Systems thinking and cultural relativism

André Lefevere

Summary

Literary canons nowadays have less of a social influence, but institutionalization prevents academics from facing the challenge this presents. If texts can be viewed within the larger context of culture, literary studies may be revitalised. The nature of power and the role of "rewriters" should be studied for the "resocialization" of literature. Systems theory presents a useful base for this endeavour. The principles of the theory are treated, with special attention to the role of patrons and the interface between systems. Examples of the way in which dominant cultures influence dominated systems, are given.

Opsomming

Literêre kanons het deesdae minder van 'n sosiale invloed, maar institusionalisering verhoed dat akademici die uitdagings daarvan die hoof bied. Indien tekste binne die wyer konteks van kultuur gesien word, kan literêre studies nuwe lewe kry. Die aard van mag en die rol van "herskrywers" moet bestudeer word vir die "hersosialisering" van literatuur. Die sisteemteorie bied 'n bruikbare basis hiervoor. Die beginsels van die teorie word behandel, met besondere aandag aan die rol van die beskermheer en die interaksie tussen sisteme. Voorbeelde van die wyse waarop die dominante kultuur gedomineerde sisteme beïnvloed, word gegee.

In many cultures literature has traditionally been studied for two main reasons. One, to offer role-models to the (young) members of the culture and, in doing so, to influence their behaviour in certain situations in such a way that it would not be harmful, or even positively beneficial to the culture as a whole. Two, to teach members of a culture how to write well, i.e. effectively by imitating and/or emulating the way in which those recognized by that culture as great writers, wrote what they have written. Hence, of course, the composition of anthologies and their use in teaching, with the concomitant problems of which writers to pick, and which of their works.

These two traditional reasons for teaching literature are increasingly seen as less and less relevant in the West. First of all,

> the reading of works of literature appears to be playing every day a less and less important role in our culture generally. The complex social function performed in Elizabethan and Jacobean England by going to the theater and in Victorian England by the reading of novels is performed these days by other activities, mostly, so it seems, by watching television (Miller, 1986: 97).

Second, since other media tend to be more and more effective in getting all kinds of models and messages across, it is no longer of primordial importance to teach people to write and speak well.

Not only, then, do the canons of literature exert less social influence than they used to in the past, but the very composition of those canons is no longer a self-evident matter. Nobody who values his or her peace of mind and/or

peaceful retirement will feel called upon to put together a canon of English, German, French, Italian and other literatures these days. The general tendency seems, rather, to pay lip-service to some "great tradition" or other, while teaching and writing about what you feel comfortable with because it has been written about so often. Even "deconstruction is conservative as far as the canon goes" (Miller, 1986: 120). Indeed, it has a vested interest in being that way, since the only way to say relatively new things about the old staples of the canon is to tackle them from all kinds of new critical angles. The more, one might say, the merrier.

There are, in general, two kinds of reactions to this state of affairs in the West. One is to ignore it, and to act as if nothing much has changed, while making certain minor concessions on the fringe (the odd film course in the literature department, for example). To people who feel comfortable with this kind of reaction, canons still

> play the role of institutionalizing idealization: they provide examples of what ideals can be, of how people have used them as stimuli and contexts for their own self-creation, and of when acts in the present can address more than the present (Altieri, 1984: 52).

Yet even they seem to sense a (growing?) lack of social relevance where their canons are concerned. They admit that it is difficult to gain real authority for the canon in the contemporary West, because to do that it is necessary

> to convince large segments of those who wield social power that they should submit themselves to the judgments fostered by an ideal community. This difficulty is one of the many reasons canons are not sufficient instruments for social change (Altieri, 1984: 54).

The other reaction is to by and large accept the loss of social relevance incurred, and to continue the "retreat from the marketplace" that began with the retreat of literary criticism to the academy during the last century. In its mild form this reaction, too, amounts to little more than business as usual, even though the heart is no longer in it:

> the theory industry grinds along, and books, articles, and symposia multiply, but much of the material seems arid and unreal, out of phase with concrete issues in critical practice and pedagogy, and out of touch with human needs and interests (Cain, 184: xi).

In its more rabid form, this kind of reaction tends to extend the perceived lack of validity in literary studies to other areas of intellectual endeavour, and to conclude that we might as well make the best of it, since we are all in the same boat, anyway. This, then, would indeed be

> a strategy for taking up the crisis in the academy in a self-preserving act which . . . fuels the institution with its own impotence (Bove, 1983: xxvii).

Both reactions, interestingly, rely on the inertial mass of institutionalization

to shelter themselves from the necessity to really face the challenge mounted outside these institutions. This, then, may well be the reason for a certain continuing reluctance to look at the institutional basis of much of what is going on in literary studies in the West today: it may, indeed, turn out not to be wise to saw off the branch you happen to be sitting on. On the other hand, it appears more and more likely that the way out of the "crisis in criticism" lies not with more of the same, i.e. more and more interpretations of works belonging to a hazier and hazier canon, but in a "resocialization of literary studies" (McGann, 1985: 16). This resocialization, then, needs to recognize the idea of the autonomy of criticism (and theory) (and, indeed, the autonomy of literary studies as a whole), as "a persistent illusion that has prevented criticism from taking a clear look at itself" (Mitchell, 1982: 610).

If we do, indeed, take a closer look at the institutionalizaton of what we are doing, chances are that the present "crisis" in criticism may lead to the kind of shift of emphasis within literary studies that might give them a new lease of life. We would, then, give up interpreting texts for the sake of *interpreting* them, and we would start seeing texts within the wider context of the culture that produces them, while paying special attention to those within the culture that mediate texts. We would, in other words, come to realize that

> classic texts, while they may or may not originally have been written by geniuses, have certainly been written and rewritten by the generations of professors and critics who make their living by them. They are the mirrors of culture as culture is interpreted by those who control the literary establishment (Tompkins, 1985: 37).

And, we might add, not just the literary establishment, but the establishment pure and simple. We must, in other words, come to terms with the role or roles played by power in cultures or, if you prefer, semiological systems. To do so, we could do worse than follow the examples of both Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault.

> By reminding us of the artificiality and undeniably arbitrary status of semiological systems ... Barthes reminds us not only of their unnatural status (they are modes of discourse given to us neither by God nor by the nature of things) but also of the much-avoided (because uncomfortable) corrolary that these systems are put into operation, put into force *by force.* Vast, diffuse and nearly anonymous "deciding groups", establishments of power, in so elaborating the perimeters and structures of a language, define our ways of thinking and behaving and our norms of value: the individual has no say, and neither does that sentimental construction called "the people" (Lentricchia, 1980: 132).

Foucault, on the other hand, refines the notion of power in semiological systems by pointing out that the positive part it plays can be much greater than the negative part immediately associated with it, which tends to call censorship to mind:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold

> good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as
> a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure,
> forms knowledge, produces discourse. (Foucault, 1980: 119)

A new discourse on literary studies (also licensed, of course, by the institut-
ions created for it by those in power) would react in a third way to the loss of
relevance ascribed to literature and literary studies at the beginning of this
paper. Since models and idea(l)s are communicated more effectively outside
of literature (even though other media will still use literary texts as their
basis), and since those engaged in literary studies no longer see it as their task
to inculcate models and ways of behavior, they become free to look at the
ways in which literature is designed to inculcate these models and ways of
behavior, while leaving the reader free to do with models and ways of
behavior as he pleases. If we no longer interpret individual texts with a view
to influencing people's lives, we may begin to look at the factors which make
a culture shape works of literature in such a way that they reflect at least some
of its values. We may then begin to realize that a society may need to rewrite
older works that are seen to belong to its canon, or works imported from
different societies, in a way that is compatible with the values perceived of as
either dominant or peripheral in it at a certain stage in its history. We would
then also begin to realize that the part played by "rewriters", such as critics,
translators, anthologizers and historiographers is of vital importance in any
attempt to integrate a text into a culture. The study of the functioning of
literary texts inside a culture therefore becomes a study in manipulation, the
relevance of which is not far to seek "in the most manipulative culture human
beings have ever experienced" (Scholes, 1985: 15).

It is obvious that any attempted "resocialization of literature" of this kind is
in need of some kind of methodology that will have to be different from
current methodologies in that it will have to be able to deal with such
elements as power and the discourses it creates, the institutions in which those
discourses flourish or come to grief, and the power of rewriting in the intro-
duction of texts generated outside a given discourse into that discourse. I have
stated in various papers that I would regard a methodology inspired by
systems thinking as a good candidate for this function because the concept of
system allows us to describe power in a fairly "neutral" way, i.e. one that does
not immediately unleash all kinds of passions, particularly when we are trying
to describe a situation in which two systems interact, or have interacted. It
would allow us to describe these kinds of situations without recourse to terms
like "inferior" or "superior", "right" or "wrong". We would still be using
words like "dominant" and "dominated", but they would be understood as
technical terms. We could, in other words, describe these situations in a
manner that does justice to the relativity of all systems, precisely by focusing
on the power that is the central category in them all. By making use of a
methodology known and used in other discourses that make up our present
system, we would certainly not "insulate, if not isolate, literary study from
other spheres of contemporary knowledge" (Martin, 1983: xxvii), thereby
constructively reversing a trend that does not do literary studies much good,

since a society will, in the end, abandon those subsystems which are not perceived as productive any longer. The fate of astrology, which went from a respected discipline to a relatively obscure hobby for quacks in not too long a lapse of time, should give us pause.

Far from being rigid and more than slightly sinister, a system is in a state of continuous tension and change. If a society can be described as a system, it will consist of different subsystems, such as literature, medicine, law, each with its own discourse. In each of these systems as, indeed, in society as a whole, there will be those who are roughly happy with things as they are, and those who want change. Those in power in a society will, therefore, have to see to it that they achieve and maintain some kind of equilibrium, both between the various subsystems and between the various individuals who make up the society as a whole. Those in power will, therefore, indicate the parameters they regard as acceptable for the discourses in the various sub-systems and they will do so on the basis of what is commonly called ideology, but which is by no means a rigid and monolithic "given" either. Rather

> ideology, we might tentatively claim, is a set of discourses which wrestle over interests which are in some way relevant to the maintenance or interrogation of power structures central to a whole form of social and historical life. (Eagleton, 1985: 116).

If the whole society, the whole system is, therefore, controlled on the basis of "ideology", the various subsystems are, in their turn, controlled by those who have become "experts" in them. The various subsystems have, historically, evolved their own specific discourse, which determines what is valid or not, what is worth pursuing or not inside a given subsystem: "any intellectual system permits certain questions to be raised while rejecting others as irrelevant" (Hohendahl, 1982: 44). Chemists, for example, no longer seem to feel they have to investigate the putative existence of "phlogiston", just as fewer and fewer literary journals are still likely to print speculations as to the size of the Macbeth family. If the whole society, then, is controlled on the basis of ideology by those we shall call "patrons", the literary system inside a society is controlled on the basis of a poetics by those we shall call "rewriters", i.e. the translators, the critics, historiographers and anthologizers of literature. A poetics, then, is the code with which a literary system operates, which sets the parameters for the writing of literature and, to a certain extent also the discourse on literature, in a certain society at a certain time. A poetics consists of two components: one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, symbols, prototypical characters and situations; the other is a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be in society. This concept plays an important part in the selection of themes which must be relevant to society for a work of literature to be noticed. The theme of the "maiden seduced and abandoned", for example, long and staple theme in the western novel, has been made largely obsolete, except for comic relief, by advances in the technology of birth control.

Needless to say, neither a given ideology nor a given poetics is eternal.

They are historical phenomena and, as such, liable to change. Indeed the tension in both the social and the literary systems originates in differences of opinion about the viability of a certain ideology, a certain poetics, and these differences of opinion not infrequently lead to a struggle for the domination of either system. An ideology, a poetics which occupied a central position inside a system may be demoted and become peripheral or even disappear. Nazism, for example, ran through the whole course of peripheral to central to peripheral in little more than 27 years. Romanticism, on the other hand, took markedly longer to displace Neo-classicism and then lasted much longer in its central position.

In the literary system, rewriters are in charge of the discourse, i.e. their "function is to preserve or reproduce discourse, but in order that it should circulate within a closed community, according to strict regulations" (Foucault, 1976: 225). Rewriters reach their position as "experts" after a more or less "long march" through the institutions society has created: they write Ph.D's, books and articles, they teach and form their own schools and they go to conferences to proselitize. Patrons are, as a rule, not very concerned with the specifics of the discourse of a given system, as long as it does not go beyond ideologically acceptable parameters. Patrons take care of rewriters and experts in other fields in that they provide them with economic subsistence and a certain status. Patronage can be exerted by persons (not necessarily just the Medici, Maecenas or Louis XIV), groups of persons (a religious body, say, or a political party), a social class, a royal court, publishers and/or the non-literary media. Rewriters who represent the "reigning orthodoxy" at any time in the development of a literary system are close to the ideology of the patrons dominating that phase in the history of their society. To put it somewhat more bluntly: "The history of literature is to a great extent the history of the generosity of individual rulers and aristocrats" (Schuecking, 1961: 92). And of course also the history of their lack of generosity towards those they did not elect to support. Nor should that history be limited to rulers and aristocrats, for that relegates the part played by patronage in literary systems much too firmly to a distant, and therefore safe past, while obscuring the fact that the function of patronage, once performed mainly by rulers and aristocrats, remains a major factor to be reckoned with in any literary system. It simply has been taken over by patrons of a different kind in a later stage of historical evolution. In the past (and in totalitarian societies of the present), the economic and the status components of patronage were often bestowed by one and the same person or institution. With the split between "high" and "low" culture in the West economic gratification often does not necessarily entail status among the rewriters.

Once more, it goes without saying that the system is not rigid and deterministic: writers and rewriters may go against the prevailing ideology if they so wish, but they do so at their own risk and peril. Many, therefore, and not of the meanest, elect to stay within the parameters given. Consider the role of the "Essex rebellion" in English literature, for example: the Earl of Essex attempts to remove Queen Elizabeth's "evil counsellors" by force. He fails to do so and is tried for high treason and executed. (Read: within a given

patronage group, one faction tries to redefine the ideological parameters to its advantage; it does not succeed and is eliminated). The Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare had dedicated *The Rape of Lucrece* is executed with him. Shakespeare's company had been paid to perform *Richard II* the day before the rebellion, prompting Elizabeth to remark: "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" (Honigmann, 1985: 40). Shakespeare had written *Troilus and Cressida* during or just after the Essex rebellion. The fact that Essex could easily be seen as Achilles in the play, and Southampton as Patroclus,

> was not appreciated, or not fully appreciated, until it was ready for performance – at which point, when Shakespeare and his fellows asked themselves whether they might give offence, it was deemed prudent not to proceed (Honigmann, 1985: 41).

(Read: the writer prefers not to offend the victorious faction in the patronage group and decides to wait for a propitious change before producing the play.) Similarly, in 1601, Fulke Greville destroyed his play *Antony and Cleopatra:*

> seeing the like instance not poetically, but really fashioned in the Earle of Essex then falling ... This sudden descent of such greatness ... stir'd up the Author's second thoughts, to be careful ... (Smith, 1907: 156).

Or take another case of patronage setting ideological parameters. The power is now no longer that of a monarch and her court, but much more mundanely, though no less effectively, that of Charles Mudie and W.H. Smith.

> The censorious, moralistic owners of the two major circulating libraries (in Victorian England), Mudie and Smith effectively monopolized Victorian literary production, determining both the form and character of what was actually written. Both men actively intervened in the selection of books for their libraries, and regarded themselves as the protectors of public morality. (Eagleton, 1984: 58)

They also insisted on the form of the novel in three volumes, which was to be the bane of many a Victorian novelist and was responsible for a lot of what is now decried as "padding" in Victorian fiction. Witness the following contemporary remark: "Messieurs and mesdames the critics are wont to point out the weakness of second volumes; they are generally right, simply because a story which would have made a tolerable book (the common run of stories) refuses to fill three books" (Gissing, 1976: 161).

That writers have always been aware of the client/patron relationship in which they have found themselves, can easily be illustrated by a few random quotations. The first one is a couplet written by Hugo Primas, a twelfth century poet writing the following Latin couplet addressed to a patron who obviously did not give him all he wanted: "You offal of the clergy, dregs of the bishops, stupid fool/ Who gave me a coat without lining in the heart of winter" (in Klopsch, 1985: 342). A few centuries later, the French poet DuBellay writes in "The Courtier Poet":

> Be wise, and satisfied with the judgment of those/Who find everything good, who you want to please/Who are able to advance you in goods and positions/Who can give you rich earnings. (Imbert, 1985: 31)

And finally, here is Goethe's Tasso, describing the court of Ferrara:

> Here is my fatherland, here is the circle/In which my soul is pleased to dwell/I listen here, I pay attention to every hint/Here speak the voices of experience, wisdom and taste. (Goethe, 1979: 449–452)

Or take the case of two writers switching from one kind of patronage to another. John Gower, Chaucer's contemporary,

> was an independent country gentleman, whose means allowed him to write in Latin, French and English verse in the hopes of edifying his countrymen. Even so, his English work, the *Confessio Amantis,* as he tells us, was written in response to a direct request by Richard II for "some new thing", and when it was completed Gower wrote a final passage praising the King. Some years later, the poet found it expedient to omit this passage and to insert a new preface, praising Henry IV! [who had replaced Richard II on the throne]. (Bennet, 1970: 6)

Gower obviously was not in direct need of the economic side of patronage, but he wanted to make sure that he would be counted among those who espoused the right ideology, for the time being.

Similarly, in February 1817 the London publishing house of Sherwood, Neely and Jones published the poet Southey's early drama *Wat Tyler,* originally written in 1794, for the first time. In the meantime, Southey had changed over from the radical to the conservative ideological side and, not to needlessly antagonize his new patrons, he tried to get an injunction forbidding the publication of his youthful radical work. The judge refuses, but the publishers withdraw the book anyway. Immediately afterwards, though, Hone publishes the play at the same price, together with a preface attacking Southey as an apostate to liberty.

> The radical campaign to discomfit the laureate (Southey had become Poet Laureate of England) and the ministers for whom he spoke continued with ever cheaper editions, some of which sold for a little as twopence. Sales were rumored to have reached as high as sixty thousand copies, far exceeding the success of any of Southey's legitimate poems. (Manning, 1985: 110)

Or, take an illustration of the specific discourse of the literary system. In his *Parzival,* I, 478 ff, Wolfram von Eschenbach apologizes to the reader for the fact that

> other stories about Artus, the Knight of May, always take place around Pentecost or among the blossoms of May. He is always allowed to breathe the sweet air of May. In this story, on the other hand, things get a little confused since I mention both the month of May and the falling of snow in one and the same breath (Eschenbach, 1981).

Similarly, and perhaps an even more telling example: after describing a tournament down to every last detail, Wolfram exclaims: "how happy I would be if I could see the kind of clash I depict in my story with my own eyes, just once" (Eschenbach, 1981: 446 ff (I)).

It is also significant that writers are highly aware of the restrictive nature of the poetics of their time, i.e. they know what is acceptable and what is not, and they often know that they are mainly running variations on a theme. The Provencal poet Gui d'Ussel, e.g., states quite openly: "I'll say the same in another manner,/That way my song will appear new" (in Bergnet, 1983: 203). Given the basic situation of theme and variation, writers also know that nothing is, in the end, really new, that everything needs to be expressed within the parameters of the accepted discourse, which may change gradually in their functional components, but tend to change much slower in their inventory component. Musset put it succinctly as follows in "A Spectacle in an Armchair":

> Nothing belongs to anything, everything belongs to everyday./ You must be ignorant like a schoolteacher/To flatter yourself that you have spoken one single word/That no one on this world said before you. (Imbert, 1985: 42)

If we start thinking in terms of two systems in contact, or "interface", things get much more complicated. We are then dealing with the interaction between the image one culture projects of itself in its literature, and the image projected by another culture in its own literature. We have two sets of ideological parameters and two sets of poetics, two sets of patrons and two sets of rewriters. To make it all even more complicated, neither ideology nor poetics, patronage nor rewriters are monolithic entities. Those who feel unhappy with the ideology and/or the poetics of their own system will plan to use (rewrite) elements taken from the other system to further their own ends. On the other hand, those who are happy with things as they are will have little time for the other system. At most they will condescend to rewrite it in a belittling, or, more often, patronizing manner.

In the end, of course, the choices are, as always, circumscribed by power. The culture that dominates can pick and choose what it wants from the dominated culture, and can rewrite that culture in its own image, much as it can impose its own image on it, to a great extent. Needless to say, both images will be ideologically colored, but the one the dominant system propagates of the dominated system will be much more influential than the one the dominated system creates of the dominant system. The dominated culture does have fewer choices: its members will have to acquire the language of the dominated culture to some extent and they will have to learn to move within its universe of discourse with some assurance at least. As is well known, members of the dominated culture often tend to overdo this, in their desire to fit in, and this mode of behavior is sure to give rise to an unending stream of anecdotes on the subject among members of the dominant culture.

In literature the most productive roles in a situation of interface are played by those rewriters who, often unwittingly, create an "historical moment" (or a

"window of opportunity", to coin a phrase) for a certain text or certain texts to move from one literature into another. If a (re)writer in culture A is attracted to a text in culture B, often because that text has either ideological or poetological characteristics (or both) he or she feels are lacking in his or her own work or culture, he or she will champion the cause of that text in his or her culture, with varying degrees of success according to the influence he or she is able to exert. Let me, in closing, illustrate this process with a few short remarks on Tagore's auto-translations.[1]

Tagore's translations were introduced to England by William Rothenstein, who showed them to Yeats, who read the poems aloud, in Rothenstein's house, to a group including, among others, Ezra Pound. Yeats, the poet, thought he had found here "an innocence, a simplicity that one does not find elsewhere in literature" (1916: xxi). And these were, of course, precisely the features Yeats had been striving to attain in his own poetry. In the same introduction Yeats also "naturalizes" Tagore within the dominant ideological parameters, by "rewriting" him into a saint, a mystic from exotic India. That "rewriting" of Tagore was made much more obvious, and the "naturalization" proceeded to far greater lengths in the citation accompanying the award of the Nobel prize to Tagore. That citation reads, in part:

> the true inwardness of this work most clearly and purely revealed in the efforts exerted in the Christian mission-field throughout the world. More especially, the preaching of the Christian religion has provided in many places the first definite impulse toward a revival and regeneration of the vernacular language, i.e. its liberation from the bondage of an artificial tradition, and consequently also toward a development of its capacity for nurturing and sustaining a vein of living and natural poetry (Frenz, 1969: 127).

We are, in other words, faced with Tagore the crypto-Christian missionary. Yet, when the dominant poetics in English poetry changed soon after, Tagore's poetry was rejected on literary grounds, whereas his speeches against nationalism put him well beyond the acceptable ideological parameters of the time.

The "missionary" quotation highlights another recurrent future of cultural interface. Powers within the dominant culture will want to disseminate what they consider its central ideology among members of the dominated culture. To that end, they will often encourage literary expression among members of the dominated culture, in their own language, and even promote it, on condition that it keeps well within the ideological parameters required.

I have given the reasons for sketching a methodology of literary studies that might be able to deal with a "resocialized" study of literature, one that can accommodate such categories as power, rewriting and institutionalization. I have also given my reasons for espousing a methodology based on systems thinking. If we see literary texts again as produced at a certain time, in a certain place, under certain constraints both poetological and ideological in nature, we shall no longer fall into the trap of reading literature for its "timeless truths", i.e. we shall no longer regard all literary works as "essen-

tially agents of something greater than themselves that is itself uncircums-cribed by historical context" (Patterson, 1985: 79). If we no longer read a literature for the role models and ideals it provides, the value of a civilization will no longer stand or fall with the perceived "excellence" of its literary output. If, in other words, literature is again circumscribed by historical context, if its genesis can be analysed, rather than its timeless lessons learned, we are well on the way to a mental framework in which we can analyse literatures produced in different cultures and their interactions without being tied to the yardstick of "timeless excellence" which needs to be claimed either by both, or in favor of one or the other. We shall then be able to see what ideological parameters one culture deems acceptable for its view of the other – think of the idealized view of India among the British before the publication of James Mills' History in 1818 and the distinctly less flattering view which began to prevail soon after. We shall also be able to see which features of the one culture were deemed acceptable by the other, and which were totally rejected. It will further be possible to analyze the ways in which the Universe of discourse in which members of both cultures move clash, interact with, adapt to each other, even create a new, mixed Universe of Discourse, just as various degrees of mixing can be observed in both the languages in interface, not to mention mixed ideologies and mixed poetics, or the transplantation of certain elements of culture A's poetics into culture B.

If we look at these things in this way categories like "inferiority" or "supe-riority" do not enter into the analysis, except at the most basic level which made the domination of one culture by the other possible in the end: that of technology. What we are left with, for the rest, is an inexhaustible stream of case-studies of cultural and literary manipulation, and those we can feel justified in offering to students who

> need from us now the kind of knowledge and skill that will enable them to make sense of their worlds, to determine their own interests, both individual and collective, to see through the manipulations of all sorts of texts in all sorts of media (Scholes, 1985: 15).

Note

1. For the factual evidence of what follows I am deeply indepted to Ms. Mahasweta Sengupta of the University of Massachussettts at Amherst.

References

Altieri, Charles. 1984. An idea and ideal of a literary canon. In: Von Hallberg, Robert (ed.). *Canons*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Bennett, H.S. 1970. *English books and readers*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bergner, Heinz (ed.). 1983. *Lyrik des Mittelalters*. Stuttgart: Reclam.

Bové, Paul A. 1983. Variations of authority: some deconstructive transformations of the New Criticism. In: Arac, Jonathan; Godzich, Wlad; Martin, Wallace (eds.). *The

Yale critics: deconstruction in America. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cain, William E. 1984. *The crisis in criticism.* Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Eagleton, Terry. 1984. *The function of criticism.* London: Verso.

Eagleton, Terry. 1985. Ideology and scholarship. In: McGann, Jerome J. (ed.). *Historical studies and literary criticism.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Eschenbach, Wolfram von. 1981. *Parzival.* 2 vols. Stuttgart: Reclam.

Foucault, Michel. 1976. *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.* New York: Harper and Row.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/knowledge.* New York: Pantheon.

Feuz, Horst (ed.). *Nobel lectures on literature.* London: The Nobel Foundation.

Gissing, George. 1976. *New Grub Street.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goethe, J.W. von. 1979. *Torquato Tusso.* Stuttgart: Reclam.

Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. 1982. *The institution of criticism.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Honigmann, E.A.J. 1985. The date and revision of Troilus and Cressida. In: McGann, Jerome J. (ed.). *Textual criticism and literary interpretation.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Imbert, Jacques (ed.). 1985. *Anthologie des poetes francais.* Paris: Editions Saint-Germain-des-Pres.

Klopsch, Paul. 1985. *Lateinische Lyrik des Mittelalters.* Stuttgart: Reclam.

Lentricchia, Frank. 1980. *After the New Criticism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Manning, Peter J. 1985. The Hone-ing of Byron's "Corsair". In: McGann, Jerome J. (ed.). *Textual criticism and literary interpretation.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Martin, Wallace. 1983. Introduction. In: Arac, Jonathan; Godzich, Wlad; Martin, Wallace (eds.). *The Yale critics: deconstruction in America.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McGann, Jerome J. 1985. Introduction: a point of reference. In: McGann, Jerome J. (ed.). *Historical studies and literary criticism.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Miller, J. Hillis. 1986. On edge: the crossrays of contemporary criticism. in: Eares, Morris; Fischer, Michael (eds.). *Romanticism and contemporary criticism.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Mitchell, W.J.T. 1982. *Critical inquiry* and the ideology of pluralism. in: *Critical Inquiry* 8(4).

Patterson, Lee. 1985. The logic of textual criticism and the way of genius. In: McGann, Jerome J. *Textual criticism and literary interpretation.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Scholes, Robert. 1985. *Textual power.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Scheuching, L.L. 1961. *Soziologie der literarischen Geschlachbildung.* Berlin and Munich: Francke.

Smith, Nowell (ed.). 1907. *Sir Fulle Greville's life of Sir Philip Sidney.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tompkins, Jane. 1985. *Sensational designs.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Yeats, W.B. 1916. Introduction. In: Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali.* New York: Macmillan.