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What is literature according to eagleton

Terry Eagleton, in an introduction to his book Literary Theory: Introduction (1983) titled What Is Literature?, tries to offer the reader different perspectives on what the term literature envelops and how each but is acceptable to the degree, miss mark on impeccable explanation. By broad example, Eagleton tries to illustrate his assertion of literature based on social construct, ideology and value judgments: We can drop once and for all the illusions that category literature is a goal because it is eternally given and unearthly. Anything can be literature and anything that is considered unchanged and undoubtedly literature – Shakespeare, for example – may no longer be literature. The first definition Eagleton offers claims literature is imaginative writing in the sense of fiction or writing, which is not literally true – clearly a false claim, because texts such as the sermons on Francis Bacon's essays, John Donne, Bunyan's spiritual autobiography, Hobbes Leviathan (1651) and Clarendon's History Rebellion (1702-04) have formed a removable part of the literary canon. Several historical texts, such as Gibbon's history of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire (1776-89), philosophical text, for example, the Plato Symposium (385-370 BC) and even instruction manuals such as Machiavelli's Prince (1532) together with several speeches, letters, treatises and maxims – texts that are not always fictitious or imaginative – are read and studied today as literature. Thus, the distinction between facts and fiction cannot be an ideal form of assessment. This can be illustrated by the case of science fiction writing. In his 1865 sci-fi novel From Earth to the Moon, Jules Verne described a projectile, a capsule shot of a canon that could be used for space exploration and landing on the Moon. The invention of such technology may have turned out to be a distant or even impossible dream back in the nineteenth century. However, humanity, capable of accessing distant realms in space, became a reality in the late 1960s, when Neil Armstrong formed mankind's first footprint on the moon. In other words, fiction gave way to fact. It could then be argued that what we believe to be science fiction could now possibly become a reality in the future. For example, using the influence of industrialization and assembly line techniques in society as a reference point, Karel Čapek wrote a sci-fi narrative in 1921 entitled Rossum's Universal Robots, where he described factories making artificial people (or robots as he called them) to facilitate human work, just as Aldous Huxley would imagine a massive production of flesh and blood by people a decade later in Brave New World (1932). Interestingly, the use of robots today in the twenty-first century replaces human work on the assembly lines. The vision of robots in science fiction, waiting for robotic servants, robot teachers, robot secretaries, even robot companions for singles is now a reality. Thus, what was previously considered to be a scientific fiction could now be seen as a fact, almost as a project in the near future written by manufacturers of artificial intelligence. In the case of religious texts, there might be another inability to distinguish fact from fiction. Although Darwin's evolutionary theory and the fittest survival of his species of origin (1859) has come scientifically tested and accepted around the world, several communities still have faith in religious texts that describe human creation with supernatural forces. The Holy Bible and Mahabharata, along with several other religious and spiritual texts, are read in the modern era as both fact as well as fiction. What can be read as a fact can still be read as fictional, and it is that Eagleton rejects this criterion for evaluating literature. Moreover, Eagleton rightly argues that if literature includes a lot of factual writing, it also excludes quite a bit of fiction, such as Batman and Superman comics and graphic novels, which were excluded from academia for a long time until paraliterature began to be taken seriously in the late twentieth century. Space travel and the creation of robots, which are considered fiction in the past, are the reality of the modern era, proving that imaginary writing does not remain in the qualifications of literature. Faith Religious Texts - a fact for some, fiction for others. Moving from literature as a definition of fiction after this kind of assessment hole fell short of its second definition – literature defined by Russian formalism, according to which speech was accepted as literary only if it gave way to the alienation of language. In other words, literature is writing that transforms and reinforces the normal language, deviates systematically from everyday speech and is made up of devices, including sound, imagery, rhythm, syntax, meter, rhyme, narrative techniques, etc. These devices were designed to defame readers with the language they used in their daily conversations, or in the words of russian critic Roman Jakobson, they had committed organized violence that was persuading ordinary speech. Text qualifies as literature only if it succeeded. As Eagleton notes, Literary work was neither a vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality, nor the embodiment of some transcendental truth. This was an important fact, the operation of which could be analysed, rather than being able to test the machine. It was made of words, not from objects or feelings, it was a mistake to see it as an expression of the author's mind. According to the formalist definition then, texts such as Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Through the Looking Glass (1871) could be classified as literature simply because they were filled with the dismissal and semantic-syntactic deviancy, especially as a nonsense poem or limericks. As critic Diane Ponterotto points out in her essay on nonsense poetry, playing with language structure is our way of learning how language works. Ponterotto also explains that readers of the meaningless poem are drawn into a world in which natural order is distorted, and that they begin to question the meaning of known words, looking for meaning in words they do not recognize. For example, in his poem Jabberwocky (1871) from Through the Looking Glass, Carroll uses phrases like vorpal sword, manxome foe, and uffish thoughts, meaning poem, perfectly. The combination of sounds may be alien, but the reader is able to make sense of them in both the poetic system and the phonological one, creating for himself a cognitive horizon where he simultaneously associates and soars with the language of the text. The texts of the formalist, content and context of Carroll — the dark recesses of the human mind, the bleak reality of the growing old, the chessboard as a metaphor for life and destiny — there's no point. To illustrate the formalist definition below, one could say that Jonathan Swift's Voyage to Lilliput from his collection Gulliver's Travels (1726) is not a political allegory of satirising eighteenth-century England. Rather, the political milieu characterized by the self-aggrandisement of the British, poverty of the working class, corruption by Whigs and Tories, and the favoritism and nepotism of the English Parliament provided a useful opportunity for the construction of the allegory, which is celebrated as a famous work of literature. Eagleton argues critically that the definition of formalists depends on a universal norm from which literary language differs. However, it is not possible to define a normal everyday language. Language that some might consider ordinary, others may be dissolved in a complex way, which challenges the claim that literature is defined by alienation. In addition, any deviation from everyday language may not be poetic or literary, such as street slang. The African-American community, which lives in ghetto areas such as Queens, Harlem and the Bronx, speaks converted, personalized English, which is clearly a deviation from the correct English, but this deviation is not always rated as literary. Eagleton also argues that the definition of formalista would exclude all realist and naturalist writing, non-linguistically self-confident and which do not deviate from the norm in any surprising way. It is therefore a completely unreliable method of qualification and categorisation of literature. Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky - considered literary not by its content, but by its syntax, unusual vocabulary, and estranging, defamiliarising quality. Eagleton also suggests that literature could be defined as nepragmatic discourse: Unlike biology textbooks and notes, for a milkman it doesn't serve an immediate practical purpose, but must be accepted as referring to the general condition. He points out how the text is written is more of a priority than what the text actually says. He calls this kind of literature a self-referential language, which in his words is a language that refers to himself. However, this definition of literature deprifs readers of topics that are written because the emphasis is on the way the text is written, not what the text is. This definition indicates the style of the writer, not what the writer is trying to express with his writing. For example, the fact that the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda chooses to write his poetry in a complex, fragmented style to shock readers from coincidence is more important than the issues related to post-colonial identity, war and violence in Latin America, which he discusses in his poems. His famous poem Ode to tomato (1954) should be seen as a literary achievement of its divided, fragmented style rather than its hints of mixing culture and race as a result of Chile's colonial past. Critic Roland Bleiker argued that Neruda's poetry aimed to distort visions to challenge the entrenched forms of representation that have come to curb our understanding of socio-political reality. Going by definition to literature as nepragmatic discourse, yet distorted visions presented in Neruda's poetry are more important than the socio-political reality of Latin America. Ode to tomatoes, Neruda uses the image of tomatoes (an important latin American and Spanish agricultural product, often a resident and carnival symbol of Tomatina) to comment on complex political topics and reaches out to its readers to create an idea of unity and unity in the face of division and racial diversity in Chile. But this sociopolitical context is less important than the symbol itself, offering a unique, off-beat style of writing. Eagleton argues that this definition is weak because each piece of literature then becomes too subjective and leaves a huge space for interpretation. According to him: This leaves the definition of literature along with how someone decides and therefore the literature cannot be objectively defined. According to the definition of literature, Neruda Ode to tomato would be seen as a literary achievement in its fragmented style rather than its hints of cultural and racial confusion as a result of Chile's colonial past. Eagleton's next definition calls for literature like any text that holds value as any kind of writing, for some reason or another to someone's value greatly. Not only is literature associated with your perception of value, but these value judgments also vary over time and in different communities that are embedded in the prevailing ideology. Eagleton defines ideology as a form of feeling, valuing, perceiving, and believing in a kind of connection with the maintenance and reproduction of social power and argues that one ideology is constantly influencing how one reads and interprets the text. Therefore, this definition becomes very subjective, because different people would choose to evaluate different aspects of the text. This subjectivity in relation to the value that oneexpies to text can be analysed using an example of paralterity or popular fiction. The term paraliterature was introduced in the late twentieth century to refer to literature that runs parallel, as an important other, to the dominant elitist literature. Literary critic Christopher Pawling, in his essay Introduction: Popular Fiction: Ideology or Utopia (1984), insists that for a long time, the value of judgments made by elite scholars rejected paraliterature – popular literature of the masses, especially bourgeot or educated in the middle class – as useless by studying in the academic field. Only scientists and critics such as Pierre Macherey, John Cawelti, Umberto Eco and Darko Suvin began to promote the importance of bringing paraliterature into the academic field that it was taken seriously. This is an excellent example of how value judgments work. For the middle class, paraliterature used to hold value as a form of entertainment and avoid reality, but for elite scientists, it was worthless. This dichotomy between canonical literature and paralyticterature has also been examined by the literary scientist Raymond Williams, who discusses in his book Marxism and Literature (1977) how three cultural groups exist at any time – dominant, residual and new. As the name suggests, the dominant group is the most powerful force in cultural creation, but the remaining group contains the impact of old cultural practices on modern societies, consciously or unconsciously, and the new group promotes new cultural ideas and practices that are constantly created in society by groups and individuals. All three groups different value judgments and choose to evaluate certain types of art and literature based on the different social ideologies to which they belong. Another example of subjectivity defining literature as a value-based text would be the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature to an American musician and lyricist, Bob Dylan in 2016. Some sections of society challenged the songwriter as a poet, arguing that when the Nobel Committee gives the literary prize to the musician, it misses the opportunity to pay tribute to the writer, and condemned the Nobel Prize committee for diluting the literary authority. Others, however, celebrated the event as a revolution that brought music and literature together and gave lyricists the same credibility as poets and authors, closing a large gap between high art and low-forehead commercial art in one big leap. It shows how the definition of literature is never the same for two people because of its subjectivity. In the current post-modern era, popular fiction such as James Bond novels by Ian Fleming, the secret and detective novels of Agatha Christie and the sci-fi works of Isaac Asimov have been absorbed into literary canons due to recent value judgments. Popular fiction or para-literature is often excluded from the literary canon. Eagleton's essay thus makes several true statements with strong reasoning and toward questioning, revealing that literature cannot be studied objectively. Since literature is ultimately based on judgments of social construct, ideology and value, it is too broad and subjective to be defined specifically.

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