pens in *The Book of Embraces*, “identity is no museum piece sitting stock still in a display case, but rather the end less astonishing synthesis of the contradictions of everyday life”(125).

Barry explores that feminist criticism is the gendered superiority from which the readers may observe the view that literary characters as well as the social implications of a language. Feminism find to diminish the social structures and gender conditioning, exposing femininity as a construction rather than as an essence. Queer theory is a recent critical approach to literature that challenges conceptual categories such as ‘homosexual’ and ‘heterosexual’ to expose how sexual identity is unstable and how specific attributes are hidden and are only occasionally displayed.

Barry explains Marxist criticism is the existence of class in society and how economics tells our attention towards the understanding of literature. This theory would be applied as a foundation for the social and economic factors which assembled in our daily lives. The overall estimation regarding the status of work which prevailed in our lives has given rise to such concepts as alienation, which examines the estrangement and dehumanization that comes from repetitive, meaningless work. Barry describes that the work of Marxist critics is known as the Russian formalists, whose scholarship took place during the first three decades of the twentieth century . Victor Shklovsky’s outstanding work was an influential concept formulated on the essence of defamiliarization, which is to establish the new approach as familiar or, Barry points out “as if we were seeing it for the first time” (161).This chapter is an over view of the work of Louis Althusser, through this Barry expands the spectrum of interpellation which is based on

illusions. Now we are free subjects when in reality the capitalism would be able to reveal all the possible choices that we make (165).

Chapters 9-10 are for about new historicism, cultural materialism and postcolonial theory. New historicism relates literary texts to other closely related texts of a specific historical era. It governs over the discourses of power and the multiple discourses that respond to power. For instance, a distinctive text would reveal to exalt govern authorities which can also be subversive since excessive praise is one of the finest way to damn kingship. We may observe such kind of play of opposites in Shakespearean dramas like Henry VIII. In order to save and refresh the artistic work of historical legends; new historicists make effort to liberate literary texts from canonical perspectives. That is way the historical work is alive.

Cultural materialism is a study to regenerate the economic and social aspects that reshapes literary texts and the hidden injustices and the power relation that little mind language. Literary factors like the silences, the ironies, are judged in cultural materialistic modes. As Barry focuses on the elements that the historicist is related to a literary text in its own era whereas the cultural materialist is closely related to analyze it in a contemporary context.

Barry illuminates that postcolonial criticism is the theory of favourism, exposition of various cultures and is to depict the interested and biased ends of such representation. Overall according to Barry, beginning of post colonialism is an attempt to help critically about the ideas and concepts regarding the British monarch and the identification of the study of 'Common wealth literature'. Postcolonial theory emerged in 1990s as a way of the great contribution of Edward Said and Michel Foucault. These writers changed the conventional theories by giving a great part of its work to show how the other became estranged are odious in discourse of power which draw lines of distinction between 'Westerner' and 'Oriental'. Like the educational expert on sex, the Orientalist portrays the other as alien and remote, to be elucidated for the uninitiated. Foucault examines that specific power is present not as so much in institutional systems, but as is a force of relations and social hegemonies (86).

Postcolonial is basically a boundary which people draw between them and others, it separates human being on the foundations of race, culture, society status, language, and social structures. It provides a specific kind of criteria on the public discourse in the United States; this is the place where media is educating routinely thinly-veiled assumptions and prejudices, by putting behind all the claims of humanitarian approaches. For instance, we may hear the words like "the Muslim world," which is falsely representing Islam with all its values, but on the other hand it has no analogy with "Christian world" The most commonly used term is "Islamic terrorists," it exposes the violent extremists, but one rarely observes the words "Christian terrorists," even though by ignoring that some Christian individuals have blown up abortion clinics or murdered doctors out of religious boundaries. Although the enduring popularity of the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" highlights how forceful are the institutions of individuals of religion with war in the minds of many Christians, that is why the expression "Christian terrorist" is considered to be the contradiction in these terms. On the other side the words "Muslim terrorist" are believed to be as an understood term which is transcendently self-evident or crystal clear expression in its essence regarding Muslims.

The final chapter of this remarkable book is to expose the boundaries to a discussion of stylistics, in which Barry seems devoted to a kind of updated version of the disciplines known as

rhetoric (204). Stylistics explores linguistic terms with a view to systematic and scientific objectivity, a dimension of that, Barry illustrates, exposition itself to the demystification of literature (208). In conclusion, Beginning Theory is an essential, meaningful, and even in this indispensable framework to the study of culture and literature.