

# Approaches to Literary Criticism

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# LITERARY CRITICISM

- a way of looking at literature.





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- a way of looking at literature.



# LITERARY CRITICISM

+ a way of looking at literature.



Text



Critique

Having a tour guide who shows you what to see and where to go.

# LITERARY CRITICISM

- a way of looking at literature.

One text



Readers



# Approaches to Literary Criticism

**FORMALISM**

**GENDER  
CRITICISM**

**HISTORICISM**

**READER  
RESPONSE**

**MARXISM**

**MEDIA  
CRITICISM**

# FORMALIST CRITICISM

This approach regards literature as “a unique form of human knowledge that needs to be examined on its own terms.” All the elements necessary for understanding the work are contained within the work itself.

Of particular interest to the formalist critic are the elements of **form—style, structure, tone, imagery, etc.**—that are found within the text. A primary goal for formalist critics is to determine how such elements work together with the text’s content to shape its effects upon readers.

## GENDER CRITICISM

This approach “examines how **sexual identity** influences the **creation** and **reception** of literary works.”

The bulk of gender criticism, however, is feminist and takes as a central precept that the patriarchal attitudes that have dominated western thought have resulted, consciously or unconsciously, in literature “full of unexamined ‘male-produced’ assumptions.”



## HISTORICAL CRITICISM

This approach “seeks to understand a literary work by investigating the **social, cultural, and intellectual** context that produced it—a context that necessarily includes the artist’s **biography and milieu.**”

## **HISTORICAL CRITICISM**

Ask these questions:

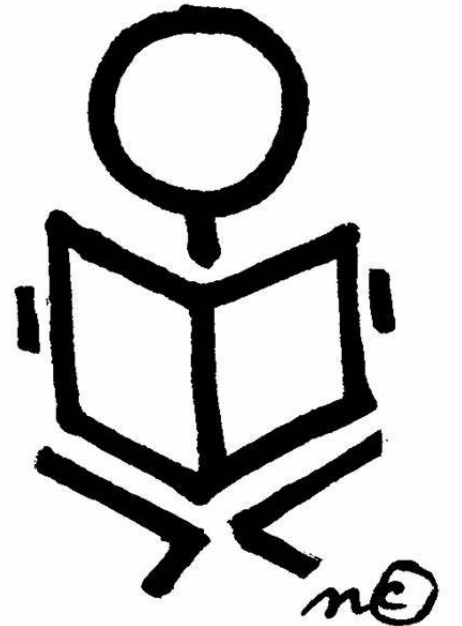
- **Who was the author?**
- **How did his/her life influence the work?**
- **What was the period of the text like**

## **READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM**

**This approach takes as a fundamental tenet that “literature” exists not as an artifact upon a printed page but as a transaction between the physical text and the mind of a reader. It attempts “to describe what happens in the reader’s mind while interpreting a text” and reflects that reading, like writing, is a creative process.**

# READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

The way reader  
respond to the  
text.



## **READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM**

- The focus is on the reader and how the reader engages in the text.
- The meaning is not really there until the reader engages to it.
- What you bring in the table will definitely affect how you interpret the text.



# READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM



# **MEDIA CRITICISM CRITICISM**

- It is the act of closely examining and judging the media. When we examine the media and various media stories, we often find instances of media bias. Media bias is the perception that the media is reporting the news in a partial or prejudiced manner.

# **MEDIA CRITICISM CRITICISM**

- **Media bias occurs when the media seems to push a specific viewpoint, rather than reporting the news objectively. Keep in mind that media bias also occurs when the media seems to ignore an important aspect of the story.**

## **MARXIST CRITICISM**

- It focuses on the economic and political elements of art, often emphasizing the ideological content of literature; because Marxist criticism often argues that all art is political, either challenging or endorsing (by silence) the status quo. Nonetheless, Marxist criticism “can illuminate political and economic dimensions of literature other approaches overlook.”

THANK

YOU!

