

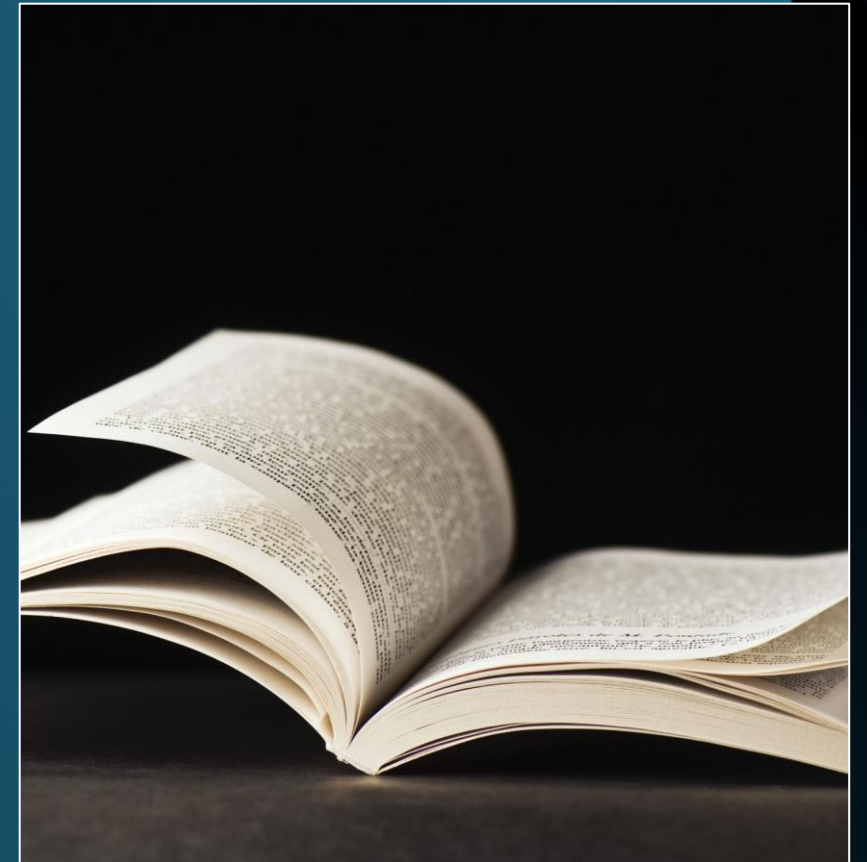
CLASSICAL LITERARY THEORY

Course Code	: <i>ENG 0232- 2216</i>
Course Title	: <i>Classical Literary Theory</i>
Course Type	: Core Course
Course Teacher	: Shaon Gharami
Credit Value	: 03
Total Marks	: 150
Contact Hours	: 51



Course Objectives

- Understand key concepts and figures of classical Greek and Roman literary theory.
- Trace the historical development of literary criticism from its classical origins.
- Critically analyze major theoretical texts (e.g., Poetics, Republic). Grasp the relevance of classical theory to contemporary debates.
- Develop skills in close reading, argumentation, and analytical writing.
- Explore the relationship between literary theory and other disciplines.
- Consider the social and political contexts of classical theories.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of classical approaches.



Course Learning Outcomes: For a course on the *Classical Literary Theory*, learning outcomes should reflect different levels of cognitive skills as per Bloom's Taxonomy. At the end of this course, students will be able to –

CLO 1	Remember the key figures, texts, and concepts in classical literary theory. Recall historical contexts and philosophical foundations that influenced classical theories.	Remember
CLO 2	Understand the principles and ideas of classical literary concepts such as mimesis, catharsis, decorum, and the sublime. Demonstrate comprehension of the relationship between classical literary theory and its cultural and philosophical contexts.	Understand
CLO 3	Apply classical literary frameworks to interpret and critique specific texts or genres. Utilize theoretical concepts to evaluate contemporary literary and artistic works.	Apply
CLO 4	Analyze the theoretical contributions of classical thinkers. Examine the relevance and adaptation of classical ideas in modern critical discourses.	Analyze
CLO 5	Evaluate the strengths and limitations of classical literary theories in addressing diverse literary traditions and forms. Formulate informed opinions on the applicability of classical concepts to modern literary analysis.	Evaluate
CLO 6	Create original interpretations or critiques of texts by drawing upon classical theoretical frameworks. Craft academic essays or projects that integrate classical theories with contemporary literary concerns.	Create

Specific Contents, Teaching-Learning Activities, and Assessment Strategy Mapping with Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

Week	Topic	Teaching-Learning Strategy	Assessment Strategy	Corresponding CLOs
Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.	1	<div>✓ Overall discussion on Classical Literary Theory</div> <div>✓ Introduction to Aristotle</div> <div>✓ Overall Discussion on <i>Poetics</i></div>	<div>✓ Class Attendance</div> <div>✓ Class performance</div>	<div>CLO 1</div> <div>CLO 2</div>
	2	<div>✓ <i>Poetics</i></div>	<div>✓ Class Attendance</div> <div>✓ Feedback and Oral Test</div>	CLO2
	3	<div>✓ <i>Poetics</i></div>	<div>✓ Class Attendance</div> <div>✓ Feedback and Oral Test</div> <div>✓ (Written Test)</div>	CLO 2
	4	<div>✓ Introduction to Philip Sidney</div> <div>✓ Overall Discussion on <i>An Apology for Poetry</i></div>	<div>✓ Class Attendance</div> <div>✓ Feedback and Oral Test</div>	CLO 2
	5	<div>✓ <i>An Apology for Poetry</i></div>	<div>✓ Class Attendance</div> <div>✓ Feedback and Oral test</div> <div>✓₄ (Assignment)</div>	<div>CLO 2</div> <div>CLO 3</div>

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to Samuel Johnson ✓ Overall discussion on <i>Preface to Shakespeare</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Preface to Shakespeare</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Interactive discussion ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to William Wordsworth ✓ Overall discussion on <i>Preface to the Lyrical Ballads</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and Oral Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Preface to the Lyrical Ballads</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Preface to the Lyrical Ballads</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5

11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to Roland Barthes ✓ Overall discussion on “The Death of the Author” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
12	“The Death of the Author”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test ✓ Quiz 3 (Presentation) 	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
13	“The Death of the Author”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	CLO 5
14	“The Death of the Author”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance 	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5

15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to T.S. Eliot ✓ Overall discussion on “Tradition and the Individual Talent” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
16	“Tradition and the Individual Talent”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
17	“Tradition and the Individual Talent”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test 	CLO 5

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

Assignment & Presentation:

Students will be assigned topics or case studies to work on at home and submit by the specified due date, with no late submissions accepted. Alternatively, students may be required to deliver a PowerPoint presentation in class. Presentations should be clear, well-organized, visually engaging, and effectively communicate research findings. Students should be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussions, enhancing their understanding of the material and developing public speaking skills.

Quizzes:

Three Quiz Tests will be taken during the semester. No makeup quiz test will be taken. Students are strongly recommended not to miss that test.

Viva-Voce:

At the end of the semester, the students must appear before a board of faculty from their course, who will assess them on topics they have covered. The department may invite external faculty to evaluate the students.

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

Total Marks
Per Credit 50 Marks

3 Credits Course

150 Marks

2 Credits Course

100 Marks

CIE

60%

SEE

40%

CIE- Continuous Internal Evaluation (90 Marks-60%)

Bloom's Category Marks (out of 45)	Tests (45)	Assignments (15)	Quizzes (15)	External Participation in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities (30)
Remember	10		05	Attendance: 15 Viva-Voce: 15
Understand	10	05		
Apply	05	10		
Analyze	10			
Evaluate	05			
Create	05		10	

SEE- Semester End Examination (60 Marks-40%)

Bloom's Category	Tests
Remember	15
Understand	15
Apply	10
Analyze	10
Evaluate	5
Create	5

Recommended Books

- Butcher, Samuel Henry, ed. *The poetics of Aristotle*. Macmillan, 1902.
- Sidney, Sir Philip, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. *An apology for poetry*. Ginn, 1971.
- Johnson, Samuel. *Preface to Shakespeare*. ReadHowYouWant. com, 2009.
- Wordsworth, William. “Preface to the lyrical ballads.” *Arts Education Policy Review* 105.2 (2003): 33-36.
- Almujaalli, Hussam. Author, Text, and Writing: Roland Barthes and “The Death of the Author”. *Journal of the College of Languages (JCL)* 48 (2023): 1-16.
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns. “Tradition and the individual talent.” *Perspecta* 19 (1982): 36-42.

The background of the slide features a collection of wooden blocks with various characters. In the foreground, a large 'O' block is prominent. To its left is an 'X' block, and to its right is a block with a right-pointing arrow. In the background, other blocks with 'O', 'X', and arrow symbols are visible, though they are out of focus. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured surface.

First, Second, & Third Weeks: P. (14-25)

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

- Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was an ancient Greek philosopher and polymath whose works laid the foundation for much of Western philosophy and science.
- He was a student of Plato and later became the teacher of Alexander the Great.
- Aristotle's writings cover a vast array of topics, including ethics, politics, metaphysics, logic, biology, and art.



Aristotle: Life and Background

- Born in Stagira, a town in Macedonia.
- Studied at Plato's Academy in Athens for 20 years.
- Founded his own school, the Lyceum, in Athens.
- Wrote extensively; some of his works were lecture notes for his students.

Aristotle: Key Philosophical Contributions

- **Logic:** Developed the first formal system of logic, known as Aristotelian or syllogistic logic. Emphasized deductive reasoning and introduced key concepts like syllogisms.
- **Metaphysics:** Coined the term “metaphysics” to study the nature of being and reality. Defined “substance” and “essence” as core concepts.
- **Ethics:** Advocated for the Golden Mean, the idea that virtue lies between extremes. Wrote *Nicomachean Ethics*, exploring the idea of eudaimonia (flourishing or happiness) as the ultimate goal of human life.

Aristotle: Key Philosophical Contributions

- **Politics:** Defined humans as “political animals.” Analyzed different types of government and argued for a mixed constitution as the best form.
- **Natural Sciences:** Studied biology, zoology, and physics, offering empirical observations. While some ideas were incorrect (e.g., geocentrism), his systematic approach influenced future science.
- **Art and Literature:** Wrote *The Poetics*, focusing on “drama and tragedy.” Introduced critical concepts like catharsis and mimesis.

Poetics: In a Nutshell



- Aristotle's *Poetics* examines poetry by breaking it down into its fundamental components and deriving general principles. The surviving portion primarily addresses tragedy and epic poetry, though it is known that Aristotle also wrote a now-lost treatise on comedy.
- He defines poetry as an imitative (mimetic) art that uses language, rhythm, and harmony, either individually or in combination. Unlike philosophy, which conveys abstract ideas, "poetry represents the world through imitation." This mimetic quality appeals to humans' natural inclination toward imitation and serves as a powerful learning tool, allowing audiences to observe representations of unsettling subjects like corpses or repulsive creatures without the distress caused by encountering them in reality.

Poetics: In a Nutshell

- Aristotle regards tragedy as the most elevated form of poetry addressing profound subjects, while comedy is its counterpart for less serious matters.
- He speculates on the evolution of tragedy, tracing its roots to dithyrambic hymns dedicated to Dionysus, which were performed by choirs with occasional narration. Aeschylus transformed tragedy by adding a second actor to interact with the narrator, and Sophocles advanced it further with a third actor.
- Over time, tragedy evolved into the structured dramatic form recognized today.





Poetics: In a Nutshell

Aristotle outlines seven key characteristics of tragedy: (1) it is mimetic, (2) it deals with serious themes, (3) it tells a complete and appropriately lengthy story, (4) it incorporates rhythm and harmony, (5) these elements vary in combination throughout the work, (6) it is performed rather than narrated, and (7) it evokes pity and fear, ultimately purging these emotions through catharsis. A tragedy is composed of six essential elements, ranked from most to least important: plot, character, thought, diction, melody/song, and spectacle.

Poetics: In a Nutshell

- The plot, Aristotle asserts, must be well-constructed with a clear beginning, middle, and end, each logically connected. Unity is essential, with all elements contributing to the overall narrative without extraneous details. This cohesion enables tragedy to convey universal themes more effectively than history, which is limited to specific events.
- Aristotle criticizes episodic plots, which lack necessity in their sequence. The best plots include surprising developments that, upon reflection, make sense within the story. Such surprises often involve peripeteia (a reversal of fortune) and anagnorisis (a moment of discovery).
- A strong plot should build complexity like a knot, which is tightened until the point of reversal and then gradually untied to reach resolution.

Poetics: In a Nutshell

- To evoke pity and fear, the hero must be a noble figure who falls from happiness to suffering due to a personal error. The emotional impact is heightened when family members, rather than strangers or enemies, are involved in the conflict.
- The most effective plots feature a near-miss, where a character almost commits harm against a family member but is stopped by an anagnorisis revealing the familial bond.
- The hero should possess virtues appropriate to their status and be portrayed consistently and realistically.
- Similarly, the resolution of the plot should arise logically from the narrative itself, avoiding contrived devices like a “deus ex machina” (an unnatural or very unlikely end to a story or event, that solves or removes any problems too easily), where gods are introduced to resolve the story artificially.

Poetics: In a Nutshell

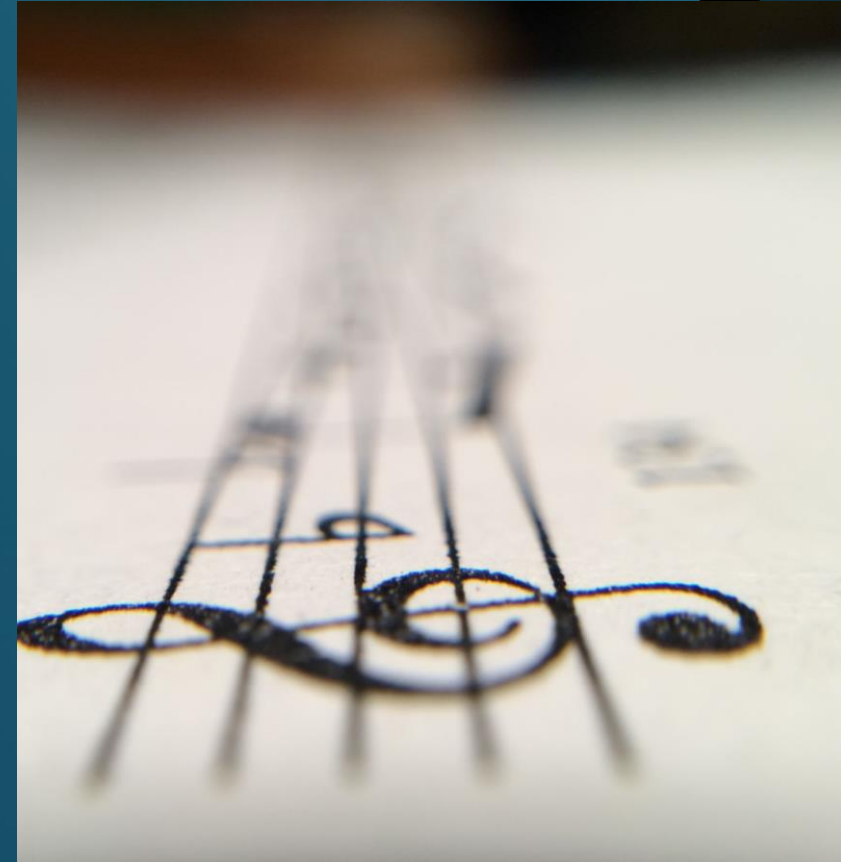
- Aristotle also examines thought and diction before turning to epic poetry, which differs from tragedy by presenting actions in a narrative form rather than a dramatic one.
- While both share unity of plot and similar themes, epic poetry is not constrained by performance and can depict broader, more fantastical events. Its greater length and narrative scope contrast with the concentrated focus of tragedy, which incorporates music and spectacle.
- The two forms also differ in their use of meter. Aristotle defends poetry against criticisms of improbability, ultimately arguing that “tragedy, with its greater intensity and focus, is superior to epic poetry.”

Chapter I: ‘Imitation’ the common principle of the Arts of Poetry.

Epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and music played on instruments like the flute and lyre are all forms of artistic imitation. In essence, they represent or mimic aspects of life, emotions, or experiences. However, these art forms differ from each other in three key ways:

- 1. The medium:** This refers to the tools or materials used to create the imitation. For example, “words are the medium in poetry, while sounds are the medium in music.”
- 2. The objects:** This means what is being imitated. It could be human actions, emotions, or events.
- 3. The manner or mode:** This is the style or method of the imitation. For instance, some art forms present their subjects directly (like a play), while others narrate them (like an epic poem).

Each art form uses its unique combination of these elements to convey its imitative representation.





Written Test



Fourth and Fifth Weeks: P. (26-36)



Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) was an English poet, courtier, scholar, and soldier, widely regarded as one of the most prominent figures of the English Renaissance. His works and life have influenced English literature, particularly in the development of poetry and prose.

- He was born into an influential family in Kent, England, Sidney was educated at Shrewsbury School and Christ Church, Oxford.
- A favored figure at Queen Elizabeth I's court, he was admired for his intellect, charm, and talents.
- Sidney was also politically active, serving as a diplomat and soldier. He was fatally wounded in the Battle of Zutphen (1586) during a campaign against Spanish forces in the Netherlands.

Literary Contributions of Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophil and Stella: A sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs, considered the first great sonnet cycle in English. It explores themes of love, desire, and moral conflict, often thought to reflect Sidney's unrequited love for Penelope Devereux (Lady Rich).

The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia: A prose romance blending pastoral and chivalric traditions, filled with complex plots and poetic interludes. It demonstrates Sidney's mastery of narrative and his experimentation with prose fiction, influencing later writers such as Edmund Spenser.

A Defence of Poesy (also known as An Apology for Poetry): A seminal critical essay in which Sidney argues for the value of poetry as a medium of moral and intellectual enlightenment. He defends poetry against Puritan critics like Stephen Gosson, asserting its ability to teach and delight.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- In *An Apology for Poetry*, Sir Philip Sidney seeks to restore poetry to its esteemed position among the arts, responding to the disdain many of his contemporaries in Elizabethan England held for it.
- Sidney argues that critics misunderstand the essence of poetry, having been misled by the prevalence of substandard modern works. He claims that a proper understanding of poetry reveals it as the “monarch” of the arts.
- Drawing on classical sources, Sidney presents poetry as a powerful tool for teaching virtue and the poet as a near-divine figure capable of envisioning a more perfect version of nature.
- Using this framework, Sidney addresses and refutes the major criticisms leveled against poetry and poets, employing persuasive rhetoric.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- Sidney structures his essay in the seven-part format of a classical oration, starting with an *exordium*, or introduction.
- He begins with an anecdote about horseback riding, referencing his riding instructor, Giovanni Pietro Pugliano, to illustrate his focus not on writing poetry but on contemplating and appreciating it.
- Since he has taken up poetry, Sidney feels it is his duty to defend its reputation.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- Sidney asserts that poetry is the earliest of the arts, predating both philosophy and history. He notes that many celebrated classical philosophers and historians wrote poetry, while others, such as Plato and Herodotus, infused their prose with poetic elements.
- Poetry, Sidney contends, was crucial to the popularity and success of these disciplines. The classical respect for poetry is reflected in the titles given to poets: *vates*, meaning “seer” or “prophet,” and *poietes*, meaning “maker.” These titles highlight poetry's role in revealing truths and its creative, godlike capacity to imagine better realities.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- In the proposition section, Sidney defines poetry as an art of imitation that teaches through “delight” or pleasure.
- He describes poetry as a “speaking picture” that vividly embodies ideas. Sidney focuses on “right poets,” those who craft poetry not confined to nature’s imperfections but that creates ideal examples of virtue, offering readers models of goodness.
- Poetry surpasses philosophy and history in teaching virtue because it combines the philosopher’s abstract ideas with the historian’s narrative, presenting pleasurable and memorable examples like Aesop’s fables.
- By blending instruction and enjoyment, poetry can inspire readers to act virtuously, earning the title of “right popular philosopher.”

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- Sidney next refutes the main objections raised by critics of poetry: that it is a waste of time, that poets are liars, that poetry corrupts morals, and that Plato banished poets from his ideal Republic.
- He argues that these criticisms inadvertently praise poetry by acknowledging its profound power to influence its audience. When well-crafted, poetry moves readers to virtue, reinforcing its value.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- In his conclusion, or *peroration*, Sidney summarizes his defense of poetry and turns to a critique of contemporary English poetry.
- While he acknowledges the lack of quality in modern works, he attributes this to the flawed practices of poets and playwrights, not to any deficiency in English as a language.
- English, Sidney asserts, is a rich and expressive medium capable of supporting great literature if poets refine their craft by learning from classical sources without slavish imitation.

An Apology for Poetry: In Brief

- Sidney ends his essay on an optimistic note, emphasizing poetry's potential to immortalize individuals through verse.
- He warns critics that poetry also has the power to condemn by ignoring them entirely.
- Thus, Sidney urges his audience to take his arguments seriously, recognizing poetry's unmatched ability to instruct and inspire.



A photograph of a classroom or meeting room. In the center, a man with dark curly hair and a maroon shirt is raising his right hand. He is looking towards the left. To his left, a woman with long dark hair is seen from the back, looking towards the man. In the background, another person is seated at a desk, holding a pen. The room has large windows showing a modern building outside. A dark grey banner with the word 'Assignment' in white serif font is overlaid at the bottom.

Assignment



Sixth, and Seventh Weeks: P. 37-47

Samuel Johnson



- Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), often referred to as “Dr. Johnson,” was an English writer, lexicographer, essayist, poet, and literary critic.
- He is one of the most influential figures in English literature, renowned for his wit, moral insight, and literary achievements.

Key Contributions of “Dr. Johnson,”

- **Dictionary of the English Language (1755):** Johnson’s most famous work, this dictionary was a monumental achievement in its time and remained the standard English dictionary until the Oxford English Dictionary's publication. It included detailed definitions, examples of usage, and witty commentary.

Key Contributions of “Dr. Johnson,”

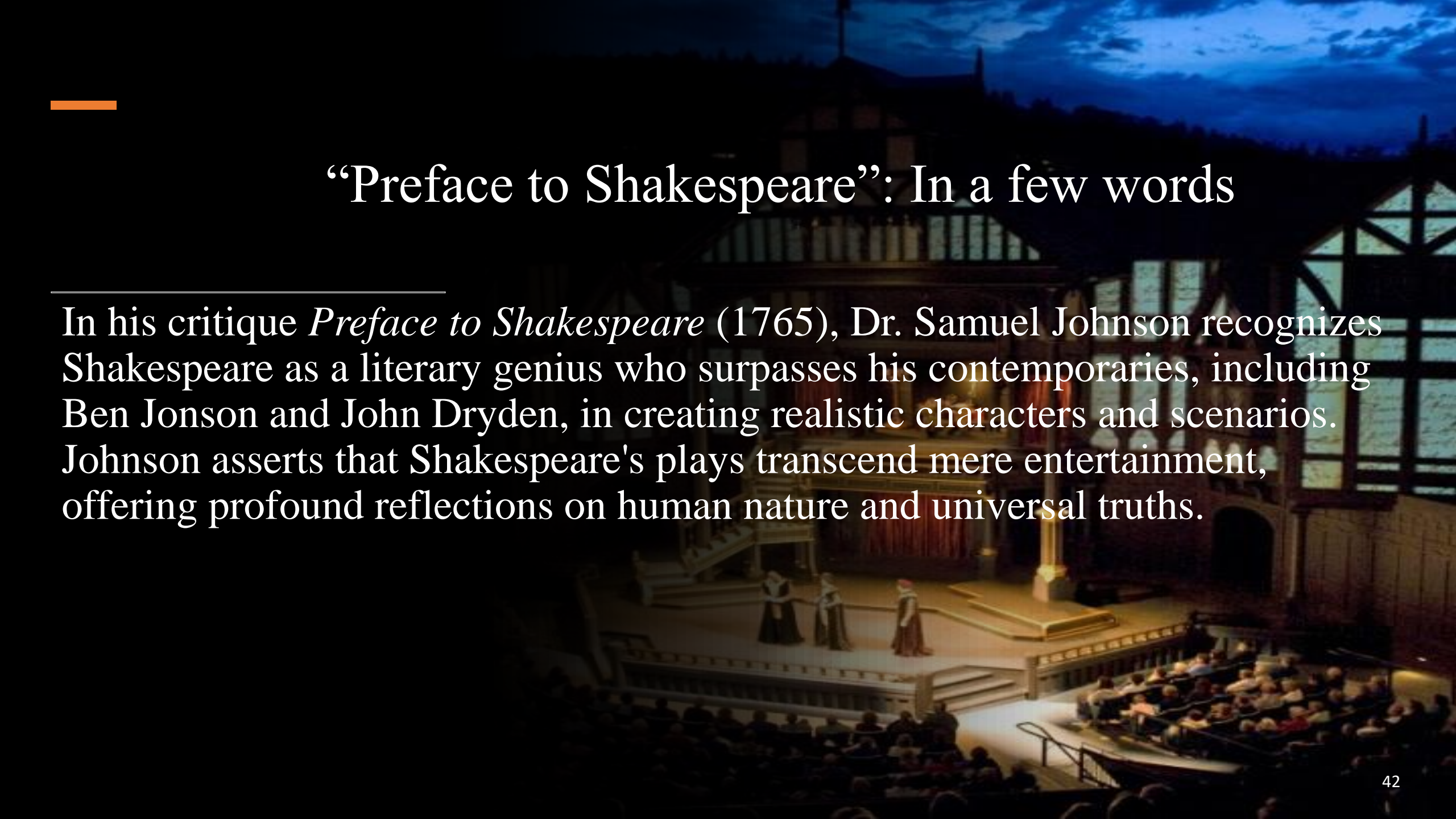
Essays and Criticism:

- Johnson was a prolific essayist, contributing to publications like *The Rambler* and *The Idler*. His essays often explored moral and philosophical themes. In *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779), Johnson provided critical biographies of 52 poets, offering both historical insight and sharp literary criticism.
- *Rasselas* (1759): A philosophical novella that explores themes of happiness, human desires, and the pursuit of meaning. It is still studied for its timeless reflections on life’s complexities.

Key Contributions of “Dr. Johnson,”

His edition of Shakespeare’s plays included critical prefaces that shaped subsequent understanding of the Bard's work.

His poetry, such as “The Vanity of Human Wishes” (1749), is admired for its deep moral tone.

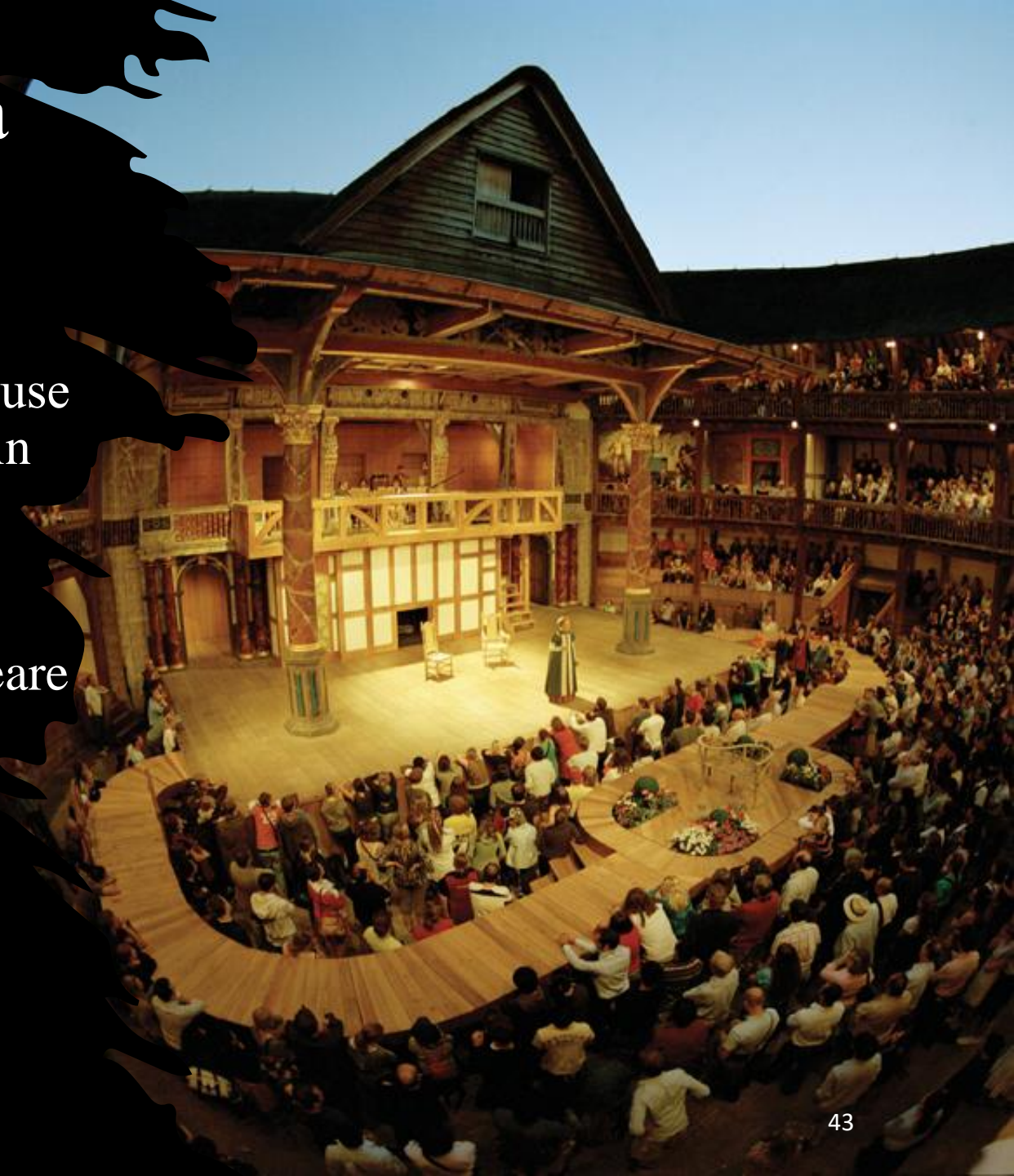
The background of the slide is a photograph of a theater stage at night. The stage is lit, and three actors in period costumes are visible. The audience is seated in the foreground, and the theater's architecture is visible in the background.

“Preface to Shakespeare”: In a few words

In his critique *Preface to Shakespeare* (1765), Dr. Samuel Johnson recognizes Shakespeare as a literary genius who surpasses his contemporaries, including Ben Jonson and John Dryden, in creating realistic characters and scenarios. Johnson asserts that Shakespeare's plays transcend mere entertainment, offering profound reflections on human nature and universal truths.

“Preface to Shakespeare”: In a few words

Dr. Johnson commends Shakespeare’s masterful use of language and rhetorical devices, which result in powerful and memorable speeches. However, Johnson critiques some aspects of Shakespeare’s works, such as their loose plot structures and overuse of subplots, though he defends Shakespeare against accusations of immorality or inappropriateness for the stage.



Key Points of “Preface to Shakespeare”

Realistic Characters:

- Shakespeare’s characters are faithful representations of human nature, addressing universal passions and principles.
- Each character’s speech aligns with their age, gender, and profession, ensuring authenticity. Even when supernatural elements are present, the dialogue remains grounded in reality.

Key Points of “Preface to Shakespeare”

Philosophy of Life:

- Shakespeare’s plays serve as a repository of practical wisdom, offering insights that reflect a philosophy of life.
- His works encompass a wide range of human emotions, not just love, making them a mirror of life itself.

Key Points of “Preface to Shakespeare”

➤ Use of Tragicomedy:

Shakespeare’s blending of tragedy and comedy, often criticized for violating classical rules, is defended by Johnson as a reflection of real life, where joy and sorrow coexist.

➤ Tragicomedy, Johnson argues, combines the pleasures and lessons of both genres, appealing directly to human nature.

➤ This mixture does not dilute the intensity of tragedy but enhances it by providing variety, as prolonged melancholy can be tiresome.



A background image showing four students (three young women and one young man) sitting at a table in a library, looking at books and a laptop. The image is dimmed to allow text to be read over it.

Key Points of “Preface to Shakespeare”

Comic Genius:

Comedy came naturally to Shakespeare, whose comic scenes are effortlessly crafted and timeless in their appeal. These scenes employ the language of everyday life, which is neither coarse nor overly refined, and remain relatable and enduring despite the passage of time.

Johnson concludes that Shakespeare’s ability to evoke both laughter and tears underscores his unparalleled understanding of human emotions and life’s complexities.

A person wearing a red and black plaid shirt, dark pants, and a hat stands on a rocky ledge, arms outstretched, overlooking the Grand Canyon. The canyon's layered rock formations and deep valleys are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. An orange rectangular bar is located in the top-left corner of the slide.

Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Weeks: P. (48-64)

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

- William Wordsworth was Born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, England and died on April 23, 1850, in Rydal Mount, England.
- was a major English Romantic poet, best known for his deep appreciation of nature and his innovative approach to poetry.
- He believed that poetry should use everyday language and express the ordinary experiences of life.
- Wordsworth's works often explore themes of memory, childhood, the beauty of the natural world, and the connection between humanity and nature.



Major Works of William Wordsworth

- *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, co-written with Samuel Taylor Coleridge): This collection is considered a cornerstone of the Romantic movement.
- It includes Wordsworth's famous poem "Tintern Abbey."

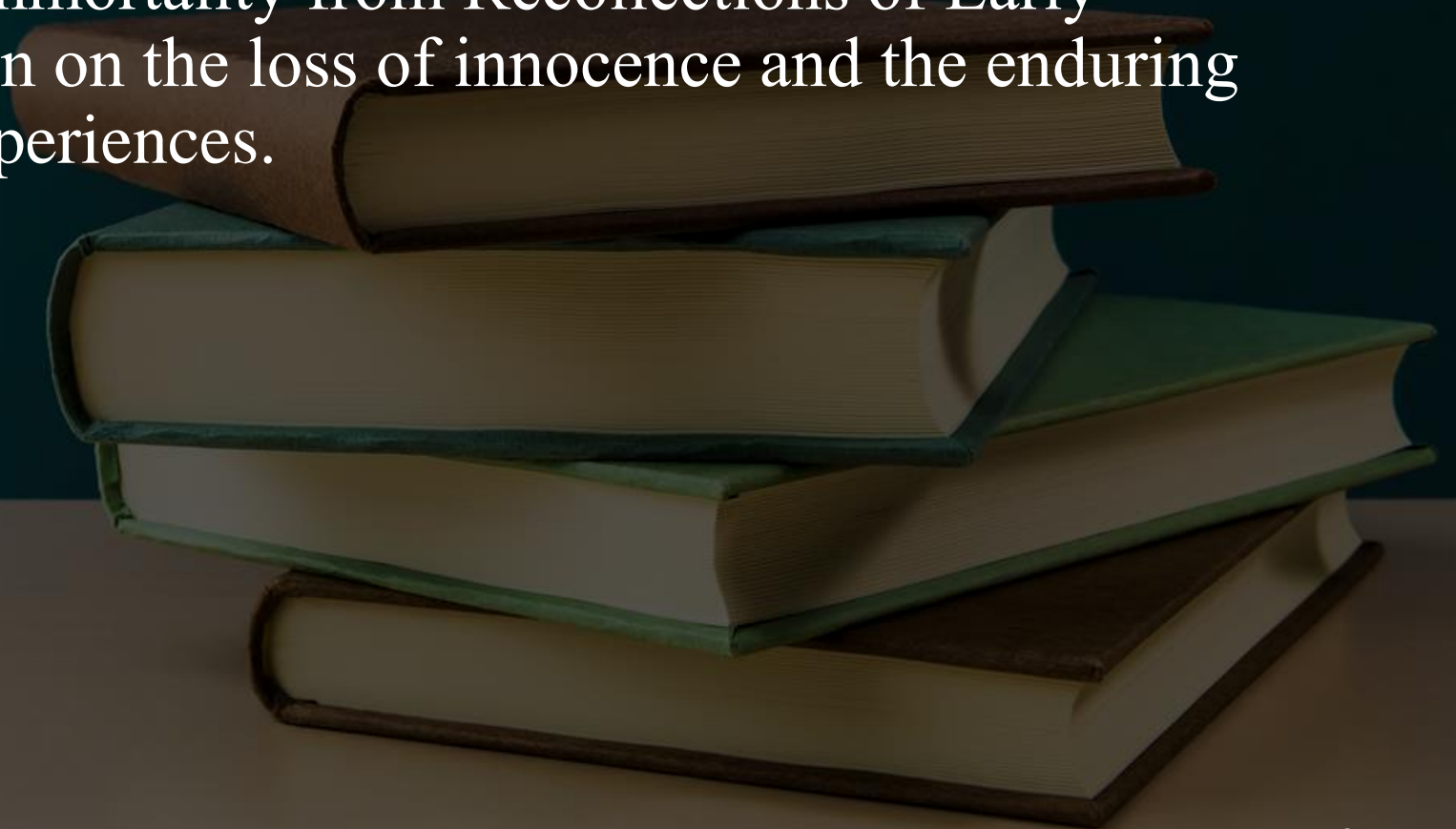


Major Works of William Wordsworth

- *The Prelude* (published posthumously in 1850): A long autobiographical poem, often regarded as his masterpiece, tracing the growth of his mind and relationship with nature.

Major Works of William Wordsworth

- “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood”: A reflection on the loss of innocence and the enduring impact of childhood experiences.



Philosophy of William Wordsworth

- Wordsworth saw nature as a moral guide and spiritual source. He believed in the profound and healing power of nature to shape the human soul and provide solace.
- His famous assertion that poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...recollected in tranquility” highlights his focus on personal emotion and reflection.

PHILOSOPHY

William Wordsworth

- Wordsworth served as Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1843 until his death in 1850.
- His works inspired generations of poets and remain essential in English literature, contributing to the Romantic emphasis on emotion, imagination, and individualism.



“Preface to Lyrical Ballads” in Essence

- “The Preface to Lyrical Ballads” by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge was first added after the initial publication of their poems and underwent several revisions throughout Wordsworth's career.
- It remains a foundational statement of Romantic principles, articulating the purpose and craft of poetry, its relationship to prose, and the role of the poet. Wordsworth emphasizes poetry's connection to the simple truths of nature and its ability to capture contemporary, unembellished ways of life.
- For Romantic writers like Wordsworth, nature serves as a primary source of inspiration, with genuine experiences in the natural world, when combined with emotion, giving rise to poetry.

“Preface to Lyrical Ballads” in Essence

The Importance of Subject Matter:

- Wordsworth discusses his choice of subject matter and explains how his work differs from earlier literary traditions.
- He criticizes previous poets for adhering too closely to formal, classical conventions, which he sees as artificial. Instead, he values emotional truths and fidelity to nature, aiming to offer readers insights into their own lives.

The Importance of Subject Matter

- Preferring a rural existence over urban life, Wordsworth argues that rural simplicity reflects natural and enduring truths, while city life, particularly in rapidly growing London, represents fleeting and fragmented values.
- Urban environments lack the continuity and tranquility necessary for connecting people with nature and their shared past.
- In contrast, rural experiences are unified and relatable, offering a fertile ground for poetry. Wordsworth's goal is to transform ordinary experiences into extraordinary and timeless reflections, mirroring the permanence found in nature.

The Characteristics of Poetry

- For Wordsworth, poetry originates in the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” but is grounded in emotion recollected during tranquil reflection.
- While poetry should appear spontaneous, its creation requires deliberate effort. It must express emotion rather than merely record observations.
- The poet draws from real-life experiences and uses ordinary language, enhanced by imagination, to present familiar things in a new and meaningful way

The Characteristics of Poetry

Wordsworth outlines four stages of the poet's creative process:

- 1.The poet observes something that evokes a strong emotion.
- 2.The poet reflects on this emotion in tranquility, possibly connecting it to related memories or experiences.
- 3.During contemplation, the poet distills the thoughts and emotions, eliminating irrelevant elements to create a universal emotional truth.
- 4.Finally, the poet shares this distilled emotion through poetry, aiming to connect with the audience.

This process highlights that poetry is not rooted in classical models or supernatural inspiration but in ordinary experiences transformed through imagination.

Wordsworth rejects ornate literary devices as unnatural, instead favoring simplicity and sincerity. His goal is to inspire readers to reflect on their own emotions and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and life.

The Relationship Between Poetry and Prose

- Wordsworth devotes a significant portion of the *Preface* to exploring the similarities between poetry and prose.
- He rejects the traditional notion that poetry is a higher or more heroic form of art than prose, emphasizing that both share the "language of men."
- By describing the poet as "a man speaking to men," he blurs the distinction between the two forms and opposes the rigid structures of classical poetry.

The Relationship Between Poetry and Prose

- For Wordsworth, poetry and prose are united by their focus on emotion and reflection, contrasting with science, which he associates with factual observation and isolation.
- Science, in his view, lacks the capacity to influence the shared human condition—a central concern of poetry.
- Although Wordsworth favors poetry for its imaginative possibilities, he resists any strict separation between verse and prose, maintaining that both arise from the same emotional and reflective processes.
- He argues that meter, when used excessively, can lead to artificiality, whereas simpler poetic forms are better suited to conveying universal truths.
- Ultimately, whether writing in verse or prose, Wordsworth seeks to employ a unified "language of imagination and sentiment" to express the essential principles of his art.

The Role of the Poet

- In his *Preface*, Wordsworth delves deeply into the role of the poet, reflecting his views on language and content.
- The poet, he argues, is both of and for the common people—attuned to their experiences and emotions—while simultaneously occupying a unique and elevated position.
- Wordsworth describes the poet as one who "sings a song in which all human beings join," finding joy in truth as a constant, visible companion.
- The poet serves as a "rock of defense for human nature," a guardian and preserver of humanity, carrying with them bonds of love and deep connections.

The Role of the Poet



- Further, Wordsworth asserts that the poet “binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society ... across all time.”
- Just as the scientists of his era advanced fields like chemistry and botany, the poet embodies the essence of knowledge—timeless and deeply rooted in the human heart.
- The poet, he claims, lends their divine spirit to elevate and transform ordinary experiences into profound understanding.

The Role of the Poet

- For Wordsworth, art is distinct from applied sciences; it is not bound by utilitarian purposes. Instead, the poet is a singular figure who takes the everyday lives of common people and weaves their experiences into coherent expressions of passion and emotion.
- These expressions resonate with moral truth and reflect a sense of rightness, making the poet an essential force in human society.



Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Weeks: P. (65-82)

Roland Barthes (1915–1980)



- Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a prominent French literary theorist, philosopher, and critic, known for his influential contributions to structuralism, post-structuralism, and semiotics.
- His work spans multiple disciplines, including literature, culture, linguistics, and philosophy.
- Barthes is celebrated for his innovative analyses of texts and cultural phenomena, as well as his challenge to traditional notions of authorship and meaning.

Contributions of Roland Barthes

- **The Death of the Author:** In his famous 1967 essay, Barthes argued that the author's intentions and biography should not dictate the interpretation of a text. Instead, he emphasized the role of the reader in constructing meaning, shifting focus from the author to the reader's experience.
- **Mythologies (1957):** This collection of essays explores how everyday cultural objects and practices (like advertisements, wrestling, or fashion) carry ideological messages. Barthes examined how myths transform culture into "natural" truths, exposing the constructed nature of cultural norms.

Contributions of Roland Barthes

- Semiotics: Barthes was instrumental in applying semiotics (the study of signs) to cultural analysis. He extended Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories to broader cultural contexts, showing how signs (words, images, objects) operate in systems of meaning.
- S/Z (1970): In this work, Barthes conducted a detailed analysis of Balzac's novella *Sarrasine*, applying his concept of the "writerly text." He distinguished between "readerly texts" (those with fixed meanings) and "writerly texts" (those encouraging active interpretation).

Contributions of Roland Barthes

- **Punctum and Studium:** In *Camera Lucida* (1980), Barthes introduced these terms to discuss photography. *Studium* refers to the cultural, historical, or intellectual interest in a photograph, while *punctum* describes the personal, emotional resonance that “pierces” the viewer.
- **A Lover’s Discourse (1977):** This fragmentary, introspective work examines the language and emotions of love, blending semiotics with personal reflection.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Roland Barthes begins “The Death of the Author” with an example from Honoré de Balzac's novel *Sarrasine*. Quoting a passage, he questions who is truly speaking those words: the novel's hero, Balzac himself, or Balzac expressing a universal truth?
- Barthes argues that we cannot definitively know. Writing, he boldly claims, erases all voices. Rather than being a creative act, writing is a void, where it's impossible to ascertain who is speaking or writing with certainty.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Barthes critiques our modern fixation on the author, which he traces back to the Renaissance and the emergence of the individual as a concept.
- Much literary criticism still clings to this idea of the author as the unique creator of a work, attempting to find the person behind the text.

For example, critics often look for Baudelaire’s personal identity within his writings. But for Barthes, this search for a single origin of a text is futile.



“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Some writers, such as 19th-century French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, have emphasized that it is language, not the author, that speaks to us. Barthes argues that authors should strive for impersonality, suppressing their individuality to allow the work itself to emerge.
- Rejecting the traditional view of the author (a concept Barthes capitalizes, likening it to a divine entity), he invites us to see the writer-text relationship differently.
- Traditionally, the author is seen as existing before the text, much like a parent before a child, creating it. In Barthes’ perspective, however, the writer and text are born together, as the act of reading brings the writer into being in the present moment.

For instance, *Shakespeare* exists now, in the reader’s engagement with his work, rather than as a Renaissance figure from 400 years ago.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Barthes sees writing as a performative act, coming to life only when the reader engages with it and gives it meaning.
- He replaces the notion of the *Author* with the concept of the *scriptor* (a term meaning “copyist” in French).
- A literary text, he argues, should not be viewed as a sacred work imbued with a single meaning by a divine-like author. Instead, it is a space where various influences, allusions, and quotations converge. No text is entirely original; every work is a “tissue of quotations.”

•

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

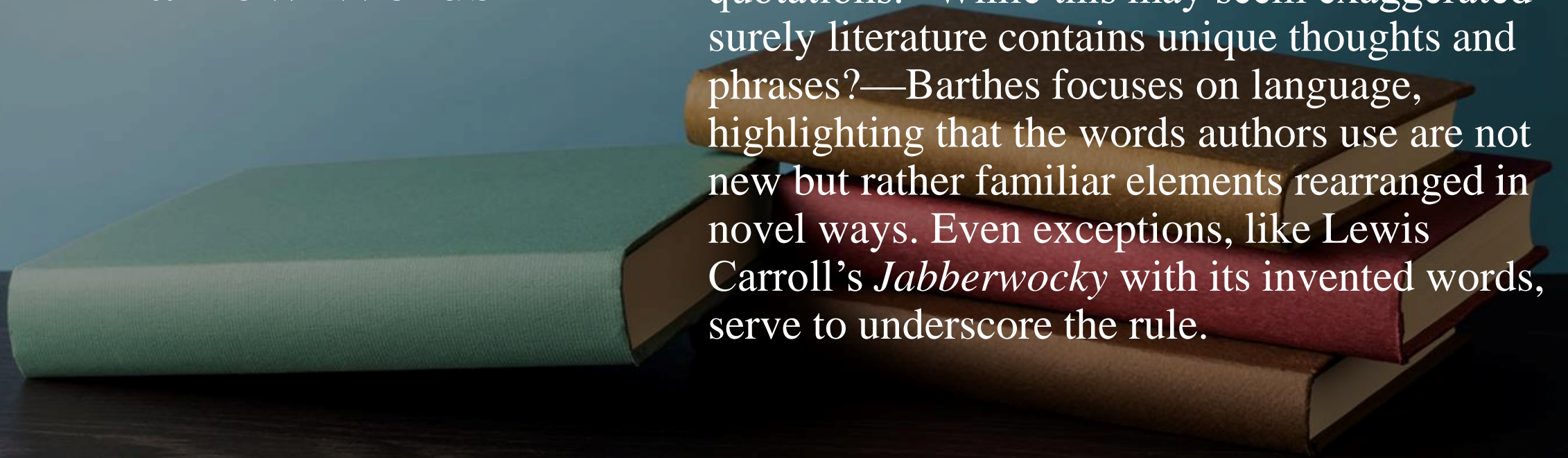
- Barthes concludes that imposing the idea of an Author on a text limits it, as it confines interpretation to the author’s intent. Writing, he argues, is a “tissue of signs” that derives meaning only when engaged with by the reader.
- A text’s meaning lies not in its origin but in its destination. For readers to truly engage with and interpret texts, we must abandon the notion that the author determines their meaning.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Roland Barthes’ essay “The Death of the Author” presents bold and provocative ideas about the relationship between authors and their literary works.
- It challenges conventional notions, asserting that literature is not inherently original and that the meaning of a text cannot simply be traced back to its author.
- Instead, Barthes argues, readers actively participate in creating a text’s meaning.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Barthes describes writing as "the destruction of every voice," rather than the creation of one—a stark contrast to the common view of writing as a creative art.
- He also claims that no literary text is truly original; instead, each work is a “tissue of quotations.” While this may seem exaggerated—surely literature contains unique thoughts and phrases?—Barthes focuses on language, highlighting that the words authors use are not new but rather familiar elements rearranged in novel ways. Even exceptions, like Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky* with its invented words, serve to underscore the rule.

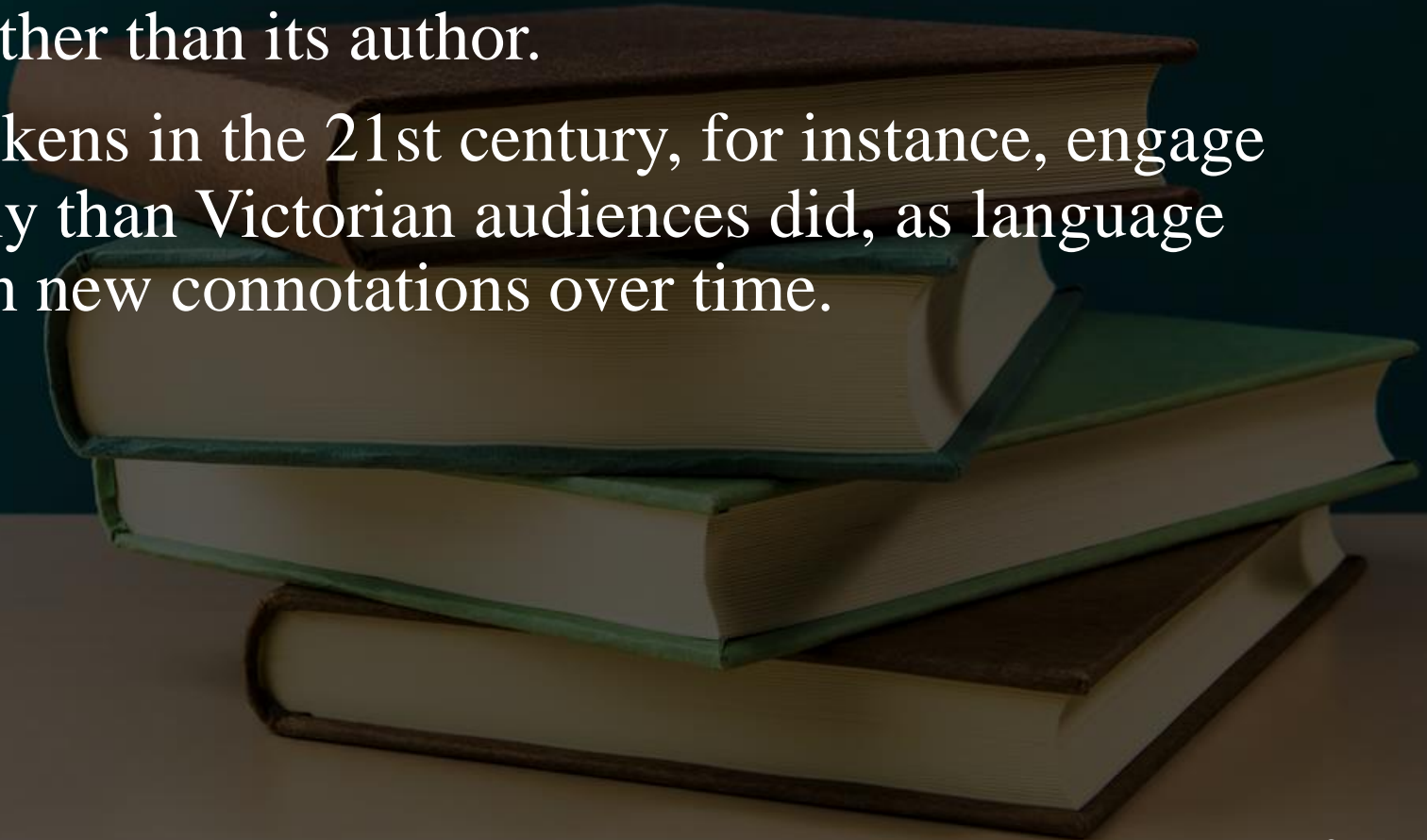


“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Barthes’ essay was groundbreaking but built on earlier ideas. T.S. Eliot’s 1919 essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* also emphasized impersonality in art, though Eliot still valued the poet as a vital source of meaning.
- Similarly, mid-20th-century New Criticism in the United States advocated for analyzing texts independently of their authors, viewing the search for authorial intention as a distraction.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Barthes’ central claim is compelling: the meaning of a literary work is shaped by its readers rather than its author.
- Readers of Charles Dickens in the 21st century, for instance, engage with his work differently than Victorian audiences did, as language evolves, and words gain new connotations over time.



“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- However, Barthes’ argument can be critiqued. First, the relationship between author, text, and reader need not be an either/or proposition. We can explore both the author’s intentions and the evolving meanings a work acquires over time. For example, we can study what Keats intended in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* while appreciating how it resonates differently today.
- Second, reducing literature to a "tissue of signs" risks equating it with something as mundane as a bus timetable or a phone directory. While both use familiar words, literature combines these elements in creative ways that produce infinite possibilities for meaning.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

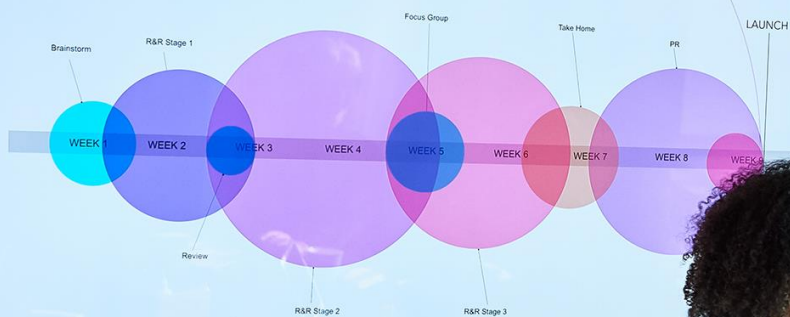
- A more nuanced view might see the author, text, and reader as equal partners in the creation of meaning.
- Context can enhance interpretation: knowing a poem’s author can shed light on its themes.

For instance, recognizing Sylvia Plath as the poet can deepen our understanding of her work, given her life experiences. While Barthes rightly emphasizes the reader’s role in shaping meaning, it’s also essential to acknowledge that texts carry traces of their authors and their contexts, even as they acquire new layers of meaning through readership.

“The Death of the Author” in a Few Words

- Roland Barthes’ influential 1968 essay, “The Death of the Author”, introduced a pivotal concept in literary theory.
- By declaring the 'death of the author,' Barthes challenged traditional notions of authorial authority over the meaning of a text.
- This concise yet impactful essay played a key role in shaping poststructuralist literary theory, which gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in English departments across the United States, alongside the ideas of thinkers like Jacques Derrida.

ROADMAP TO PRODUCT LAUNCH



Presentation



Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Weeks: P. (83-96)

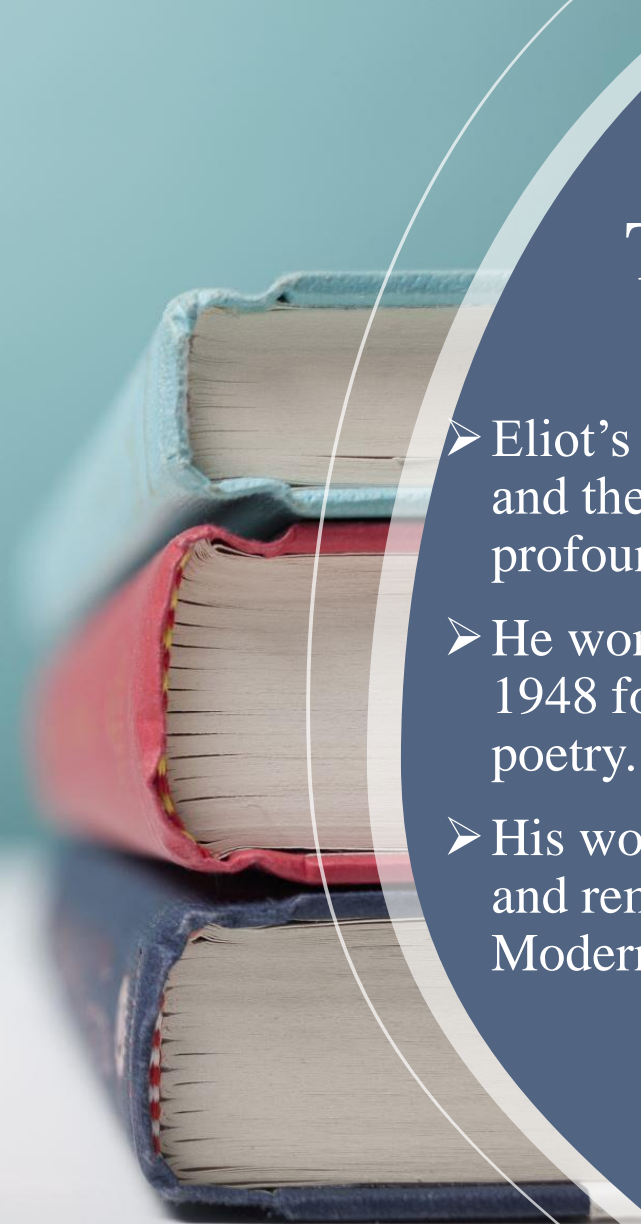
Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965)

T.S. Eliot, or Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965), was a renowned poet, playwright, and literary critic. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Eliot became a key figure in the Modernist literary movement.

His work is characterized by its complexity, use of allusion, and exploration of themes like alienation, spiritual crisis, and the fragmentation of modern life.

He became a British citizen in 1927 and a devout Anglican, both of which deeply influenced his later works.





Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965)

- Eliot's critical essays, such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), had a profound impact on literary theory.
- He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948 for his outstanding contribution to poetry.
- His work influenced a generation of writers and remains central to the study of Modernist literature.



Famous Works of Thomas Stearns Eliot

- “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915): A dramatic monologue capturing the paralysis and existential musings of a modern individual.

Famous opening line: ‘Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky...’

- “**The Waste Land**” (1922): Often considered his masterpiece, this poem delves into post-World War I despair, cultural disintegration, and the search for meaning.
- Known for its fragmented structure and diverse references to mythology, religion, and literature.

Famous Works of Thomas Stearns Eliot

- “Four Quartets” (1936–1942) A set of four long poems reflecting on time, spirituality, and redemption.

Represents his mature voice and religious faith.

- *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935): A verse drama about the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket.

Explores themes of faith, power, and sacrifice.

- “The Hollow Men” (1925): A haunting meditation on emptiness and failure, often quoted for its closing lines: ‘This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper.’

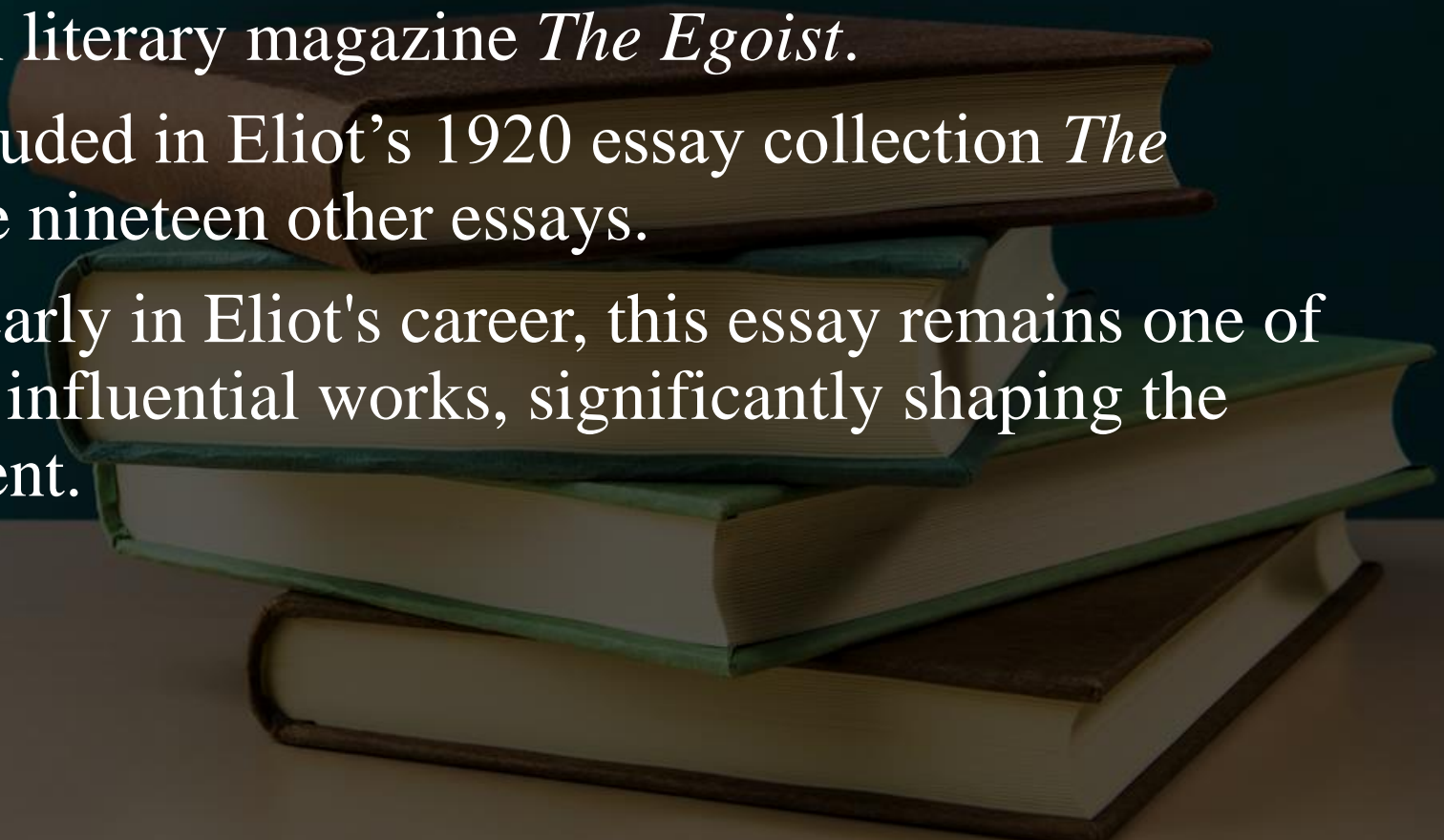
“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” by T.S. Eliot, a critical essay published in 1919, explores the connection between individual poets or authors and the literary tradition that precedes them.

- Eliot contends that great poets achieve distinction not merely through originality but by engaging with the established literary tradition.
- He also proposes that a poet's primary role is not to convey personal emotions but to act as a conduit for the collective emotions and intellectual heritage of the "mind of Europe."

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- T.S. Eliot's 1919 essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” first appeared in the London literary magazine *The Egoist*.
- A year later, it was included in Eliot's 1920 essay collection *The Sacred Wood*, alongside nineteen other essays.
- Despite being written early in Eliot's career, this essay remains one of his most renowned and influential works, significantly shaping the New Criticism movement.



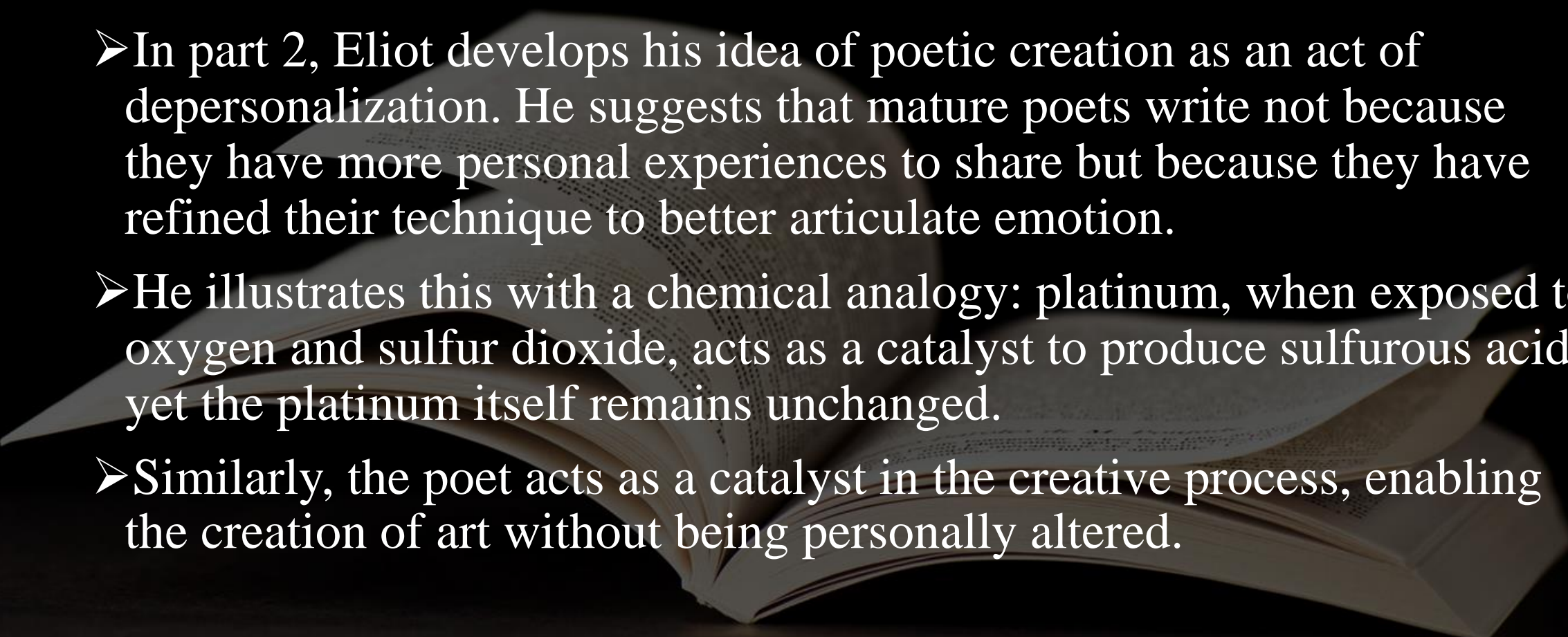
“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- New Criticism emphasizes close reading and focuses on the aesthetic and stylistic aspects of poetry rather than its ideological or biographical context.
- In “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot argues for the separation of art from the artist and redefines tradition as an active engagement with and expansion of the literary and intellectual context of one’s time, rather than mere imitation.
- The essay is divided into three sections: the first defines Eliot’s concept of tradition, the second explores the relationship between poetry and the poet, and the third provides a concise conclusion.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- In part 1, Eliot outlines his concept of literary tradition, emphasizing that great poetry is distinguished by its dialogue with the poetry of the past.
- For Eliot, being “traditional” does not equate to a lack of originality; rather, it reflects an awareness of the entire European literary heritage.
- While innovation and creativity are vital, truly remarkable poets must understand how their work engages with both contemporary and historical contexts.
- Poetry, Eliot asserts, does not exist in isolation; its meaning extends beyond its immediate content, participating in a broader, ongoing conversation within the literary canon. This tradition, however, is not static—it evolves as each generation contributes to and reshapes it. To be part of this tradition requires what Eliot calls a “continual self-sacrifice” and the “extinction of personality.”

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- 
- In part 2, Eliot develops his idea of poetic creation as an act of depersonalization. He suggests that mature poets write not because they have more personal experiences to share but because they have refined their technique to better articulate emotion.
 - He illustrates this with a chemical analogy: platinum, when exposed to oxygen and sulfur dioxide, acts as a catalyst to produce sulfurous acid, yet the platinum itself remains unchanged.
 - Similarly, the poet acts as a catalyst in the creative process, enabling the creation of art without being personally altered.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- Eliot further argues that great art transcends personal emotion, functioning as an aesthetic distillation.
- Instead of expressing unique or intense personal feelings, the poet synthesizes commonplace “feelings, phrases, and images” into a unified “new compound.”
- This compound achieves greatness not through the power of its individual components but through the disciplined “artistic process” that shapes it.
- The resulting work moves beyond personal emotion to reach a universal aesthetic sensibility. At the same time, the poem exists as a self-contained entity while engaging in dialogue with past, present, and future works.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a Nutshell

- In part 3, Eliot concludes by advocating for a shift in critical focus from poets to their poetry.
- He reiterates that the “emotion of art is impersonal” and argues that a poet’s role is not to convey their own “sincere emotion.” Instead, poets serve as a medium through which the collective thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the “mind of Europe” are expressed.



Central ViVa

The background is a dark teal surface with a collage of various stationery items. At the top, there are two wrapped packages: one in white paper with a red patterned band and a gold pen, and another in teal paper with a white patterned band and a gold pen. Below these are several envelopes and cards with different patterns, including floral, geometric, and abstract designs. A gold pen is also visible at the bottom right, resting on a card with a floral pattern.

Thank You

Course Instructor:

Shaon Gharami

Lecturer

Department of English, UGV

Cellular: 01837-637679, Email: shaongharami405@yahoo.com