

ARISTOTLE

Assigned: *The Poetics* (90-117).

Poetics

1. On 90-92, Aristotle says that the imitative arts differ in media, object, and manner. What do those terms mean? Give an example of each. Also, in what sense might do his initial remarks about the purpose of *Poetics* emphasize his scientific attitude and methodology?
2. On 93, why is it, according to Aristotle, that “everyone delights in representations”? What instincts does imitation or representation satisfy? And why, in particular, do we take “delight in looking at the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain”? (93)
3. On 95, how does Aristotle first define tragedy? What are the two tragic emotions by means of which *catharsis* is achieved, and what effect does tragedy have upon those emotions? Look up the word *catharsis* -- what range of meanings can you find for that term?
4. On 95-96, what six parts does Aristotle say every tragedy must have? He says that plot is “the soul of tragedy.” How does he define the term “plot,” and why is the plot so important in his theory of drama?
5. On 96-97, Aristotle discusses plot structure. What makes a play’s action “whole” (96), and what does Aristotle advise regarding the correct “magnitude” of a given plot -- how flexible is he on this point? In what sense might his theory be described as favoring “organically” constructed plots?
6. On 97-98, what key distinction does Aristotle make between the representation of history and poetic representation? Why is poetry, in his view, a “more philosophical and serious” kind of imitation than anything to be found in the work of historians?
7. On 98-99, what two kinds of plot does Aristotle outline, and how are they distinguished? Which is better, and why? What are “recognition” (*anagnorisis*) and “reversal” (*peripeteia*)? Why are they important to the structure of a drama and to the achievement of *catharsis*?
8. On 100-03, how, according to Aristotle, should the imperative of generating “pity and terror” in the audience influence the poet’s selection of the tragic protagonist? What should the playwright bear in mind when it comes to the representation of character?
9. On 104 bottom, what does Aristotle say about the nature of playwrights or poets themselves, and about the creative process? On the whole (here and elsewhere in *The Poetics*, to what extent does Aristotle seem interested in the poet as an individual creator?

10. On 111-13 (following a disquisition mostly on figures of speech), Aristotle comments on epic verse. What latitude in representation allows epic, in comparison with tragedy, the more easily and appropriately to generate "amazement" (113) in an audience? What praise does Aristotle accord Homer as a storyteller, and why?

11. On 113-14, what does Aristotle say about the handling of improbable and/or impossible events in a tragedy? When should we look kindly on an error in representative art -- that is, when something is portrayed inaccurately or an impossible event takes place on stage, what might excuse this kind of representation and even make it entirely appropriate? (In responding, consider Aristotle's example on page 114 of the painter who represents a female deer with horns.)

12. On 116-17, on what grounds does Aristotle argue that tragedy is superior to epic, in spite of Homeric epic's undoubted virtues?

13. General question: Aristotle's theory about drama has been called a direct response to Plato's theory of imitation. How does Aristotle's conception of *mimesis* (imitation, representation) provide the possibility of replying to some of Socrates' objections as they are spelled out in *The Republic*?

14. General question: Aristotle's remarks in *The Poetics* need not be read as a grandiose defense of art, but they go farther than refuting Plato in the name of scientific observation -- drama, in the Aristotelian view, plays a role in Greek life that cannot be dismissed as corruptive, and representation is seen as natural and human, not a tool of deception. To what extent might a person validate art or popular culture today on similar grounds -- including film, television, or other entertainment forms?

15. General question adapted from UC Irvine's Prof. Albert Wlecke: does the movie *Jaws* arouse pity and fear in the manner described by Aristotle? Would it be a genuinely tragic production even if the answer is "yes"? Why or why not?

16. General question: what about movies like *Silence of the Lambs*? People seem quite capable of viewing with pleasure violent, even psychopathic behavior that (one may hope, at least) would horrify them if it were engaged in "for real." Does such pleasure stem from a different source than the one Aristotle identifies? Is it a healthy kind of pleasure, or an unhealthy one? Explain.

17. General question: pick out those places in *The Poetics* where Aristotle compares poetry to painting. How does his use of this comparison differ from Plato's? Relate these differences to their different notions of *mimesis* or imitation.

FRANCIS BARKER AND PETER HULME

Assigned: Francis Barker and Peter Hulme. "Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: the Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*" (781-93 McDonald).

“Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: the Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*”

1. Recall our initial distribution of critical emphases into the P-O-E-M scheme: Pragmatic (audience-oriented), Objective (text-oriented), Expressive (author-oriented), and Mimetic (world-oriented). Into which camp or combination of emphases does the current critic’s work best fit, and what in the critical text makes you describe it that way? Does it fit easily, or is there something about the critic’s work that doesn’t make it easy to categorize? Explain.
2. What are the present critic’s main claims (in order of significance) with regard to the Shakespeare play/s under study? What methodological assumptions does the critic explicitly or implicitly assert?
3. How well does the present critical essay characterize and respond to the Shakespeare play/s it addresses? What are its strengths and limitations? Is the goal mainly explication (i.e. detailed analysis of the play), or are the author’s concerns more metacritical (concerned with its own or others’ theoretical assumptions) or general than that? If so, what is your assessment of those metacritical concerns and how do you relate them to the play under discussion?
4. If we are reading more than one critic on the same play (as we generally will be doing) compare and contrast the approach of one critic with the approach taken by another. Which do you prefer, and why?
5. Compare and contrast your own interpretation of the Shakespeare play in question with the interpretation offered by the critic: if you find the piece lacking in some regard, explain why you find it misguided, partial, unconvincing, etc. How would your own reading and emphasis better enhance our understanding of the Shakespeare play? If you are in agreement with the critic’s interpretation, what is particularly strong about it? (If you are presenting, follow up on this last point by offering at least a brief analysis of a section of the play that the author doesn’t address but that responds well to his or her approach.)

CLEANTH BROOKS

Assigned: “The Heresy of Paraphrase” from *The Well Wrought Urn* (1353-65).

“The Heresy of Paraphrase”

1. What becomes of the poem, according to Brooks, unless we assert “the primacy of the pattern”? What does he say that this pattern or structure is not? By what is this structure “conditioned”? What indeed is the “structure meant”?
2. How does Brooks describe “the principle of unity” which “informs” this structure? What sorts of things does it unite? What sort of unity is achieved?

3. From what formula do most of the “common heresies” about poetry derive? What are the two “horns of the dilemma” that this formula leads to?
4. What happens if we try to incorporate the meaning of the poem in a statement? What happens to our statement, or proposition, “as it approaches adequacy”?
5. What do the phrases “so wore night” and “thus night passed” have in common, and what do they not have in common?
6. What are some of the consequences of allowing ourselves to be misled by “the heresy of paraphrase”?
7. What three analogies does Brooks offer for “the essential structure of a poem”? What is the point of each analogy?
8. In what does “the characteristic unity” of a poem lie? What is the “conclusion” of the poem? By what kind of process is the unity of the poem achieved?
9. Why don’t the “meanderings of a good poem” have to be excused? What is the point of its “apparent irrelevancies”?
10. What is the difference between the “terms of science” and the “terms of a poem”? What is the difference between the words of the “ideal language” and words as poets use them?
11. What is there about the poet’s task that has “induced poet after poet to choose ambiguity and paradox”?

STANLEY CAVELL

Assigned: Stanley Cavell. “The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*” (338-52 McDonald).

“The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*”

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Edition: McDonald, Russ, ed. *Shakespeare: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1945-2000*. Malden, MA/Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0631234883.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

Assigned: from *The Second Sex* (1403-14).

From *The Second Sex*

1. On 1406-09, what is the myth of the Eternal Feminine, as de Beauvoir articulates it? How does it strip women of their own sense of integrity and accomplishment?

2. On 1409-11, to what use does de Beauvoir say male-oriented societies have put this myth about women? What existentialist point does she make about defining humanity? What further insights does she offer about the alleged source of the mysteriousness imputed to women?

3. On 1412-13, how, according to de Beauvoir, has literature dealt with the representation of women? In what sense are Stendhal and Hemingway less culpable than many male authors in their portrayals of female characters?

4. On 1414, does de Beauvoir seem hopeful about our achieving the kind of gender relations she believes best? The last page or so of the selection may provide some material here. Also, given that de Beauvoir wrote *The Second Sex* over half a century ago, would you say that there has been a significant improvement in the way men and women relate to one another?

JONATHAN DOLLIMORE

Assigned: Jonathan Dollimore. "King Lear (ca. 1605-06) and Essentialist Humanism" (535-46 McDonald).

King Lear (ca. 1605-06) and Essentialist Humanism"

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WILLIAM EMPSON

Assigned: William Empson. "'Honest' in *Othello*" (35-49 McDonald).

'Honest' in *Othello*"

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MICHEL FOUCAULT

Assigned: "What is an Author?" (1622-36); "Truth and Power" (1667-70).

"What is an Author?" (1969)

1. From 1623-26, how does Foucault characterize the latest way of talking about the relationship between an author and a text? How does this new way reject older theories about that relationship? Foucault further identifies two new "theses" that replace the author: the "work" and *écriture*. What general and specific problems does he have with these two theses?

2. On 1626, Foucault writes that "we should reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance." From 1626-31, how does he make such a reexamination? In what ways does an author's name function, and what four key points does Foucault make and refine about the development and significance of this author-function?

3. From 1631-33, how does Foucault broaden his earlier consideration of mostly literary and religious texts to encompass discourses such as Marxism and psychoanalysis? What new kind

of author-function emerges from the nineteenth century onward, and how does Foucault begin to analyze the importance of this new kind of author-function?

4. From 1633 (bottom)-36, why, according to Foucault, is it inevitable that those involved in what he has called “transdiscursive discourses” should return to them? How is this return more complex than, say, a simple rediscovery of some old point made by an earlier author: what characterizes a return to a transdiscursive author or set of texts?

5. From 1635-36, what final reflections does Foucault offer with regard to subjectivity as a long-privileged philosophical concept? And how does he drive home the point that his careful examination is not intended as a defense of the older concept of authorship that has been demolished in modern times?

“Truth and Power” (1977)

6. Throughout this interview (only a small part of which is reproduced in Leitch) Foucault has been critical of unsubtle application of Marxist ideas. Consider what he says on 1667 about the role of European intellectuals since World War II -- what promise does Foucault see in the advent of the “specific intellectual” as opposed to the older-style “universal intellectual”?

7. From 1668-69, what key statement does Foucault make about the relationship between “truth” and “power”? Shortly after this statement, what five key traits does Foucault suggest characterizes the “‘political economy’ of truth” in modern societies?

8. From 1669-70, Foucault returns to the concept of the specific intellectual in relation to the statements he has been making about truth and power. He seems optimistic about the role of intellectuals in disrupting the operations of social and political power. What reasons does he offer for this optimism, even though, as he says, one really can’t liberate “truth from every system of power” (1670)? What *can* intellectuals do, then?

9. General question: consider what Foucault says about the relationship between truth and power in light of Nietzsche’s analysis of truth in “Truth and Falsity in a Non-Moral Sense.” In what ways, and to what extent, is Foucault indebted to Nietzsche, as he himself suggests he is? (This question might make a good paper topic.)

SIGMUND FREUD

Assigned: Sigmund Freud. From *The Interpretation of Dreams* (919-29 Leitch).

From “Chapter V. The Material and Sources of Dreams”

1. On 919-22, how (and for what psychoanalytic purpose) does Freud account for the perpetual and seemingly universal appeal of Sophocles’ tragedy “Oedipus the King”? What view of the

play does he oppose, and why? If you are presenting on this question, do you find Freud's reading of the play sufficient and compelling? Why or why not?

2. On 922-23, Freud addresses Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* as another instance of the Oedipus Complex. How does Prince Hamlet's problem differentiate him from Oedipus' dilemma? How does Freud explain the variation, and what does he infer to be the wider cultural or historical significance of that difference?

3. On 923, how does Freud draw upon Shakespeare's biography and career as a dramatist to construct an expressive theory for the play *Hamlet*? What limitations does Freud place upon this kind of biography-based expressive criticism of a work of art?

From "Chapter VI. The Dream-Work"

4. On 923-24, how does Freud define the manifest content of dreams and the latent dream-thoughts, respectively? Why have previous explicators of dreams failed so badly in their attempts, in Freud's view -- what didn't they understand about the "dream-content" as Freud conceptualizes that content?

5. On 924-26, how does Freud explain dream displacement and dream condensation? How do these two mechanisms, taken together, constitute the form of dreams? Why are they essential to establishing a relationship between the dream-content and dream-thoughts?

6. On 926-29, what insights does Freud offer regarding the manner in which the dream-work represents logical connections, causal relations, and negations or "contraries and contradictories" that may have been a factor in the dreamer's original "dream-thoughts"? What is the dream interpreter's role with regard to understanding such representations when they appear in the manifest content of a given dream?

7. General question: It's obvious why Freud's theory of the Unconscious instills anxiety in many people about the autonomy of individual consciousness. How do you personally deal with or process this unsettling theory?

GAYLE GREENE

Assigned: Gayle Greene. "This that you call love": Sexual and Social Tragedy" (655-68 McDonald)

"This that you call love": Sexual and Social Tragedy"

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GEORG HEGEL

Assigned: from *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "The Master-Slave Dialectic"; from *Lectures on Fine Art* (626-45).

From *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "The Master-Slave Dialectic" (1807)

1. What is required, according to Hegel, for "self-certainty"? Why is it necessary in this regard that there should be a "life-and-death struggle" in which "each must seek the other's death"? (632, paragraph 187)

2. How does Hegel characterize the immediate aftermath of this "life-and-death struggle"? How does he describe the two kinds of consciousness that he calls "lord {Herr} and bondsman {Knecht}"? (633, par. 189)

3. How do the lord and bondsman, respectively, relate to the "thing"? What does laboring or "work{ing} at" the thing turn out to be vital to the bondsman's consciousness? (633, par 190)

4. After the struggle, what contradiction or problem besets the lord's attempt to achieve self-certainty through his conquest of the one now called the bondsman? (634 par 191-92)
5. How does the bondsman's servitude lead to the surprising development of "a truly independent consciousness? (634-35, par 193-94)
6. How is it, further, that "consciousness qua worker, comes to see in the independent being {of the object} its own independence"? In other words, how, according to Hegel, does work, as "formative activity," allow the bondsman to produce his own independent identity? (635-36, par. 195-96)
7. We have read only a few selections by Kant and Hegel, but what similarities and differences can you find in the two philosophers' way of examining individual consciousness or identity? (general question, possible paper topic)

HORACE

Assigned: *Ars Poetica* (121-35).

***Ars Poetica* (circa 10 BCE)**

Fun Exercise: lay down the rules, the "decorum," of some popular art or cultural form today, offering your best justification for such rules and your best defense of the art or cultural form you have chosen to describe. Bring the results to class.

1. What advice does Horace offer "you writers"? How would you contrast his advice, here and elsewhere in the letter, to post-romantic tenets about the individual poet and the creation of poetry -- i.e. most particularly the emphasis on originality, individualism, and the centrality of emotion in art? (124-25)
2. Horace compares the changes that a language undergoes with the changes that nature undergoes. What is the poet's role in shaping the language of an entire people? What might one infer from this analogy about the durability of culture itself? Can art, for Horace, embody universal and eternal values, or is that something we must not expect of it? Explain. (125)
3. Horace writes, "If you want me to cry, mourn first yourself." Does this sentence indicate an interest in language as an expressive vehicle, or does it have more to do with Horace's notions about imitation and decorum? Explain. (126)
4. How important is poetic tradition, according to Horace? To what extent may a poet depart from earlier traditions, and what limitations do poets face when they so depart? (126-27)

5. According to Horace, what is more important to a Roman audience than the poet's ability to convey individuality or emotional intensity? How are his remarks here important for their reflection on his central concern with "decorum," or artistic propriety? (127-28)
6. Concerning tragedy and the satyr plays connected with it, what, in Horace's view, is appropriate to show onstage, and what should instead be narrated rather than shown? Why? What are the proper functions of the dramatic chorus? (128-29)
7. How does Horace discuss the development of tragedy and the changes that have occurred in musical accompaniment? What do his observations suggest about his view of drama's social value, its relation to the audience's mores? Similarly, how does he view the connection between the Satyr play and the tragedy proper? (129)
8. What does Horace suggest about the artist's responsibility to the various Roman social classes? (129-30)
9. What contrasts does Horace make between Greek and Roman artists and art? He may appear to be casting his own people as pedestrian business-folk and builders, but is there more to his statements than that? Explain. (131-32)
10. What, according to Horace, is the source of good poetry? From whence comes the poet's material? Is content the first and most important thing to determine, or is form the first consideration? What is the relationship between form and content? (131-33)
11. What does Horace say is the best sort of poetry? Why should poetry both teach and delight (i.e. be "utile et dulce," useful and pleasant), rather than just one or the other? (132-33)
12. Horace writes that poetry is like painting -- *ut pictura poiesis*. Later Renaissance and Neoclassical critics made much of this statement, but what does it seem to mean here in Horace's letter? (132, line 361)
13. Why, according to Horace, is the poet, unlike the lawyer, not allowed to be second-rate? How does the poet's social purpose differ from that of the lawyer? (132-33)
14. What does Horace say were the first functions of poetry? Does he see much need to defend the arts against any detractors, or is it evident to him that art's value is beyond dispute? (133)
15. What does Horace assert about the ultimate source of good poetry? Is it a matter of genius, of cultivating one's talents, or both? What are your own thoughts about this longstanding critical debate? (133)
16. Horace ends his verse essay as he began it, with grotesque references to madness. Why do you suppose he brackets his letter with such references? What notion of poetry is he dismissing

or downplaying by means of his final reference? How does the “mad poet” image invoke the Horatian poet’s worst fears about the reception of his work, about his public standing? (134-35)

17. What were Plato and Aristotle interested in regarding art that Horace appears not to be interested in? How does his lack of interest here reflect a fundamental difference between the Greeks and the Romans? (general question)

18. Horace is an important figure for those interested in whether art shapes a given culture, or whether it merely or mainly reflects values already present in that culture. What do you think? Can/should art transform people and make them see things in radically new ways, or does/should it mostly reflect and validate (i.e. imitate or represent approvingly) what most people already think they know about morality, politics, and other broad areas of life? Or is the question too stark? (general question)

19. Do you think that your own generation is more Horatian, i.e. conformist, than rebelliously Romantic, or is it the other way around? Explain. (general question)

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Assigned: “On Fiction” (*Rambler* #4); from *Rasselas*; from “Preface to Reading Shakespeare” (458-80).

“On Fiction” (*Rambler* #4)

1. On 462-63, how does Johnson sum up the “task of our present writers” as opposed to yesteryear’s purveyors of romance epic and other such genres? In what sense has the gap between author and readership narrowed, and with what results to the status of the new texts? In addition, what sort of people does Johnson suggest are the main readers of the new kinds of fiction?

2. On 464, why, according to Johnson, do “familiar histories” (realistic fiction, popular novels) prove more useful than “the solemnities of professed morality”? In what sense are they useful? What moral responsibility does Johnson suggest ought to be kept in mind by authors of realistic fiction, and why?

3. On 464-65, what “chief advantage” does modern fiction have in comparison with the real-life objects it imitates or represents (ordinary people, events, and things)? How does Johnson turn this advantage into a moral imperative, and how does he refute those who insist that it’s acceptable to represent morally ambivalent or composite characters?

4. General question: Johnson is obviously concerned about the moral welfare of the C18 novel-reading audience, and some politicians, social critics, and religious folk show a similar concern today, even to the point of urging legal censorship (which Johnson isn’t advocating). Plato, of

course, is the father of all such moral arguments about the pragmatic effects of art. To what extent, if at all, do you think such arguments or concerns are valid? Discuss.

From *Rasselas*

5. On 466-67, what most surprises Imlac about people's judgment of ancient poets? What comparison does Imlac make between the earliest authors and those who come after them? We have examined Johnson's insistence on a writer's duty to choose subjects judiciously. What new thoughts about the conjunction between morality and representation ("imitation") does Imlac offer on these pages?

6. On 467, Imlac claims that poets who know their trade do not "number the streaks of the tulip." Most readers today, as inheritors of the Romantics' love for individuality and particularity, will surely disagree. But what is the basis of Imlac's argument -- in what vital way do tulip-streakers, in his view, fail as artists and with respect to the potential of their audience? Furthermore, in what sense might Imlac actually *embrace* the notion artists should observe human nature and the environment closely?

7. On 467, what does Imlac apparently mean when he says that the poet must write "as a being superior to time and place"? What is he suggesting about human nature and about the function of art? Can you recall echoes of this statement in later works of literary criticism? If so, which works and authors?

From "Preface to Reading Shakespeare"

8. On 468-69, what test does Johnson suggest should be applied to literary works "of which the excellence is not absolute and definite"? How does Johnson reason in support of this test -- what alone can please the majority of people over long periods of time? How does Shakespeare's drama exemplify the kind of art that passes this test of excellence?

9. On 470-73, what praise does Johnson bestow on Shakespeare's handling of human nature, and how does he defend the playwright from charges leveled against him over his handling of traditional heroic characters, historical periods, and generic expectations about tragedy and comedy? Why, in particular, is Shakespeare right to include comic elements in his tragedies, and tragic potential in his comedies?

10. On 474-76, Johnson meets the censors of Shakespeare half-way: what criticisms of his own does he level against the Bard? Which is the worst and least excusable fault, and why? Which faults seem less important, and partly or entirely understandable?

11. On 476-78, how does Johnson refute critics who say dramatic illusion requires strict adherence to the unities of time and place? What is the exact nature of dramatic illusion, according to Johnson -- if we aren't taken in by what we see on stage, why, then, do we respond to it, and in what manner do we respond? Another way to ask this question is, "in what sense is

the audience's experience at a drama genuine or authentic {my terms} in its own right, even though we don't believe we are witnessing a real-life event?"

12. General question: on 473 and 475, Johnson shows a decided preference for Shakespeare's comedies over his tragedies. What are his reasons for preferring the comedies? Which kind of Shakespeare do you prefer, and why? Does your response have to do mainly with your own personality (i.e. "brooders" usually go in for tragedy, while those with a sunny disposition may prefer comedy and romance), or with what you can point to as "objective" features of Shakespeare's language, plots, and stagecraft? Explain.

13. General question: Johnson writes on 478, "if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more." He's probably right at least in the sense that direct viewing of such things in real life would horrify most people, at least in modern times. (Many Romans, after all, considered it "strength and honor" to enjoy watching gladiators die.) But what about cinema? To what extent might it be argued that we come very close to taking the powerful images on a movie screen as real, at least during the time we are watching the film? Does that affect your view of Johnson's argument against extreme proponents of dramatic illusion? If so, how?

14. General question: how many of Sir Philip Sidney's ideas can you find in Johnson's "On Fiction"? In what ways do you think Johnson differs from Sidney's expressly religious moral framework, or has transformed some of his ideas? Alternately, how much of Plato or Aristotle do you find in Johnson? For example, how close does Johnson come to Plato's brand of moralism? How might Johnson's explanation of how we can take pleasure in watching a tragic play be compared with Aristotle's remarks on our response to representations of painful or otherwise troubling things?

15. General question: in Ch. 14 of *Biographia Literaria*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge observes that his contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* involved concentrating upon "persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." Compare his notion of poetic illusion with Johnson's ideas about dramatic illusion and the manner in which an audience "credits" a good play.

IMMANUEL KANT

Assigned: from *Critique of Judgment*, "Analytic of the Beautiful" and "Analytic of the Sublime" (499-536).

From *Critique of Judgment* (1790)

1. What is philosophical idealism? How does it describe the relationship between the mind and the external world? (general question)

2. What implications might philosophical idealism have for broader notions about politics and societal organization? Responding to this question helps one understand why the romantic poets borrowed so heavily from Kantian ideas. (general question)

From Book I. "Analytic of the Beautiful"

3. Describe the mental process leading to what Kant calls an "aesthetic judgment" or a "judgment of taste." (505)

4. Why, according to Kant, isn't it possible to make "a pure judgment of taste" as soon as "interest" enters the picture? At 509 top, Kant uses the term "disinterested{ness}." How does this word encapsulate what he has been saying about the purity of a proper aesthetic judgment? (506-07)

5. How does Kant define judgments about "the agreeable" and "the good"? Why aren't these kinds of judgment aesthetic? (See 505-06 for a definition of this term.) Provide your own examples of a judgment about the agreeable and the good, respectively. (507-08)

6. Why, according to Kant, do we suppose we have the right to other people's agreement once we have declared an object beautiful? That is, we would not demand that everybody like chocolate ice cream just because we like it, but we would insist that our statement, "this rose is beautiful" is a universally correct judgment. Why? (509-11)

7. According to Kant, do we feel pleasure before making a judgment of taste, or do we make the judgment first and then feel pleasure? What reasons does he provide for his answer? (512-13)

8. What does Kant appear to mean by the terms "design" and "form"? How do these two terms differ from "charm" and "emotion"? Why is the design of a presentation or object central to a judgment of taste? (514-15)

9. Following upon question 8, what role does "sensation" play in the making of an aesthetic judgment? Does Kant disdain sensation or sensory experience, or does his desire to abstract from it stem from some other purpose? Explain. (514-15)

10. According to Kant, what is "free beauty" (*pulchritudo vaga*)? What examples does he offer? Why is it important that our liking for such objects does not refer to any definite concept, i.e. that we don't refer the object to a fixed purpose or concept? (515-16)

11. How do you understand Kant's terms "common sense" (*sensus communis*) and "purposiveness without a purpose"? What significance do they hold for Kant's claims about the human value of aesthetic judgment? (518-19)

From Book II. "Analytic of the Sublime"

12. In what respects, according to Kant, are the beautiful and the sublime similar? (519-20)
13. What “significant differences” does Kant address between the beautiful and the sublime? Which difference is the most important, and why? (520-21)
14. What reason does Kant give for considering the “[the concept of] the beautiful in nature” more important than the “the concept of the sublime in nature”? What can our experience of the beautiful do for us that our experience with the sublime cannot? (520-21)
15. Following upon question 14, how does Kant’s attitude towards the sublime differ from that of Longinus? (520-21, general question)
16. How does Kant define the term “sublime”? Why is it the case that “nothing that can be an object of the sense is to be called sublime”? (521-22)
17. Why, according to Kant, should we most properly turn to “crude nature” and not to “products of art” (523) in explaining the sublime? (523-24)
18. How is it that the feeling most relevant to our experience of the sublime is “respect”? What is it that we respect when we experience the sublime, and why? How does this experience entail “a feeling of displeasure” and yet “at the same time also [involve] a pleasure”? (525)
19. How does Kant define nature as a “might”? Why is it necessary for a judgment of sublimity that we “consider and object fearful without being afraid of it” (527)? What would happen to our experience of sublimity, for instance, if -- my example -- we were clinging to a flimsy branch over the edge of Niagara Falls rather than viewing the Falls from a safe distance? (526-27)
20. How does Kant argue that neither judgments about beauty nor judgments about the sublime are a matter of “mere convention”? (528-29)
21. What is Kant’s definition of the *sensus communis*, or “common sense,” and why is such a capacity important to his framework for explaining aesthetic judgments? How is it, further, that (at 531 middle), “taste can be called a *sensus communis* more legitimately than can sound understanding”? (529-31, Section 29)
22. Kant wrote a famous essay called “What is Enlightenment?” How does he characterize “enlightenment” while analyzing the *sensus communis*? (530)
23. How does Kant distinguish “art” from “nature”? What are the distinguishing characteristics of art? And how is art to be further distinguished from craft and from science? (531-32, Section 43)
24. How does Kant treat the issue of “genius”? What can the artist or genius do especially well? (533-34, Section 49)

25. How, according to Kant, is beauty the “symbol of the morally good”? (534-35, Section 59)

WILLIAM R. KEAST

Assigned: William R. Keast. “The ‘New Criticism’ and *King Lear*” (63-87 McDonald).

“The ‘New Criticism’ and *King Lear*”

1. Recall our initial distribution of critical emphases into the P-O-E-M scheme: Pragmatic (audience-oriented), Objective (text-oriented), Expressive (author-oriented), and Mimetic (world-oriented). Into which camp or combination of emphases does the current critic’s work best fit, and what in the critical text makes you describe it that way? Does it fit easily, or is there something about the critic’s work that doesn’t make it easy to categorize? Explain.
2. What are the present critic’s main claims (in order of significance) with regard to the Shakespeare play/s under study? What methodological assumptions does the critic explicitly or implicitly assert?
3. How well does the present critical essay characterize and respond to the Shakespeare play/s it addresses? What are its strengths and limitations? Is the goal mainly explication (i.e. detailed analysis of the play), or are the author’s concerns more metacritical (concerned with its own or others’ theoretical assumptions) or general than that? If so, what is your assessment of those metacritical concerns and how do you relate them to the play under discussion?
4. If we are reading more than one critic on the same play (as we generally will be doing) compare and contrast the approach of one critic with the approach taken by another. Which do you prefer, and why?
5. Compare and contrast your own interpretation of the Shakespeare play in question with the interpretation offered by the critic: if you find the piece lacking in some regard, explain why you find it misguided, partial, unconvincing, etc. How would your own reading and emphasis better enhance our understanding of the Shakespeare play? If you are in agreement with the critic’s interpretation, what is particularly strong about it? (If you are presenting, follow up on this last point by offering at least a brief analysis of a section of the play that the author doesn’t address but that responds well to his or her approach.)

JAN KOTT

Assigned: Jan Kott. “*King Lear* or *Endgame*” (174-190 McDonald).

“*King Lear* or *Endgame*”

1. Recall our initial distribution of critical emphases into the P-O-E-M scheme: Pragmatic (audience-oriented), Objective (text-oriented), Expressive (author-oriented), and Mimetic

(world-oriented). Into which camp or combination of emphases does the current critic's work best fit, and what in the critical text makes you describe it that way? Does it fit easily, or is there something about the critic's work that doesn't make it easy to categorize? Explain.

2. What are the present critic's main claims (in order of significance) with regard to the Shakespeare play/s under study? What methodological assumptions does the critic explicitly or implicitly assert?

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MARX AND ENGELS

Assigned: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (759-67); *The German Ideology* (767-69); *Grundrisse* (773-74); "Preface" to *A Contribution...* (774-76).

From *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1844)

1. What basic philosophical error does Marx say the Political Economists commit when they enunciate the laws of economics? (765)

2. What does Marx appear to mean by his term "alienation"? In what senses are workers alienated? Why, according to Marx, is this process of alienation inherent in capitalist production? (765-67)

3. How does Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic apply to Marx's commentary about workers' alienation? How, for example, does the capitalist relate to the worker and to commodified objects? How do workers relate to the commodified objects they produce and to their employers? (765-66, general question)

4. Why, by implication in Marx, is labor central to human existence? What fundamental assumption/s about human beings underlie Marx's theory of alienation and his comments about labor? (general question)

From *The German Ideology* (1845-46)

5. What is a *camera obscura*? What does this term imply about the possibility of arriving at true statements about human relations? Does the figure imply that we can actually perceive ourselves and the world directly? (768)

6. What basic philosophical error does Marx accuse German Idealists like Hegel and Kant of committing? (768)

7. Why is it that "Morality, religion, metaphysics, {and} all the rest of ideology ... have no history"? What constitutes real history, as Marx sees it? (768-69)

From *Grundrisse* (1857-58)

8. How does this selection demonstrate that Marx's status as an economic determinist (one who sees economic affairs as the direct basis for our ideas about the world and ourselves) is more complex than some of his "vulgar Marxist" followers?

9. What is the source of Greek myth, according to Marx? That is, what conditions and needs led to its development?

10. What, according to Marx, accounts for the fact that we can still enjoy Greek art even though we no longer believe in the Greeks' mythology? To what extent is he describing a kind of nostalgia for an irrevocably lost stage in human development?

11. Our Norton editors call this selection from *Grundrisse* a rather hasty formulation, not a truly thought-out formulation of the relationship between art (an amazingly sophisticated element of the "superstructure") and the material basis of life. Nonetheless, what suggestions does the selection hold for us regarding the task of literary criticism and theory?

From "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859)

12. What assumptions does Marx the "scientific socialist" make in this selection concerning the process of history and our ability to comprehend that process, describe it, and even make predictions on the basis of our understanding?

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Assigned: "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" (870-84).

“On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” (1873)

1. What attitude does Nietzsche convey about the capacity of human intellect and the claims made on its behalf? (874-75)
2. Why, at the beginning of the essay, does Nietzsche more than once imply that the “impulse to truth” is little short of a miracle? (874-75)
3. Nietzsche invokes the social contract as the way in which humans put an end to what Thomas Hobbes called in *Leviathan* “the war of all against all” (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). The social contract, says Nietzsche, gave rise to the binary or paired opposing concepts “truth/lie.” What does Nietzsche immediately thereafter imply about the separateness and stability of the terms in that paired opposition? What is “truth” in the context of his remarks about the social contract? (875-76)
4. How, according to Nietzsche, does language falsify the world, or let us falsely assert that we know things when we don’t? Why might, say, a noun (a substantive, as it’s called) harbor a lie? Why is the term “metaphor” important in this essay? (876-77)
5. Nietzsche aims a broadside against concepts. How do they arise, and what societal purpose does the ability to create them serve? (877-78)
6. What provisional definition of “truth” does Nietzsche offer following from his argument about how concepts are formed, and what conclusions does he draw about the value of “truth”? (878-79)
7. According to Nietzsche, if human beings were momentarily to grasp themselves as “artistically creative subject{s},” what would at once happen to “consciousness of self”? To what is there “at most an aesthetic way of relating”? (880)
8. How does Nietzsche link the pursuit of scientific knowledge to what he has written about the formation of concepts? (881-82)
9. From what impulse, according to Nietzsche, does art spring? What does Nietzsche say about the “man of intuition” -- his language, his force in culture and history? (883-84)
10. How, if at all, does Nietzsche’s essay-ending mention of the “stoic who has learned from experience” alter your view of the “man of intuition’s” accomplishment? (883-84)
11. What has Nietzsche achieved in this essay? That is, what has happened to the binary opposition between “truth” and “lying” now that Nietzsche has examined it in his “non-moral” sense? (general question)

PLATO

Assigned: Plato. *Ion* (37-48) and from *The Republic* Books II, III, VII, X.

***Ion* (circa 390 BCE)**

1. What analogy dominates Socrates' discussion of the relationship between the poet, the rhapsode, and the audience? What conclusion does this analogy illustrate about the true source of poetic inspiration and power? (41, 43 for example, general question)
2. Why does Socrates say that rhapsodes and poets do not speak "by mastery" of any art, as Ion insists? How, on 41, does Socrates characterize poets? (40-41)
3. What must the poet first lose, according to Socrates, that a poem might be composed? (42)
4. Why does Socrates call the poets "interpreters" and the rhapsodes who recite them the "interpreters of interpreters?" (42)
5. Defend Ion the *alazon* (wanderer or dupe) against the arguments of the *eiron* (ironic, clever character) Socrates: what argument can you make against the claim that poets and rhapsodes are not masters of any art? What possibilities is Socrates ignoring here? (general question)

***The Republic*, Book 2 (circa 375 BCE)**

6. What is Socrates' notion of childhood? Why is it so important to shape a child's experience? (49-51)
7. According to Socrates, what is the worst "defect" or fault in the work of poets such as Hesiod and Homer? When and how is this fault committed? To what is this fault compared? (50)
8. What are some of the "unsuitable" fictions about the gods to which Socrates objects? (50-52)
9. Why does Socrates argue that "God ... cannot be responsible for everything"? What kind of attributes do Socrates' Gods (or his God) have instead of the ones given them by Homer and ordinary Greek mythology? (51-52)
10. Why must impious stories, either about gods or heroes, be excluded from a "well-regulated" commonwealth? Is it simply a matter of their lack of truth? Explain. (52-53)
11. Especially around pages 53-55, Socrates calls for considerable censorship, effectively limiting artistic choices and audiences. Is this kind of demand ever justified? If so, when, and regarding what audience and what images or ideas? If not, why not? (53-55, general question)

***The Republic*, Book 3**

12. Socrates says that the Republic's rulers may, if they find it necessary, tell lies, but the citizens cannot lie to them. Does this diminish his utopian ideal? Why or why not? (58)

13. What sorts of cultural education or activities does Socrates say should be offered, and to whom? What sorts of behavior and attitudes should be discouraged, and why? (56-58)

14. What inferences can you make about the relationship Socrates would like to see between religion, the State, and education? (general question)

15. Do you think that education today is simply about learning or arriving at truth, or is it part of the political power structure, the class structure, and so forth? Explain. (general question)

The Republic, Book 7

16. What is the basic point of Plato's Allegory of the Cave? Outline the story and then explain what Socrates is arguing about where we ought seek truth or the source of reality. (64-67)

17. If you are familiar with Socrates' biography, how might this allegory be taken as a defense of his risky philosophical attempts to lead fellow Athenians towards truth and away from error? (general question)

18. Does the Allegory of the Cave leave you with an optimistic or a pessimistic feeling about people's capacity to get free of comforting illusions, habitual ways of perceiving and thinking? Explain your response. For instance, what role, if any, can philosophy or literature play in the upward process Socrates describes? (general question)

The Republic, Book 10

19. What complexity of feeling does Socrates admit to even as he insists that we must banish all "representational poetry" from the ideal Republic? And how, more generally, can the author Plato make his character Socrates banish poetry when he himself (Plato) is a maker of fine dialogues -- texts surely not devoid of artistic ability and form? (67-68)

20. In explaining his views on representation, Socrates uses as his example the making of a bed. What does he mean when he says that there are "three different kinds of bed"? Who are the three different makers of those beds, and which is furthest removed from the "real" bed? What is this real bed"? (69-70)

21. How does Socrates criticize Homer and other poets? For example, how is the imitative poet's product like "illusory painting" and "sorcery"? To what part of human nature do poetry and such practices appeal? Summarize Socrates' criticisms of poetic imitation. (74-77)

22. How much hope does Plato offer us that poetry may be saved from complete banishment? What kinds of poetry might Socrates permit in his Republic? What would have to be

demonstrated before he would permit poetry “designed merely to give pleasure” (80) in his state? (78-80)

Extra Questions

23. Plato’s argument about the need to censor and control artistic production and distribution has been called “the contagion theory of art”: people will want to do what they see on a stage or read in a book. Is there any truth to this kind of claim? What loss of value for literature do you run if you dismiss it too easily? (general question)

24. In discussing with Ion who might be the better judge of certain passages in Homer, does Socrates seem to admit the applicability of only one kind of judgment? Is there another kind of judgment about poetry which Socrates does not consider?

25. Might Ion have been better able to reply to Socrates if he had made a distinction between form and content? Explain.

26. Socrates’ notion that the true source of poetry is divine inspiration suggests, at the very least, that man’s reason is hardly enough for the production of a good work of art. Can you think of other theories about the source of art which stress its a-rational, even irrational, origins? Do these theories justify a distrust of art? Do they, on the contrary, make art seem more valuable?

27. Socrates never seems to tire of imagining ways in which literature can morally corrupt people, especially the young. Does Socrates ever strike you as naive in his conception of the relationship between the literary work and its audience? How is Socrates’ ethical suspicion of literature derived from his psychological assumptions? Are those psychological assumptions very different from many of today’s psychological assumptions?

28. Has Socrates mentioned all the ways in which literature, or the imaginative arts in general, might be regarded as morally corrupting? Does this question offend you?

29. Suppose that Socrates abandoned the idea of literature as imitation and instead embraced the modern notion of poetry as the expression of powerful feelings. Would Socrates therefore change any of his ideas about the place of poetry in his ideal state?

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Assigned: John Crowe Ransom. “Criticism, Inc.” (Sections 1, 4 and 5 only: 1108-09, 1115-18 Leitch).

“Criticism, Inc.”

1. In Section 1 (1108-09) of “Criticism, Inc.,” how does Ransom, writing in 1938, describe the basic task of his own profession of literary criticism? What question is he trying to answer, and

from whom, in his view, might we suppose such an answer ought to come? When he says that "Criticism must become more scientific" and that "what we need is Criticism, Inc., or Criticism, Ltd.," how do you understand the connotations and implications of such terms: that is, what effect does the adjective "scientific" seem designed to provoke in readers, and what implications might arise from yoking the word "criticism" to the common corporate terms, "Incorporated" and "Limited"?

2. In Section 2 (1109-13) of "Criticism, Inc.," Ransom evaluates predecessors and contemporaries who have diverged significantly from the longstanding dominance of the historical approach to studying literature — i.e. an approach that treats literary works not as complex pieces of language deserving detailed attention but rather as occasions for recovering a stronger sense of the past? What similar weakness does he find in both the New Humanists and the Marxists who tried to displace historical scholarship in English academic circles?

3. In Section 2 (1109-13) of "Criticism, Inc.," after evaluating those who have preceded him in opposing purely historical criticism, how does Ransom assess the current (circa 1938) position and self-understanding of even the most impressive English departments at major universities? What sort of scholars generally control such departments, and how do they conceive of their mission and value? How do they respond to those who don't easily accept their key assumptions about how to study literature?

4. In Section 3 (1113-15) of "Criticism, Inc.," what nuances does Ransom add to what he has already said about historical criticism and its value to scholars and students? What strengths does he accord to historical scholarship about literary works, and what further remarks does he offer about its limitations?

5. In Section 4 (1115-16) of "Criticism, Inc.," what does Ransom identify as practices "not" properly the work of criticism? What reasons does he give for excluding each? Do you find his statements in this regard persuasive or adequate? Why or why not?

6. In Section 5 (1116-18) of "Criticism, Inc.," Ransom says that "technical studies of poetry" (1117) are perhaps the best example in his own day of a criticism that understands what its aims and objects are. What does such a practice, when carried out by "the superior critic," consist in, and towards what fundamental question and insight about poetry does it drive such a critic? In the course of addressing these issues, how does Ransom define poetic style?

7. In Section 5 (1116-18) of "Criticism, Inc.," Ransom not only lays out some of his best thoughts about poetry but also deals with the work or process of criticism. How does Ransom characterize this activity, in particular its supposed effect upon the integrity of a given poem? Does this kind of characterization somewhat differentiate Ransom's notions from those of Cleanth Brooks in "The Heresy of Paraphrase" from *The Well Wrought Urn* (Leitch 1353-65). If so, how?

EDWARD SAID

Assigned: "Introduction" to *Orientalism* (Leitch 1986-2012).

"Introduction" to *Orientalism*

1. From 1991-93, how does Said initially define "Orientalism": which meanings of this term does he delineate, and how does he situate Orientalism in relation to the French and British colonial and cultural enterprise (1993)? In what sense is Orientalism more complex than straightforward, brutal domination exercised by imperial powers?
2. From 1994-97, how does Said reinforce the point that while Orientalism isn't simply material, neither is it simply an abstract set of ideas, a matter of supposedly pure ideology? How does he enlist the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* in making this point? Aside from Gramsci, what does Said suggest (1997 top) about his own scholarly worries and goals?
3. From 1997-2002, Said lays out what he calls "three aspects of my contemporary reality" (1997); the first of these has to do with "The distinction between pure and political knowledge." How does he go on to analyze this distinction? In what sense do his statements evoke Foucauldian ideas about the inextricable relationship between power and knowledge ("Truth and Power" 1667-70)?
4. From 2002-10, what are the main points Said makes about the second of the three aspects he said earlier that he wants to discuss? Namely, "the methodological question" (2002). Consider his comments about "strategic location" and "strategic formation" (2006) and about the importance of avoiding a "history of ideas" approach when studying Orientalism (2008). On the whole, how does Said make his case in these pages that texts are "worldly and circumstantial" rather than purely literary or linguistic?
5. From 2010-12, how does Said discuss the third aspect he had mentioned on 1997 -- namely, "the personal dimension" of his project? How, that is, does he account for his own situation as a Palestinian writing about Orientalism? How, in addition, does he address the effects of communication in our "electronic, postmodern world" (2011) with regard to the representation of "the Orient," and what does he suggest at the end is the general goal of his book *Orientalism*?

MEREDITH ANNE SKURA

Assigned: Meredith Anne Skura. "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*" (817-44 McDonald).

"Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*"

1. Recall our initial distribution of critical emphases into the P-O-E-M scheme: Pragmatic (audience-oriented), Objective (text-oriented), Expressive (author-oriented), and Mimetic (world-oriented). Into which camp or combination of emphases does the current critic's work

best fit, and what in the critical text makes you describe it that way? Does it fit easily, or is there something about the critic's work that doesn't make it easy to categorize? Explain.

2. What are the present critic's main claims (in order of significance) with regard to the Shakespeare play/s under study? What methodological assumptions does the critic explicitly or implicitly assert?

3. How well does the present critical essay characterize and respond to the Shakespeare play/s it addresses? What are its strengths and limitations? Is the goal mainly explication (i.e. detailed analysis of the play), or are the author's concerns more metacritical (concerned with its own or others' theoretical assumptions) or general than that? If so, what is your assessment of those metacritical concerns and how do you relate them to the play under discussion?

4. If we are reading more than one critic on the same play (as we generally will be doing) compare and contrast the approach of one critic with the approach taken by another. Which do you prefer, and why?

5. Compare and contrast your own interpretation of the Shakespeare play in question with the interpretation offered by the critic: if you find the piece lacking in some regard, explain why you find it misguided, partial, unconvincing, etc. How would your own reading and emphasis better enhance our understanding of the Shakespeare play? If you are in agreement with the critic's interpretation, what is particularly strong about it? (If you are presenting, follow up on this last point by offering at least a brief analysis of a section of the play that the author doesn't address but that responds well to his or her approach.)

GAYLE GREENE

Assigned: Gayle Greene. "This that you call love": Sexual and Social Tragedy" (655-68 McDonald)

"This that you call love": Sexual and Social Tragedy"

1. Recall our initial distribution of critical emphases into the P-O-E-M scheme: Pragmatic (audience-oriented), Objective (text-oriented), Expressive (author-oriented), and Mimetic (world-oriented). Into which camp or combination of emphases does the current critic's work best fit, and what in the critical text makes you describe it that way? Does it fit easily, or is there something about the critic's work that doesn't make it easy to categorize? Explain.

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analysis of the play), or are the author's concerns more metacritical (concerned with its own or others' theoretical assumptions) or general than that? If so, what is your assessment of those metacritical concerns and how do you relate them to the play under discussion?

4. If we are reading more than one critic on the same play (as we generally will be doing) compare and contrast the approach of one critic with the approach taken by another. Which do you prefer, and why?

5. Compare and contrast your own interpretation of the Shakespeare play in question with the interpretation offered by the critic: if you find the piece lacking in some regard, explain why you find it misguided, partial, unconvincing, etc. How would your own reading and emphasis better enhance our understanding of the Shakespeare play? If you are in agreement with the critic's interpretation, what is particularly strong about it? (If you are presenting, follow up on this last point by offering at least a brief analysis of a section of the play that the author doesn't address but that responds well to his or her approach.)

RAYMOND WILLIAMS

Assigned: Raymond Williams. From *Marxism and Literature* (1965-75 Leitch).

From *Marxism and Literature*

1. From 1567-69, why is it, according to Williams, that "literature" is difficult to construe as a concept? And what is important about the fact that the term came to imply a kind of experience somehow more important and real than the "actual lived experiences of society and history" (1568)?

2. From 1569-72, according to Williams, what did the concept "literature" initially mean, and what notion of criticism developed along with it? By the nineteenth century, what had both concepts (literature and criticism) come to mean, and what social and political implications does Williams discuss with respect to those shifting concepts?

3. From 1573-75, according to Williams, how -- and how well -- did Marxist critics deal with the developing notion of literature and criticism in western capitalist societies? And what does Williams suggest are the implications and potential of the twentieth century's new technologies associated with the written word and literature?