

Readings in the History of Critical Theory in Western Culture

1. Please identify and briefly indicate the significance of *TEN* of the following items (40%):

Plot Diaspora Comic relief Art for art's sake dystopia

Epic theater foregrounding Menippean satire Archetypal criticism

Three unities Apostrophe Frankfurt School Geneva Critics Irony

2. Below are four pairs of quotations. Please choose *TWO* of them and discuss the similarities and differences you perceive in terms of the subject matter, method, criteria, tone, style, and/or structure manifested in each pair (40%):

a. "The imitator or maker of the image knows nothing, we have said, of true existence; he knows appearance only. . . . this imitation is concerned with an object which is thrice removed from the truth. . . . painting or drawing, and imitation in general, are engaged upon productions which are far removed from truth . . . they have no true or healthy aim."

"Painters and Poets have always had an equal privilege of daring to do anything they wish. This is true; as poets, we claim this license for ourselves, and grant it to others."

b. "The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention; in truth, no laboring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be."

"You experience lyric poetry as something opposed to society, something wholly individual. Your feelings insist that it remain so, that lyric expression, having escaped from the weight of material existence, evoke the image of a life free from the coercion of reigning practices, of utility, of the

relentless pressures of self-preservation. This demand, however, the demand that the lyric word be virginal, is itself social in nature.”

- c. “The epochs of Aeschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their permanence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, toward which criticism can only beckon.”

“The latter-day colonialist critic, equally given to big-brother arrogance, sees the African writer as a somewhat unfinished European who with patient guidance will grow up one day and write like every other European, but meanwhile must be humble, must learn all he can and while at it give due credit to his teachers in the form of either direct praise or, even better since praise sometimes goes bad and becomes embarrassing, manifest self-contempt.”

- d. “The affective fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its *results* (what it *is* and what it *does*) . . . It begins by trying to derive the standard of criticism from psychological effects of the poem and ends in impressionism and relativism.”

“This seems to me the situation of every book, until someone comes and begins to read it. Books are objects. On a table, on bookshelves, in store windows, they wait for someone to come and deliver them from materiality, from their immobility.”

3. Freud suggests that girls and women are inferior to boys and men. To him, the inferiority complex has deep roots in our early sexual and familial development. A number of feminist critics have searchingly criticized Freud for his view of women as passive, hysterical, masochistic and penis-envy. Please write a cogent essay in which you give a particular example of such a feminist praxis and elaborate on the points made to challenge Freud (20%).