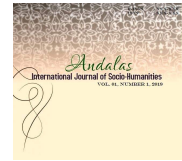




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Article

# Literary Criticism In The Post-Truth Era

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### A B S T R A C T

Post truth relates to circumstances whereby objective facts are less influential in shaping the opinion of the public, rather appealing to personal belief and emotion. Post truth era is bordering a blurry line between lies and truths, dishonesty and honesty, nonfiction and fiction. The entire phenomenon of post truth is about an individual's opinion being worth more than the facts. As such, the present paper seeks to understand new insights or perspectives in literary criticism in the post truth era. The criticism of the literature was always based on broad schools of thoughts/theories, which were employed for many centuries. Some of the traditional approaches the paper highlights include: formalistic criticism, biographical criticism, historical criticism, gender criticism, psychological criticism, sociological criticism, mythological criticism, reader-response criticism, and deconstructionist criticism. Equally, the paper extensively analyzes some of the new perspectives or insights to literary criticism in the post truth era: reflective approach, didactic approach, partisan approach, and religious approach. In reflective approach to literature criticism in the post truth era, the meaning in the literature is reflected by the outside of its own being. On the other hand, in didactic approach to literature criticism, truth and meaning is taught in the literature. Moreover, in partisan approach to literature criticism, there is the truthful meaning that is already known and can be found in the literature. Lastly, in the religious approach to literature criticism in post truth era, the meaning and truth is the literature itself, while the outside world has nothing to do with it.

## INTRODUCTION

Post truth is defined as denoting or relating to circumstances whereby objective facts are less influential in shaping the opinion of the public than appeals to personal belief and emotion (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). Cambridge Dictionary (2017) also defined post truth as relating

to a situation where people have more likelihood of accepting an argument based on their beliefs and emotions, instead of one based on facts. Post truth era implies bordering a blurry line between lies and truths, dishonesty and honesty, nonfiction and fiction. Deceiving other people became a game, a challenge, and ultimately a habit. When observing the political scenes, the post truth era fueled campaigns based on arguments that are emotive, instead of fact checks.

Post truth is seen as damage to the whole democracy fabric and a corruption of intellectual integrity (Coughlan, 2017). Sean documented that the key ingredient in the culture of post truth was represented by the social media rise. The entire phenomenon of post truth is about an individual's opinion being worth more than the facts; highly valuing the individual's feelings. This terrible narcissistic state was empowered by the fact that anyone can publish their opinion, while any shred of disagreement to the opinion is regarded as an attack towards the publisher, and not towards the ideas published (Coughlan, 2017). Moreover, fake news all over in the social media compounded with the online culture amongst people that cannot distinguish fiction and facts (Coughlan, 2017).

Since the ancient times, the readers critiqued and debated literature from different perspectives. Some readers examined a play or a story from a moral stance, making consideration on the manner in which the texts were representing values. Other literature critics can equally evaluate a poem in terms of the form. However, recent critics in the post truth era observed the literature, seeking to find out what it might be saying about people's lives in society, power and political relations, sexuality or gender roles (Gavilan, 2017). Thus, this paper discusses literary criticism in the post truth era, with an emphasis on the new perspectives or insights that the post-truth era may offer for literary criticism. While discovering these new perspectives or insights, the paper initially examines the existing critical approaches to literature as a basis for finding out the new perspectives, which were not discussed by the traditional approaches.

## **LITERARY CRITICISM**

### **Formalist criticism**

According to Olemiss (2017), the approach of literary criticism considers literature as a unique human knowledge form needing examination on its own terms. This implies that all the necessary elements for understanding the work are confined within the work itself. The formalistic critic has a specific interest on the form elements that is the imagery, tone, structure, style among others, which are found within the text. Moreover, the primary goal for the formalistic critic is to determine the manner through which such elements are working together within the content of text in shaping its effects to the readers.

### **Biographical criticism**

Olemiss (2017) also claims that the approach of literary criticism begins with the central but simple insight that literary works are written by actual people. As such,, getting to understand the life of an author can help the readers to thoroughly comprehend their work. Therefore, in most instances it provides a more practical method through which the readers are able to better understand texts. However, Olemiss (2017) advises the biographical critics not to over-interpret or over-use the biographical facts of the life of a writer when criticizing the writer's work. The biographical critic should focus on explicating the literary work by applying the provided insights through the knowledge of the life of the author. Therefore, the biographical information should amplify the text meaning, and not produce irrelevant materials.

## **Historical criticism**

This approach of literary criticism seeks to understand the literary work by investigating the intellectual, cultural, and social context that produced it. In addition, the context necessarily includes the biography of the author and milieu. The main goal for the historical critics is to understand the literary work's effect on its original readers.

## **Gender criticism**

According to Olemiss (2017), this approach of literary criticism examines the influence of the sexual identity on the creation and reception of a literary work. Gender criticism was originally a branch of the feminist movements, but, currently, it includes many approaches, such as the masculinist approach that was recently advocated by Robert Bly, the poet. However, the bulk of gender criticism is taking the central percept that the attitudes of the patriarchs have been dominating the western thought, and is, as such, feminist. Unconsciously and consciously, this led to a literature that is full of unexamined assumptions that they are "male produced." Olemiss (2017) further elaborates that feminist criticism tries to correct this imbalance by combating and analyzing such attitudes through questioning. Other aims of the feminist critics include analysis on how sexual identity has influence on the text reader. Similarly, it examines how the images of women and men, in the imaginative literature, reject or reflect the social forces that historically kept the sexes from realizing total equality.

## **Psychological criticism**

The psychological criticism makes a reflection on the effect that modern psychology has had on the literary criticism and literature (Olemiss, 2017). When considering this field, one has to mention fundamental figures, such as Sigmund Freud, with his psychoanalytic theories, and Carl Jung. Olemiss (2017) points out that psychoanalytic theories change the human behavior notions by exploring controversial and new areas, like sexuality, wish fulfillment, repressions and the unconscious, in addition to expanding the understanding of how symbols and language operate, by demonstrating their ability to reflect unconscious desires and fears. The theories proposed by Carl Jung about the unconscious also formed the main foundation of the mythological criticism. According to Olemiss (2017), psychological criticism employs numerous approaches, but, in most instances, it employs one or even more of the three approaches highlighted below:

1. The psychological study of a specific artist, usually noting how the biographical circumstances of an author influence or affect their behavior and/or motivations.
2. An investigation of the artist's creative process: what is the literary genius' nature and how is it relating to the normal mental functions?
3. Fictional characters analysis, using the methods and language of psychology.

## **Sociological criticism**

This literary criticism approach examines literature in the political, economic, and cultural context in which it is received or written, while exploring the relationship between the society and the artist (Olemiss, 2017). Sometimes, sociological criticism examines the society of the artist, in order to better understand the literary works of the author. Other times, it can make an examination of the representation of such elements in the society within the literature itself. Olemiss (2017) highlights one influential sociological criticism type, Marxist criticism, which

majorly focusses on the political and economic elements of art, often laying emphasis on the literature's ideological content. Given that Marxist criticism in most instances argues that all art is political, either endorsing (in silence) or challenging the status quo, it is often judgmental and evaluative, a tendency that can result into reductive judgement. Marxist criticism, nonetheless, can illuminate economic and political dimensions of literature that other literary criticism approaches tend to overlook (Olemiss, 2017).

### **Mythological criticism**

According to Olemiss (2017), this approach lays more emphasis on the recurrent universal patterns that underlie in most literary works. Mythological criticism, in combining the insights from psychology, anthropology, comparative religion, and history, explores the common humanity of artists by tracing how an individual's imagination uses common symbols and myths to different epochs and cultures. In mythological criticism, one key concept is the *archetype*, which is an image, situation, character, or a symbol invoking a deep universal response, and entered literary criticism from Carl Jung. Jung indicated that all people share a "collective unconsciousness," which is a set of common primal memories to the human race, and exists below every person's conscious mind.

These set of primal memories often derive from primordial phenomena, such as, the moon, sun, night, blood and fire, archetypes triggering the collective unconsciousness, according to Jung. Northrop Frye, another critic, simplified the archetype's definition, considering it a symbol, in most instances, an image, which often recurs enough in the literature to the point that it can be recognized as an element of an individual's whole literary experience. Irrespective of the archetype definition they use, mythological critics, according to Olemiss (2017), tend to view literary works broadly in the contexts of works that share similar patterns.

### **Reader-Response Criticism**

This literary criticism approach takes as an important tenet that literature exists not just as an artifact upon a printed page, but as a transaction between the mind of the reader and the physical text (Olemiss, 2017). This approach tries to offer a description of what happens in the mind of the reader while interpreting a text, and makes a reflection that reading, just like writing, is a creative process. Olemiss (2017) reveals that reader-response critics argue that literary texts do not have or contain the meanings, but the means get derived only from the act of a person reading. Therefore, it is implying that two different readers of the same literary text can come up with completely different interpretations. Similarly, a reader re-reading the same work years later may find the same text different. The emphasis of the reader response criticism is on how social, cultural, and religious values affect readings. This approach also overlaps with the gender criticism in making an exploration on how women and men read the same literary text with different assumptions. Despite the fact that reader response criticism rejects the existence of a single correct reading in literature, it does not regard all readings permissible. As such, each and every text implies limitations to its possible interpretations (Olemiss, 2017).

### **Deconstructionist criticism**

According to Olemiss (2017), this literary criticism approach rejects the long-held assumption that language can accurately represent reality. Deconstructionist critics consider language as a medium that is fundamentally unstable. For instance, the words "dog" or "tree" can be represented in different mental images for different people. Therefore, given that literature is made up of words, it does not possess no single, fixed meaning. According to Paul de Man,

deconstructionists insist on “the impossibility to make the actual expression have a coincidence with what has to be expressed, that is to make the actual signs such as words have a coincidence with what is signified.” Therefore, deconstructionist critics have a tendency of emphasizing not on what is being said, but on how the language is being used in a text (Olemiss, 2017). Other deconstructionists’ goals include (1) challenging the idea of ownership of the texts created by authors, along with their ability to control the meaning of their texts, and (2) focusing on how language is used in achieving power, such as situations when trying to understand how some literary work interpretations come to be considered as the “truth.”

## **DISCUSSION**

### **New perspectives/insights to literary criticism in Post Truth Era**

In the post truth era, which is characterized by lies, propaganda, and fake news, many people raised the issue of the meanings in the literature. It is the task of the interpreter to find the meaning and the truth in any literature text. Meanings and truth can be found through literary criticisms and analysis. This can either be done by using the traditional schools of literary criticisms or adopting the new perspectives in literary criticisms. This section of the paper addresses new perspectives and insights in literary criticism in the post truth era. How to obtain the truth in the text or its meanings? How to get the meaning in the post truth era literature? And finally, how can the new perspectives of literary criticisms be applied in criticizing any literary text.

In the process of findings these answers, there were many debates and discussions, most frequently revolving around the question: what is the meaning contained in the literature. In critically examining literature in the post truth era, there are four approaches among theorists, critics, and philosophers in trying to answer this question. These approaches include:

1. Reflective approach - the meaning in the literature is reflected by the outside of its own being.
2. Didactic approach - truth and meaning is taught in the literature.
3. Partisan approach - there is the truthful meaning that is already known and can be found in the literature.
4. Religious approach - the meaning and truth is the literature itself, and the outside world has nothing to do with it

Despite the fact that this paper singles out these four approaches, they are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, they overlap the approaches to different thinkers and critics. Therefore, they should not be regarded as body of ideological beliefs and as certain creed, but more like attitudes.

#### **1) Didactic approach**

In the post truth era characterized by lies, the truth or the meaning of a literary text is a lesson, and the teacher is the author. The teacher is tasked with the responsibility of teaching his or her students, who are the readers. The book’s author is considered a great educator leading the reader through life. He is the intellectual who is enlightened and whom the society follows. The literature work can influence the people in being better

women and men. The meaning in the literature, which is considered the truth, can be taught by reading the literature.

This approach regards the truth to be ethical, as it is also presented in the article from New York Times, by Kirsch (2017), entitled, “Lie to Me: Fiction in the Post Truth Era.” The author cited an actor in the quiz show “Twenty-One”, scandal fame in 1961, Charles Van Doren, and compares him to Donald Trump to gauge the measure of change over the past five decades. However, it was revealed that Doren received the answers to the game show questions, and was disgraced. Most television viewers believed the contest was real and not staged. Similarly, Kirsch (2017) reminds of the earliest English novels from *Clarissa* (1748) and *Moll Flanders* (1722), which were anonymously published with titles showing that they were true stories. However, Kirsch (2017) claims that these authors engage in sophisticated projects, whereby the line between fiction and truth becomes hard to identify. People love truths in literature, but label a book as “fiction”, making it unable to be accused of composed being of lies. Above all, many people enjoy the illusion, thus, they like being lied to.

In order to achieve a more focused view on the truth in the literary works, Kirsch (2017) must be a stern believer on the effectiveness of didactic approach. In this regard, when peaking of truth from the authors in their literary works, it can be observed that throughout the history, all censors adopted a similar approach when criticizing literature. In the censors’ view, literature is just like a textbook that can be abandoned when it contains wrong or outdated information. Therefore, it is the solemn duty of the censors in protecting the society from harmful lessons that might be learned from such literary work. A contributor nicely summed up the censor’s attitudes in an excellent article:

“According to the conservatives, the state has a justification in applying its coercive powers in enforcing and upholding the moral convictions of a community and to prevent her citizens from participating in activities that are offensive to the prevailing standards of decency and morality the community. Sometimes, this position is called legal moralism. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the governments to prevent the citizens from inflicting harm to themselves. This is also applicable and true even where the citizen is a mature adult engaging voluntarily in an activity which they presume to be desirable but causes harm to others. The notion that the state has an entitlement of interfering with the freedom of adults who are mentally competent for their own good against their will is often referred to as legal paternalism” (Nordquist, 1987).

The scope of this paper does not permit an argument against such views, but a notable aspect from the summary implies that the general attitude of the censors towards arts is a didactic approach. In *Huckleberry Fin*, if one has to skip the offensive words, it is because an individual might learn racism. Similarly, the fake news and blatant lies of Donald Trump should be avoided, as they can promote intolerance, hatred and violence in the post truth era. Another shape of didactic approach is represented by the commissioned propagandist literatures, released by the proponents of different ideologies or even the state.

However, these dishonorable forms of didactic approach should not completely dissuade literal critics from using this approach in their literary criticism, which is also supported by a rich tradition. The moral angle to didactic approach is very old, just like literary criticism. The ancient representative of this view, who is also regarded as the

grandfather of this thought, is Horace. Horace claimed that the poetry's objective is to teach by delighting the reader. His opinion prevailed, and, during the medieval literary criticism, it became very dominant. Hall (1985) also quoted Horace by stating that "Good poetry is not wicked form. It is a source of learning and inspiration (p.)." This trend continued into the Renaissance era where Sidney (2005) stated that, "which notwithstanding since it is full of well sounding phrases and stately speeches, climbing to the Seneca's style height, and as full of notable morality, that it delightfully teaches doth most, and so obtaining the poesy very end (p. 75)."

This view is mostly evident when studying classic criticism, while also observing that since the time of Aesthetics some modern schools the grip of the didactic approach has weakened, becoming unfashionable, or considered forgotten. However, outside the academia confines, no other approach is dominant or popular. In the post truth era, hack writing and censorship for the governments is still rampant, ranging from banning of books/videos/films, to age ratings. Furthermore, the presence of literature written for adults and children, along with the way schools and parents deal with literature, point to the fact the didactic approach is still in use. Similarly, most of the schools of criticisms adhere to didactic approach. Queer criticism, post colonialism, African-American criticism, feminism, and Marxism all affirm or infer that the reader can learn different values from the literary texts they read.

## 2) Reflective Approach

It is known that beyond the realms of rhymes and words in the literature, there is truth. Literature is the mirror reflecting the truth, or it represents a small sample that can be utilized as the truth representative. The reflective approach implies that the literature can be used in illuminating some truth about something that does not exist in the literature. When comparing the didactic approach and the reflective approach in literary criticism, the reflective approach regards the author as an observer, the didactic approach regards the writer as a teacher. Moreover, in the reflective approach, the literary text is a window that opens the unseen realms, and not a lesson.

The oldest prototype of reflective approach is the Mimesis theory, which holds that literature is a life imitation. As such, literature is a truth imitation and by examining it, one might learn something about the source. Some of the notable authors and books in the post truth era who believed that literature is an imitation of life and truth include: "Post-Truth: Why We Have Reached Peak Bullshit and What We Can Do About It" by Evan Davis; "Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World" by James Ball, and lastly "Post Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back" by Matthew d'Ancona. In the post truth era, Donald Trump postured as the right person to drain the swamp, in which he meant the Washington establishment. However, for these authors, he was a creature from a worse swamp, rising from a very toxic filth to the civilized world to slime them with untruths (Jeffries, 2017). Each of the writers suggests that Donald Trump even worse than a liar.

In his book, "*Post-Truth: Why We Have Reached Peak Bullshit and What We Can Do About It*", Davis (2017) reflects the truth outside in the world that is beyond the words of the literature. The authors argue that western societies became like the Soviet Union, being characterized by the people in authority's pervasive tendency in overstating their case. So far, the people in authority bombard their citizens with messages disconnected from the reality, as the public sees them. He further argues that the shameful part is

represented by the communicators. Moreover, Davis (2017) asserts that the more people lap it up, the more it is flowing. Similarly, the more the people are neglecting the facts, the more lies will be deployed, which is the truth and reality outside there, beyond the literature.

Similarly, in her book, *“Post Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back,”* D'Ancona (2017) conceded that the post truth era was in place long before Trump. She explains that in the post truth era, people live in a world where there is no verifiable stable reality but an endless battle of defining it. This is a reflection of the truth outside the literary works. For instance, Nigel Farage, Ukip leader on June 16, 2016, unveiled a poster picturing a long huge queue of refugees from Syria with a headline, “Breaking Point.” The insinuation was that the refugees coming to United Kingdom are a bunch of freeloaders, who deprive Britons of their healthcare, housing, and school places. However, these insinuations were debunked comprehensively by Neli Demireva, sociology lecturer at Essex University. Neli argued that the migrants substantially contribute to the economy, since they are average skilled and do not compete with the indigenous Britons for social housing (Jeffries, 2017).

In his book, *“Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World”*, Ball (2017) also reflects the truth in the world that is not found in the literature. He explains that old media outlets are experiencing falls in ad revenue. This results in fewer reporters, hence, leading to journalistic ecology whereas regurgitating cost effectiveness, rather than the reporters digging into what they report. Moreover, the sites of fake news have economic benefits economically from this, by spinning exaggerated or unchecked stories to reduce their costs of production. The end result of the journalistic ecology, according to Ball (2017), is that the public will not give much weight to the New York Times or the BBC, than to a status on Facebooks, tweets, or the American Patriot Daily.

One cannot argue that the reflective approach to literary criticism is false. Literature is written and composed by people and also read by people, while it is also dealing with issues of real humans.

### 3) Religious Approach

According to this approach in literary criticism, literature has no relationship at all with the truth. The literature itself has its own meanings, truth or has no truth. In this approach, literature has no use, being a separate entity and, thus, cannot be used in studying or understanding the truth in the outside world. It is a world that is a confined, a stimulator of pleasure, or a thing of beauty. This approach regards literature as a fantasy or fiction, far from the reality of the world. Therefore, it is not necessary to compare literature with philosophy or even history, because philosophy and history are dealing with the real world, while literature is revealing its own virtual world.

One might ask why this approach of literary criticism is called religious. From the description of this approach, one can notice that it reduces or elevates literature to an entity that is pseudo divine. That is an entity that is godly and has its own ends and rules, beyond the petite needs of the normal human beings who are mere mortals; thus, is aloof. This approach is very much applicable in criticizing literature in the post truth era. In this era, information is passed faster on the social media and cannot be supported with facts. Equally, fake news is everywhere and everything seems far from reality. The virtual world has its own rules, being subjected to beauty and aesthetic.



When considering aloofness, own rules, and beauty in a fictional literary text which aim is the provision of sophisticated aesthetic pleasure, one should mention the book “*The Man in the High Castle*” by Philip K Dick (Dick, 2017). The book tries to paint a situation in the history of America, in which the Allies and the United States lost World War II and were occupied by foreign powers. The west coast falls under the Japanese control, while the eastern seaboard is under the Germans. The south has a Vichy-type regime that is, controlled by the collaborators to the Nazi. The Rocky Mountains and Midwest regions are quasi-independent and act as buffer zones that separate the two powers that occupy United States. Moreover, there is a simmering tension beneath the surface between Japan and Germany, while the nuclear conflict threat is always present (Dick, 2017). Within the story, there is a blurry reality and the reader has a feeling that the author is almost experiencing the stories first hand. Moreover, this novel seems more like a vision or a dream. When the reader is finally reaching its end, he or she meets the “Man in the High Castle”; the suspicion of meeting the real dreamer, that is Dick himself, is hard to suppress. Another intriguing element to the reader in this book includes the country’s atmosphere in this alternate reality. The gloomy mood and Dick’s tone of writing place the characters in an uncanny and ghostly realistic setting (Gioia, 2017).

However, there is no individual who can completely reject the religious approach in the post truth era. When an individual is nagging about the violence exhibited in the novels, it is important to note that the literature world is not similar to the real world. The real world has rules that are similar to the rules of literature, which is why goblins and dragons are possible in literature. However, any citizen concerned, based on the premise of religious approach, that literature cannot be used in studying the truth and has no use, might ask if literary texts are useless. Why is the government spending money from the taxpayers to fund universities and libraries studying literature? Why should it be respected? Any literature critic using the religious approach will fail to meet this challenge, being a failure on their part, rather than on the literature.

#### 4) Partisan Approach

In this approach, an individual criticizes literature with already an interest in the mind. As such, the critic already believes in a truth and tries interpreting the literature work mainly as an affirmation of the already determined meaning or truth. The partisan approach does not strive to seek the meaning in the text or the truth, but to affirm it. It does not perform an investigation, but blends and manipulates the literary work for it to fit in the individuals owns scheme. Usually, the partisan approach is applied when the literary critic is completely aware of what is in the literature. Therefore, this approach has fallacies because its proponents prefer their personal opinion, compared to the empirical facts that the literary text may yield when criticized. It is not wrong to base ones arguments on a theory in their mind, but an individual must be open to changing the theory or accepting exceptions, when faced with contrary evidence. However, when an individual ignores or manipulates the evidence in the service of the theory, the critic’s words and the theory lose their value.

Every literature critic who comes across the partisan approach will quickly bring up Marxism as an example. Indeed, long before changing to literature, most Marxists were already definite about the base and superstructure and decided to find class and economics warfare in everything. In the post truth era, the partisan approach is seen in most literary texts of this era. By critically analyzing the work of Davis (2017) and

D'Ancona (2017), one can quickly notice the partisan approach they took by portraying those in politics and power as millers of untruths. According to D'Ancona (2017), the dominant characteristic in this new world of post truth era is the crashing of the value of truth. Political falsehoods, spins, and lies are not emphatically the same as post truth. The public regards lying as the norm, even in democracies. Moreover, D'Ancona further claims that the post truth era began with the Iraq war, which she describes as the stupendous exercise in denial and disinformation that convinced the general public that in politics the norms prevail over the truth. In the case of Britain, the mistrust towards the government was not facilitated by the misuse of the intelligence and the dodgy dossier in the runup to war, but by the refusal of the architects of war in acknowledging the disaster that came after.

Apart from the literary texts of the post truth era, the partisan approach is also widely used in the world of academia, encountering discussions and arguments. But are the feminist critics better? They also look for gender issues and roles in every literary work, regardless of how insignificant the topic in a given poem or novel. The partisan approach they employ in literary criticism ensures that they come up with female issues. However, how some issues might be undeserving in the literature. In most universities, the partisanship approach is acceptable these days. When scholars apply particular theories to a work they are doing, they are approaching the literary text with a mind that is biased. The current state in the academic setting implies shedding particular colors on every object, then gleefully claiming that every object has the same color.

### **The New Dimension of Religious Literary Criticism in the Post Truth Era**

A great significant need in the post truth era is for ways to discuss spiritual and religious dimensions in the literary works. The traditional schools of literary schools over the ages have been aligned to gender, class, historical contexts and textuality. In the post truth era, there is a soaring religious awakening with people reading more religious issues (Taylor, 2017). The question is whether this awakening influence unique literary criticism. An important part of the literature people read goes untouched in different discourses, or is sexualized, historicized, deconstructed, or is made symptomatic of relationships of power coverts. The negative hermeneutic of such discourses that are reductive has been successful and thorough. Efforts for more hermeneutic that is reductive have a tendency to be soft discourses, that appeals to the unexamined general values and an audience that is pre-converted. In this post truth era, there is need for substantial religious interpretations enough to enter into competitive and productive relation with the known schools of literary criticisms. The need for religious criticism of the literature is a reflective of the present void in the scholarly world. It is also coming out as a spiritual hunger that is felt by many readers, students and teachers, for a way to discuss the intersections of their personal spiritual lives with what they read in the literature.

However, to assert that there exists a wide vacuum in spirituality discussions and criticisms in the literature, is unfair to the individuals who for a very long time have been working in this field. Some of their work can be traced to journals like *Renascence, Literature and Theology, Christianity and Literature, Religion and Literature* and many more (Taylor, 2017)..

In the poem "The Man who dreamed of Faeryland" by Yeats, each stanza represent a stage in the life of the man: young love, middle age which is prosperous, old age which is rancorous, and finally death. The paper is not concerned with interpreting this layered and interesting poem. Using the current schools of literary criticism, Feminists, Marxists, new historicists can criticize this poem differently depending on their angle of criticism. However, what comes out

as being left behind is the man's nagging spiritual question. That is, the worth of this man's life as the reader sees it, and the manner he sees it. There is the question of where the man is going, what is the meaning of his life, and what stages the man arrives at (Taylor, 2017).

However, in defining the development of the man's life in the poem, it is cut crossways by another thing. At each moment when his life's shape seems to have taken a satisfactory shape that is final, the man experiences an interruption to his life that confounds and perplexes. What interrupts is something challenging all systems and not another system, something as unsettling and questioning as the best scalpels for deconstruction critics, but suggests something all demanding, unconditioned, and un-evadable ultimately. The images grotesque triviality suggests the revelations nature which are fragile yet persistent. In the post truth era, when criticizing this poem, there is need for talking about the experiences of the developing life of an individual and the odd turnings which his life is subjected, as they are intricately rendered in detail in the poem. In religious criticism in the post truth era, it will question this intimation that comes crashing into an individual's life and every time upsetting schemes that are constructed (Taylor, 2017).

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