



PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.

A Multiple Critical Perspectives

P O W E R P R E S E N T A T I O N



INTRODUCTION TO **Literary Theory**





Introduction to Literary Theory



3	.....	Introduction
22	.....	Feminist Theory
64	.....	Marxist Theory
105	.....	Psychoanalytic or Freudian Theory
153	.....	Mythological or Archetypal Theory
248	.....	New Historicism
295	Formalism

FORMALISM
MARXISM
ARCHETYPE
NEW HISTORICISM
FEMINISM





Introduction





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What do you mean by “critical perspective”?





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What do you mean by “critical perspective”?

The terms “literary theory” and “critical theory” refer to essentially the same fields of study. They both address *ways of looking at literature* beyond the typical plot-theme-character-setting studies.



Just as a **PERSPECTIVE** is a way of looking at something, a **CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE** is a way of criticizing or analyzing literature. Your **CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE** is the view you bring to the literature you read.





How and why did literary theories develop?





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We all know that different people will experience the same event differently. It follows, then, that different people will approach the same literary text differently.



One person may be offended by a character's actions, while another finds them comic.

One reader is energized by a story's political implications, while another is awed by the same story's philosophical bent.





Literary theories emerged as ways to explain different people's views and responses to literature. Rather than insisting that one view is the best or correct view, literary theory attempts to find value in all views that are based on a careful study of the literature.





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- One of the views is likely to affirm your perspective and speak to what you see in the literature you are studying.
- Studying a view different from yours—not to disagree with it, but to understand it—helps you understand those who hold that view.
- Studying a work from more than one view gives you a deeper understanding of the author's work and a better appreciation for the richness of it.



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Essentially, all you have to do to study a work from more than one critical perspective is to put *your own* view on hold and entertain the other view. Although you may be a staunch *green-thinker*, you now ask yourself, “What would a *yellow-thinker* see in this work?”



What does studying a work from multiple critical perspectives *not* involve?





What does studying a work from multiple critical perspectives *not* involve?

First and foremost, studying a work from multiple critical perspectives does not require that you agree with any of the perspectives you study. You are not being asked to become a yellow-thinker, only to consider—without criticism and judgment—what a yellow-thinker would see in the text.



What does studying a work from multiple critical perspectives *not* involve?

Second, studying a work from multiple critical perspectives does not require that you blend or merge two or more perspectives into a single interpretation. Some of the points of some of the theories are actually mutually exclusive and cannot be reconciled. While examining a work from the feminist perspective, you do not need to take into account what a Marxist would find. You would examine each perspective independently.