

# LITERARY THEORY

## An introduction



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## NEW CRITICISM

A literary movement that started in the late 1920s and 1930s and originated in reaction to traditional criticism that new critics saw as largely concerned with matters extraneous to the text, e.g., with the biography or psychology of the author or the work's relationship to literary history. New Criticism proposed that a work of literary art should be regarded as autonomous, and so should not be judged by reference to considerations beyond itself. A poem consists less of a series of referential and verifiable statements about the 'real' world beyond it, than of the presentation and sophisticated organization of a set of complex experiences in a verbal form (Hawkes, pp. 150-151). **Major figures** of New Criticism include I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks, David Daiches, William Empson, Murray Krieger, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, F. R. Leavis, Robert Penn Warren, W. K. Wimsatt, R. P. Blackmur, Rene Wellek, Ausin Warren, and Ivor Winters.

### Key Terms:

**Intentional Fallacy** - equating the meaning of a poem with the author's intentions.

**Affective Fallacy** - confusing the meaning of a text with how it makes the reader *feel*. A reader's emotional response to a text generally does not produce a reliable interpretation.

**Heresy of Paraphrase** - assuming that an interpretation of a literary work could consist of a detailed summary or paraphrase.

**Close reading** (from Bressler - see *General Resources* below) - "a close and detailed analysis of the text itself to arrive at an interpretation without referring to historical, authorial, or cultural concerns" (263).

## DEFINITION OF THE NEW CRITICISM

The New Criticism is a type of formalist literary criticism that reached its height during the 1940s and 1950s and that received its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. New Critics treat a work of literature as if it were a self-contained, self-referential object. Rather than basing their interpretations of a text on the reader's response, the author's stated intentions, or parallels between the text and historical contexts (such as author's life), New Critics perform a close reading, concentrating on the relationships within the text that give it its own distinctive character or form. New Critics emphasize that the structure of a work should not be divorced from meaning, viewing the two as constituting a quasi-organic unity. Special attention is paid to repetition, particularly of images or symbols, but also of sound effects and rhythms in poetry. New Critics especially appreciate the use of literary devices, such as irony, to achieve a balance or reconciliation between dissimilar, even conflicting, elements in a text.

Because it stresses close textual analysis and viewing the text as a carefully crafted, orderly object containing formal, observable patterns, the New Criticism has sometimes been called an "objective" approach to literature. New Critics are more likely than certain other critics to believe and say that the meaning of a text can be known objectively. For instance, reader-response critics see meaning as a function either of each reader's experience or of the

norms that govern a particular interpretive community, and deconstructors argue that texts mean opposite things at the same time.

The foundations of the New Criticism were laid in books and essays written during the 1920s and 1930s by I. A. Richards (*Practical Criticism* [1929]), William Empson (*Seven Types of Ambiguity* [1930]), and T. S. Eliot ("The Function of Criticism" [1933]). The approach was significantly developed later, however, by a group of American poets and critics, including R. P. Blackmur, Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and William K. Wimsatt. Although we associate the New Criticism with certain principles and terms—such as *affective fallacy* (the notion that the reader's response is relevant to the meaning of a work) and *intentional fallacy* (the notion that the author's intention determines the work's meaning)—the New Critics were trying to make a cultural statement rather than to establish a critical dogma. Generally southern, religious, and culturally conservative, they advocated the inherent value of literary works (particularly of literary works regarded as beautiful art objects) because they were sick of the growing ugliness of modern life and contemporary events. Some recent theorists even link the rising popularity after World War II of the New Criticism (and other types of formalist literary criticism such as the Chicago School) to American isolationism. These critics tend to view the formalist tendency to isolate literature from biography and history as symptomatic of American fatigue with wider involvements. Whatever the source of the New Criticism's popularity (or the reason for its eventual decline), its practitioners and the textbooks they wrote were so influential in American academia that the approach became standard in college and even high school curricula through the 1960s and well into the 1970s.

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#### Further references:

- Brooks, Cleanth. *The Well-Wrought Urn*. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947.
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- Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. New York, 1955.
- Lentriccia, Frank. *After the New Criticism*. See chapter 6.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. See chapter 1.
- Jefferson, Anne and David Robey. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. See chapter 3.
- Ransom, John Crowe. *The New Criticism*. New York: New Directions, 1941.
- Richards, I. A. *Practical Criticism*. London: Routledge & Paul, 1964.
- Wimsatt, W. K., and Monroe C. Beardsley. *The Verbal Icon*. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1954.
- Winters, Ivor. *In Defense of Reason*. Denver: Swallow P, 1947.

See also the works of Robert D. Denham, John Fekete, and William J. Kennedy.

## ARCHETYPAL/MYTH CRITICISM

A form of criticism based largely on the works of **C. G. Jung** (YOONG) and **Joseph Campbell** (and myth itself). Some of the school's **major figures** include Robert Graves, Francis Fergusson, Philip Wheelwright, Leslie Fiedler, Northrop Frye, Maud Bodkin, and G. Wilson Knight. These critics view the genres and individual plot patterns of literature, including highly sophisticated and realistic works, as recurrences of certain archetypes and essential mythic formulae. Archetypes, according to Jung, are "primordial images"; the "psychic residue" of repeated types of experience in the lives of very ancient ancestors which are inherited in the "collective unconscious" of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in the works of literature (Abrams, p. 10, 112). Some common examples of archetypes include water, sun, moon, colors, circles, the Great Mother, Wise Old Man, etc. In terms of archetypal criticism, the color *white* might be associated with innocence or could signify death or the supernatural.

### Key Terms:

**Anima** - feminine aspect - the inner feminine part of the male personality or a man's image of a woman.

**Animus** - male aspect - an inner masculine part of the female personality or a woman's image of a man.

**Archetype** - (from Makaryk - see *General Resources* below) - "a typical or recurring image, character, narrative design, theme, or other literary phenomenon that has been in literature from the beginning and regularly reappears" (508). **Note** - Frye sees archetypes as recurring patterns in literature; in contrast, Jung views archetypes as primal, ancient images/experience that we have inherited.

**Collective Unconscious** - "a set of primal memories common to the human race, existing below each person's conscious mind" (Jung)

**Persona** - the image we present to the world

**Shadow** - darker, sometimes hidden (deliberately or unconsciously), elements of a person's psyche

### Further references:

- Bodkin, Maud. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*. London: OUP, 1934.
- Campbell, Joseph. *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1949.
- Frazer, J. G. *The Golden Bough*.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism and Fables of Identity*.
- Graves, Robert. *Greek Myths* and *The White Goddess*.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. *Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature* and various other works
- Knight, G. Wilson. *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy*.

- Lentriccia, Frank. *After the New Criticism*. See chapter 1.
- Pratt, Anais. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982.
- Seboek, Thomas A., ed. *Myth: A Symposium*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955.
- See also the works of Derek Brewer, Shirley Lowry, June Singer, and Laurens Van der Post

**Suggested Websites:**

- "Archetypal Criticism" from the Literary Encyclopedia
- "Mythological and Archetypal Approaches" (from Guerin et al - see *General Resources* below)
- Johns Hopkins' Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism: Archetypal Theory and Criticism
- "Carl Jung" - Wikipedia
- "Handout on Carl Gustav Jung" - Dr. Victor Daniels (Psychology Dept. - Sonoma University)

## PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

The application of specific psychological principles (particularly those of **Sigmund Freud** and **Jacques Lacan** [zhawk lawk-KAWN]) to the study of literature. Psychoanalytic criticism may focus on the writer's psyche, the study of the creative process, the study of psychological types and principles present within works of literature, or the effects of literature upon its readers (Wellek and Warren, p. 81). In addition to Freud and Lacan, **major figures** include Shoshona Felman, Jane Gallop, Norman Holland, George Klein, Elizabeth Wright, Frederick Hoffman, and, Simon Lesser.

### Key Terms:

**Unconscious** - the irrational part of the psyche unavailable to a person's consciousness except through dissociated acts or dreams.

### Freud's model of the psyche:

- **Id** - completely unconscious part of the psyche that serves as a storehouse of our desires, wishes, and fears. The id houses the libido, the source of psychosexual energy.
- **Ego** - mostly to partially (<--a point of debate) conscious part of the psyche that processes experiences and operates as a referee or mediator between the id and superego.
- **Superego** - often thought of as one's "conscience"; the superego operates "like an internal censor [encouraging] moral judgments in light of social pressures" (123, Bressler - see *General Resources* below).

### Lacan's model of the psyche:

- **Imaginary** - a preverbal/verbal stage in which a child (around 6-18 months of age) begins to develop a sense of separateness from her mother as well as other people and objects; however, the child's sense of sense is still incomplete.
- **Symbolic** - the stage marking a child's entrance into language (the ability to understand and generate symbols); in contrast to the imaginary stage, largely focused on the mother, the symbolic stage shifts attention to the father who, in Lacanian theory, represents cultural norms, laws, language, and power (the symbol of power is the **phallus**--an arguably "gender-neutral" term).
- **Real** - an unattainable stage representing all that a person is not and does not have. Both Lacan and his critics argue whether the real order represents the period before the imaginary order when a child is completely fulfilled--without need or lack, or if the real order follows the symbolic order and represents our "perennial lack" (because we cannot return to the state of wholeness that existed before language).

## DEFINITION OF PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

Psychoanalytic criticism originated in the work of Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, who pioneered the technique of psychoanalysis. Freud developed a language that described, a model that explained, and a theory that encompassed human psychology. His theories are directly and indirectly concerned with the nature of the unconscious mind.

The psychoanalytic approach to literature not only rests on the theories of Freud; it may even be said to have *begun* with Freud, who wrote literary criticism as well as psychoanalytic theory. Probably because of Freud's characterization of the artist's mind as "one urged on by instincts that are too clamorous," psychoanalytic criticism written before 1950 tended to psychoanalyze the individual author. Literary works were read—sometimes unconvincingly—as fantasies that allowed authors to indulge repressed wishes, to protect themselves from deep-seated anxieties, or both.

After 1950, psychoanalytic critics began to emphasize the ways in which authors create works that appeal to readers' repressed wishes and fantasies. Consequently, they shifted their focus away from the author's psyche toward the psychology of the reader and the text. Norman Holland's theories, concerned more with the reader than with the text, helped to establish reader-response criticism. Critics influenced by D.W. Winnicott, an object-relations theorist, have questioned the tendency to see the reader/text as an either/or construct; instead, they have seen reader and text (or audience and play) in terms of a relationship taking place in what Winnicott calls a "transitional" or "potential space"—space in which binary oppositions like real/illusory and objective/subjective have little or no meaning.

Jacques Lacan, another post-Freudian psychoanalytic theorist, focused on language and language-related issues. Lacan treats the unconscious as a language; consequently, he views the dream not as Freud did (that is, as a form and symptom of repression) but rather as a form of discourse. Thus we may study dreams psychoanalytically in order to learn about literature, even as we may study literature in order to learn more about the unconscious. Lacan also revised Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex—the childhood wish to displace the parent of one's own sex and take his or her place in the affections of the parent of the opposite sex—by relating it to the issue of language. He argues that the pre-oedipal stage is also a preverbal or "mirror stage," a stage he associates with the *imaginary order*. He associates the subsequent oedipal stage—which roughly coincides with the child's entry into language—with what he calls the *symbolic order*, in which words are not the things they stand for but substitutes for those things. The *imaginary order* and the *symbolic order* are two of Lacan's three orders of subjectivity, the third being the real, which involves intractable and substantial things or states that cannot be imagined, symbolized, or known directly (such as death).



**Further references:**

- Elliott, Anthony. *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. See chapter 5.
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- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
- Gay, Peter, ed. *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage, 1995.
- Jefferson, Anne and David Robey. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. See Chapter 5.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Ecrits: A Selection*.
- Sarup, Madan. *Jacques Lacan*. London: Harvester, Wheatsheaf, 1992.
- Weber, Samuel. *The Legend of Freud*.
- See also the works of Harold Bloom, Shoshona Felman, Juliet Mitchell, Geoffrey Hartman, and Stuart Schniederman.

**Suggested Websites:**

- "Definition of Psychoanalytic Criticism" from virtuaLit (Bedford-St.Martin's resource)
- "Freudian, Lacanian and Object Relations Theory" - Timothy R. Quigley
- "Introduction to Psychoanalysis" by Dr. Dino Felluga
- "The Mind and the Book: A Long Look at Psychoanalytic Criticism" by Norman N. Holland
- "Psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud" by Dr. Mary Klages (University of Colorado at Boulder)
- "Jacques Lacan" by Dr. Mary Klages (University of Colorado at Boulder)



## MARXISM

A sociological approach to literature that viewed works of literature or art as the products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed. In Marxist ideology, what we often classify as a world view (such as the Victorian age) is actually the articulations of the dominant class. Marxism generally focuses on the clash between the dominant and repressed classes in any given age and also may encourage art to imitate what is often termed an "objective" reality. Contemporary Marxism is much broader in its focus, and views art as simultaneously reflective and autonomous to the age in which it was produced. The Frankfurt School is also associated with Marxism (Abrams, p. 178, Childers and Hentzi, pp. 175-179). **Major figures** include Karl Marx, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Raymond Williams, Louis Althusser (ALT-whos-sair), Walter Benjamin (ben-yeh-MEEN), Antonio Gramsci (GRAWM-shee), Georg Lukacs (lou-KOTCH), and Friedrich Engels, Theodor Adorno (a-DOR-no), Edward Ahern, Gilles Deleuze (DAY-looz) and Felix Guattari (GUAT-eh-ree).

**Key Terms** (note: definitions below taken from Ann B. Dobie's text, *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* - see *General Resources* below):

**Commodificaion** - "the attitude of valuing things not for their utility but for their power to impress others or for their resale possibilities" (92).

**Conspicuous consumption** - "the obvious acquisition of things only for their sign value and/or exchange value" (92).

**Dialectical materialism** - "the theory that history develops neither in a random fashion nor in a linear one but instead as struggle between contradictions that ultimately find resolution in a synthesis of the two sides. For example, class conflicts lead to new social systems" (92).

**Material circumstances** - "the economic conditions underlying the society. To understand social events, one must have a grasp of the material circumstances and the historical situation in which they occur" (92).

**Reflectionism** - associated with Vulgar Marxism - "a theory that the superstructure of a society mirrors its economic base and, by extension, that a text reflects the society that produced it" (92).

**Superstructure** - "The social, political, and ideological systems and institutions--for example, the values, art, and legal processes of a society--that are generated by the base" (92).

## DEFINITION OF MARXIST CRITICISM

Marxist criticism is a type of criticism in which literary works are viewed as the product of work and whose practitioners emphasize the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate, and even challenge the prevailing social order. Rather than viewing texts as repositories for hidden meanings, Marxist critics view texts as material products to be understood in broadly historical terms. In short, literary works are viewed as a product of work (and hence of the realm of production and consumption we call economics).

Marxism began with Karl Marx, the nineteenth-century German philosopher best known for *Das Kapital* (1867; *Capital*), the seminal work of the communist movement. Marx was also the first Marxist literary critic, writing critical essays in the 1830s on such writers as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and William Shakespeare. Even after Marx met Friedrich Engels in 1843 and began collaborating on overtly political works such as *The German Ideology* (1846) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), he maintained a keen interest in literature. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels discuss the relationship between the arts, politics, and basic economic reality in terms of a general social theory. Economics, they argue, provides the *base*, or *infrastructure*, of society, from which a *superstructure* consisting of law, politics, philosophy, religion, and art emerges.

The revolution anticipated by Marx and Engels did not occur in their century, let alone in their lifetime. When it did occur, in 1917, it did so in a place unimagined by either theorist: Russia, a country long ruled by despotic czars but also enlightened by the works of powerful novelists and playwrights including Anton Chekhov, Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Russia produced revolutionaries like Vladimir Lenin, who shared not only Marx's interest in literature but also his belief in its ultimate importance. Leon Trotsky, Lenin's comrade in revolution, took a strong interest in literary matters as well, publishing *Literature and Revolution* (1924), which is still viewed as a classic of Marxist literary criticism.

Of those critics active in the Soviet Union after the expulsion of Trotsky and the triumph of Stalin, two stand out: Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukács. Bakhtin viewed language—especially literary texts—in terms of discourses and dialogues. A novel written in a society in flux, for instance, might include an official, legitimate discourse, as well as one infiltrated by challenging comments. Lukács, a Hungarian who converted to Marxism in 1919, appreciated pre-revolutionary realistic novels that broadly reflected cultural "totalities" and were populated with characters representing human "types" of the author's place and time.

Perhaps because Lukács was the best of the Soviet communists writing Marxist criticism in the 1930s and 1940s, non-Soviet Marxists tended to develop their ideas by publicly opposing his. In Germany, dramatist and critic Bertolt Brecht criticized Lukács for his attempt to enshrine realism at the expense not only of the other "isms" but also of poetry and drama, which Lukács had largely ignored. Walter Benjamin praised new art forms ushered in by the age of mechanical reproduction, and Theodor Adorno attacked Lukács for his dogmatic rejection of nonrealist modern literature and for his elevation of content over form.

In addition to opposing Lukács and his overly constrictive canon, non-Soviet Marxists took advantage of insights generated by non-Marxist critical theories being developed in post-World War II Europe. Lucien Goldmann, a Romanian critic living in Paris, combined structuralist principles with Marx's base superstructure model in order to show how economics determines the mental structures of social groups, which are reflected in literary texts. Goldmann rejected the idea of individual human genius, choosing instead to see works as the "collective" products of "trans-individual" mental structures. French Marxist Louis Althusser drew on the ideas of psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan and the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, who discussed the relationship between ideology and hegemony, the pervasive system of assumptions and values that shapes the perception of reality for people in a given culture. Althusser's followers included Pierre Macherey, who in *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966) developed Althusser's concept of the relationship

between literature and ideology; Terry Eagleton, who proposes an elaborate theory about how history enters texts, which in turn may alter history; and Frederic Jameson, who has argued that form is "but the working out" of content "in the realm of the superstructure."

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#### Further references:

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- Cary, Nelson, and Lawrence Gross berg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Bullock, Chris and David Peck. *Guide to Marxist Criticism*.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Criticism and Ideology*. New York: Schocken, 1978.
- Jay, Martin. *Marxism and Totality*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1935.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: PUP, 1971.
- Jefferson, Anne and David Robey. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. See chapter 6.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: OUP, 1977.
- See also the works of Walter Benjamin, Tony Bennett, Terry Eagleton, John Frow, Georg Lukacs, Pierre Macherey, Michael Ryan, and Ronald Taylor.

#### Suggested Websites:

- "Definition of Marxist Criticism" - virtuaLit (Bedford-St. Martin's resource)
- "Marxism" - Wikipedia Encyclopedia
- Marxist Theory and Criticism - from the Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Criticism
- "Marxism and Ideology" by Dr. Mary Klages - University of Colorado at Boulder



## POSTCOLONIALISM

Literally, postcolonialism refers to the period following the decline of colonialism, e.g., the end or lessening of domination by European empires. Although the term *postcolonialism* generally refers to the period after colonialism, the distinction is not always made. In its use as a critical approach, postcolonialism refers to "a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture (literature, politics, history, and so forth) of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world" (Makaryk 155 - see *General Resources* below). Among the many challenges facing postcolonial writers are the attempt both to resurrect their culture and to combat preconceptions about their culture. Edward Said, for example, uses the word Orientalism to describe the discourse about the East constructed by the West. **Major figures** include Edward Said (sah-EED), Homi Bhabha (bah-bah), Frantz Fanon (fah-NAWN), Gayatri Spivak, Chinua Achebe (ah-CHAY-bay) , Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie, Jamaica Kincaid, and Buchi Emecheta.

### Key Terms:

**Alterity** - "lack of identification with some part of one's personality or one's community, differentness, otherness"

**Diaspora** (di-ASP-er-ah- "is used (without capitalization) to refer to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture" (Wikipedia).

**Eurocentrism** - "the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and values at the expense of those of other cultures. It is an instance of ethnocentrism, perhaps especially relevant because of its alignment with current and past real power structures in the world" (Dictionary.LaborLawTalk.com)

**Hybridity** - "an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures ("integration" may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new). The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as as oppressive" (from Dr. John Lye - see General Literary Theory Websites below).

**Imperialism** - "the policy of extending the control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and/or maintenance of empires, either through direct territorial control or through indirect methods of exerting control on the politics and/or economy of other countries. The term is used by some to describe the policy of a country in maintaining colonies and dominance over distant lands, regardless of whether the country calls itself an empire" (Dictionary.LaborLawTalk.com).

## DEFINITION OF POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM

A type of cultural criticism, postcolonial criticism usually involves the analysis of literary texts produced in countries and cultures that have come under the control of European colonial powers at some point in their history. Alternatively, it can refer to the analysis of texts written about colonized places by writers hailing from the colonizing culture. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said, a pioneer of postcolonial criticism and studies, focused on the way in which the colonizing First World has invented false images and myths of the Third (postcolonial) World—stereotypical images and myths that have conveniently justified Western exploitation and domination of Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures and peoples. In the essay "Postcolonial Criticism" (1992), Homi K. Bhabha has shown how certain cultures (mis)represent other cultures, thereby extending their political and social domination in the modern world order.

*Postcolonial studies*, a type of cultural studies, refers more broadly to the study of cultural groups, practices, and discourses—including but not limited to literary discourses—in the colonized world. The term *postcolonial* is usually used broadly to refer to the study of works written at any point after colonization first occurred in a given country, although it is sometimes used more specifically to refer to the analysis of texts and other cultural discourses that emerged after the end of the colonial period (after the success of the liberation and independence movements). Among feminist critics, the postcolonial perspective has inspired an attempt to recover whole cultures of women heretofore ignored or marginalized—women who speak not only from colonized places but also from the colonizing places to which many of them fled.

Postcolonial criticism has been influenced by Marxist thought, by the work of Michel Foucault (whose theories about the power of discourses have influenced the new historicism), and by deconstruction, which has challenged not only hierarchical, binary oppositions such as West/East and North/South but also the notions of superiority associated with the first term of each opposition.

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### Further references:

- Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, and Tiffin, Helen. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*.
- Guneratne, Anthony R. *The Virtual Spaces of Postcoloniality: Rushdie, Ondaatje, Naipaul, Bakhtin and the Others*.
- Harding, Sandra and Uma Narayan, ed. *Border Crossings: Multicultural and Postcolonial Feminist Challenges to Philosophy 2*. Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto, 1986.
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- Trinh, T. Minh-Ha, Woman. *Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- See writings of Jamaica Kincaid, Nadine Gordimer, Wole Soyinka, R. K. Narayan, Yasunari Kawabata, Anita Desai, Frantz Fanon, Kazuo Ishiguro, Chinae Achebe, J.M. Coetzee, Anthol Fugard, Kamala Das, Tsitsi Dangarembga, etc.

**Suggested Websites:**

- "Post-Colonialism" - Wikipedia Encyclopedia
- "Some Issues in Postcolonial Theory" by Dr. John Lye (Brock University)
- "Introduction to Postcolonial Studies" by Dr. Deepika Bahri (Emory University)
- "Postcolonialism" - handout by Dr. Aaron Kelly - University of Edinburgh



## EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism is a philosophy (promoted especially by Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus) that views each person as an isolated being who is cast into an alien universe, and conceives the world as possessing no inherent human truth, value, or meaning. A person's life, then, as it moves from the nothingness from which it came toward the nothingness where it must end, defines an existence which is both anguished and absurd (Guerin). In a world without sense, all choices are possible, a situation which Sartre viewed as human beings central dilemma: "Man [woman] is condemned to be free." In contrast to atheist existentialism, Søren Kierkegaard theorized that belief in God (given that we are provided with no proof or assurance) required a conscious choice or "leap of faith." The **major figures** include Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre (sart or SAR-treh), Albert Camus (kah-MUE or ka-MOO) , Simone de Beauvoir (bohv-WAHR) , Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers (YASS-pers), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (mer-LOH pawn-TEE).

### Key Terms:

**Absurd** - a term used to describe existence--a world without inherent meaning or truth.

**Authenticity** - to make choices based on an *individual* code of ethics (commitment) rather than because of societal pressures. A choice made just because "it's what people do" would be considered inauthentic.

**"Leap of faith"** - although Kierkegaard acknowledged that religion was inherently unknowable and filled with risks, faith required an act of commitment (the "leap of faith"); the commitment to Christianity would also lessen the despair of an absurd world.

### Further references:

- Barrett, William. *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*.
- Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*.
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- "Existentialism" - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- "Existentialism" - Dictionary of the History of Ideas (University of Virginia)
- "Existentialism" - Wikipedia
- "The Ethics of Absolute Freedom" by Dr. David Banach
- "Jean-Paul Sartre: The Humanism of Existentialism" by Dr. Bob Zunjic (University of Rhode Island)
- "Fredrich Nietzsche" - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

**Phenomenology and Hermeneutics*****Phenomenology***

Phenomenology is a philosophical method, first developed by Edmund Husserl (HUHSS-erel), that proposed "phenomenological reduction" so that everything not "immanent" to consciousness must be excluded; all realities must be treated as pure "phenomena" and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin. Husserl viewed consciousness always as intentional and that the act of consciousness, the thinking subject and the object it "intends," are inseparable. Art is not a means of securing pleasure, but a revelation of being. The work is the phenomenon by which we come to know the world (Eagleton, p. 54; Abrams, p. 133, Guerin, p. 263).

***Hermeneutics***

Hermeneutics sees interpretation as a circular process whereby valid interpretation can be achieved by a sustained, mutually qualifying interplay between our progressive sense of the whole and our retrospective understanding of its component parts. Two dominant theories that emerged from Wilhelm Dilthey's original premise were that of E. D. Hirsch who, in accord with Dilthey, felt a valid interpretation was possible by uncovering the work's authorial intent (though informed by historical and cultural determinants), and in contrast, that of Martin Heidegger (HIGH-deg-er) who argued that a reader must experience the "inner life" of a text in order to understand it at all. The reader's "being-in-the-world" or *dasein* is fraught with difficulties since both the reader and the text exist in a temporal and fluid state. For Heidegger or Hans Georg Gadamer (GAH-de-mer), then, a valid interpretation may become irrecoverable and will always be relative.

**Key Terms:**

**Dasein** - simply, "being there," or "being-in-the world" - Heidegger argued that "what is distinctive about human existence is its *Dasein* ('givenness'): our consciousness both *projects* the things of the world and at the same time *is subjected to* the world by the very nature of existence in the world" (Selden and Widdowson 52 - see *General Resources* below).

**Intentionality** - "is at the heart of knowing. We live in meaning, and we live 'towards,' oriented to experience. Consequently there is an intentional structure in textuality and expression, in self-knowledge and in knowledge of others. This intentionality is also a

distance: consciousness is not identical with its objects, but is intended consciousness" (quoted from Dr. John Lye's website - see suggested resources below).

**Phenomenological Reduction** - a concept most frequently associated with Edmund Husserl; as explained by Terry Eagleton (see *General Resources* below) "To establish certainty, then, we must first of all ignore, or 'put in brackets,' anything which is beyond our immediate experience: we must reduce the external world to the contents of our consciousness alone....Everything not 'immanent' to consciousness must be rigorously excluded: all realities must be treated as pure 'phenomena,' in terms of their appearances in our mind, and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin" (55).

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- "Phenomenology" - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Phenomenology Online - page developed by Max van Manen
- "Phenomenology" - Wikipedia
- "Phenomenology: Bracketing Experience" - by Garth Kemerling (Philosophy Pages)
- "Some Principles of Phenomenological Hermeneutics" by Dr. John Lye (Brock University)



## Russian Formalism/Prague Linguistic Circle/Linguistic Criticism/Dialogic Theory

These linguistic movements began in the 1920s, were suppressed by the Soviets in the 1930s, moved to Czechoslovakia and were continued by members of the **Prague Linguistic Circle** (including Roman Jakobson (YAH-keb-sen), Jan Mukarovsky, and René Wellek). The Prague Linguistic Circle viewed literature as a special class of language, and rested on the assumption that there is a fundamental opposition between literary (or poetical) language and ordinary language. Formalism views the primary function of ordinary language as communicating a message, or information, by references to the world existing outside of language. In contrast, it views literary language as self-focused: its function is not to make extrinsic references, but to draw attention to its own "formal" features--that is, to interrelationships among the linguistic signs themselves. Literature is held to be subject to critical analysis by the sciences of linguistics but also by a type of linguistics different from that adapted to ordinary discourse, because its laws produce the distinctive features of literariness (Abrams, pp. 165-166). An important contribution made by Victor Schklovsky (of the Leningrad group) was to explain how language--through a period of time--tends to become "smooth, unconscious or transparent." In contrast, the work of literature is to defamiliarize language by a process of "making strange."**Dialogism** refers to a theory, initiated by Mikhail Bakhtin (bahk-TEEN), arguing that in a dialogic work of literature--such as in the writings of Dostoevsky--there is a "polyphonic interplay of various characters' voices ... where no worldview is given superiority over others; neither is that voice which may be identified with the author's necessarily the most engaging or persuasive of all those in the text" (Childers & Hentzi, p. 81).

### Key Terms:

**Carnival** - "For Bakhtin, carnival reflected the 'lived life' of medieval and early modern peoples. In carnival, official authority and high culture were jostled 'from below' by elements of satire, parody, irony, mimicry, bodily humor, and grotesque display. This jostling from below served to keep society open, to liberate it from deadening..." (Bressler 276 - see *General Resources* below).

**Heteroglossia** - "refers, first, to the way in which every instance of language use - every utterance - is embedded in a specific set of social circumstances, and second, to the way the meaning of each particular utterance is shaped and influenced by the many-layered context in which it occurs" (Sarah Willen, "Dialogism and Heteroglossia")

**Monologism** - "having one single voice, or representing one single ideological stance or perspective, often used in opposition to the Bakhtinian dialogical. In a monological form, all the characters' voices are subordinated to the voice of the author" (Malcolm Hayward).

**Polyphony** - "a term used by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe a dialogical text which, unlike a monological text, does not depend on the centrality of a single authoritative voice. Such a text incorporates a rich plurality and multiplicity of voices, styles, and points of view. It comprises, in Bakhtin's phrase, "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (Henderson and Brown - *Glossary of Literary Theory*).

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**Suggested Websites:**

- Prague Linguistic Circle - Dr. John Gohol
- "Mikhail Bakhtin" by Dr. Mary Klages - University of Colorado at Boulder
- "Russian Formalism" - Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- The Bakhtin Circle - by Dr. Craig Brandist - The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Russian Formalism - Dr. John Gohol
- *Dialogism: An International Journal of Bakhtin Studies* - The Bakhtin Centre - University of Sheffield



## AVANT-GARDE/SURREALISM/DADAISM

**Avant-Garde** literally meant the "most forwardly placed troops." The movement sought to eliminate or at least blur the distinction between art and life often by introducing elements of mass culture. These artists aimed to "make it new" and often represented themselves as alienated from the established order. Avant-garde literature and art challenged societal norms to "shock" the sensibilities of its audience (Childers & Hentzi, p.26 and Abrams, p.110).

**Surrealism** (also associated with the avant-garde and dadaism) was initiated in particular by André Breton, whose 1924 "Manifesto of Surrealism" defined the movement's "adherence to the imagination, dreams, the fantastic, and the irrational." **Dada** is a nonsense word and the movement, in many ways similar to the trends of avant-garde and surrealism, "emphasized absurdity, reflected a spirit of nihilism, and celebrated the function of chance" (Childers & Hentzi, p. 69). **Major figures** include André Breton (breh-TAWN), Georges Bataille (beh-TYE), Tristan Tzara, Jean Arp, Richard Huelsenbeck, Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp (dew-SHAHN), Man Ray, Raoul Hausmann, Max Ernst and Kurt Schwitters.

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## STRUCTURALISM AND SEMIOTICS

### **Structuralism**

Structuralism is a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perceptions and description of structures. At its simplest, structuralism claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by all the other elements involved in that situation. The full significance of any entity cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part (Hawkes, p. 11). Structuralists believe that all human activity is constructed, not natural or "essential." Consequently, it is the systems of organization that are important (what we do is always a matter of selection within a given construct). By this formulation, "any activity, from the actions of a narrative to not eating one's peas with a knife, takes place within a system of differences and has meaning only in its relation to other possible activities within that system, not to some meaning that emanates from nature or the divine" (Childers & Hentzi, p. 286.). **Major figures** include Claude Lévi-Strauss (LAY-vee-strows), A. J. Greimas (GREE-mahs), Jonathan Culler, Roland Barthes (bart), Ferdinand de Saussure (soh-SURR or soh-ZHOR), Roman Jakobson (YAH-keb-sen), Vladimir Propp, and Terence Hawkes.

### **Semiology**

Semiotics, simply put, is the science of signs. Semiology proposes that a great diversity of our human action and productions--our bodily postures and gestures, the the social rituals we perform, the clothes we wear, the meals we serve, the buildings we inhabit--all convey "shared" meanings to members of a particular culture, and so can be analyzed as signs which function in diverse kinds of signifying systems. Linguistics (the study of verbal signs and structures) is only one branch of semiotics but supplies the basic methods and terms which are used in the study of all other social sign systems (Abrams, p. 170). Major figures include Charles Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure, Michel Foucault (fou-KOH), Umberto Eco, Gérard Genette, and Roland Barthes (bart).

**Key Terms** (much of this is adapted from Charles Bressler's *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* - see *General Resources* below):

**Binary Opposition** - "pairs of mutually-exclusive signifiers in a paradigm set representing categories which are logically opposed and which together define a complete universe of discourse (relevant ontological domain), e.g. alive/not-alive. In such oppositions each term necessarily implies its opposite and there is no middle term" (Daniel Chandler).

**Mythemes** - a term developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss--mythemes are the smallest component parts of a myth. By breaking up myths into mythemes, those structures (mythemes) may be studied chronologically (~ diachronically) or synchronically/relationally.

**Sign vs. Symbol** - According to Saussure, "words are not symbols which correspond to referents, but rather are 'signs' which are made up of two parts (like two sides of a sheet of paper): a mark, either written or spoken, called a 'signifier,' and a concept (what is 'thought' when the mark is made), called a 'signified'" (Selden and Widdowson 104 - see *General Resources* below). The distinction is important because Saussure contended that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary; the only way we can distinguish meaning is by difference (one sign or word differs from another).

$\text{Sign} = \frac{\text{Signified}}{\text{Signifier}}$
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The relational nature of language implied by Saussure's system rejects the concept that a word/symbol corresponds to an outside object/referent. Instead, meaning--the interpretation of a sign--can exist only in relationship with other signs. Selden and Widdowson use the sign system of traffic lights as an example. The color *red*, in that system, signifies "stop," even though "there is no natural bond between *red* and *stop*" (105). Meaning is derived entirely through difference, "a system of opposites and contrasts," e.g., referring back to the traffic lights' example, red's meaning depends on the fact that it is *not* green and *not* amber (105).

**Structuralist narratology** - "a form of structuralism espoused by Vladimir Propp, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, and Gerard Genette that illustrates how a story's meaning develops from its overall structure (its *langue*) rather than from each individual story's isolated theme. To ascertain a text's meaning, narratologists emphasize grammatical elements such as verb tenses and the relationships and configurations of figures of speech within the story" (Bressler 275 - see *General Resources* below).

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**Suggested Websites:**

- "Elements of Structuralism" - Dr. John Lye (Brock University)
- Structuralism - Wikipedia
- Structuralism - John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- "Structuralism/Poststructuralism" - Dr. Mary Klages (University of Colorado at Boulder)
- "Definition of Structuralism" - virtualLit
- "Semiotics for Beginners" - Dr. David Chandler (University of Wales)
- Semiotics - Wikipedia
- Semiotics - Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism



## POST-STRUCTURALISM AND DECONSTRUCTION

**Post-Structuralism** (synonymous: **Deconstruction** or **Postmodernism**) is a reaction to structuralism and works against seeing language as a stable, closed system. "It is a shift from seeing the poem or novel as a closed entity, equipped with definite meanings which it is the critic's task to decipher, to seeing literature as irreducibly plural, an endless play of signifiers which can never be finally nailed down to a single center, essence, or meaning" (Eagleton 120 - see reference below under "General References"). **Jacques Derrida's** (dair-ree-DAH) paper on "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (delivered in 1966) proved particularly influential in the creation of post-structuralism. Derrida argued against, in essence, the notion of a knowable center (the Western ideal of logocentrism), a structure that could organize the differential play of language or thought but somehow remain immune to the same "play" it depicts (Abrams, 258-9). Derrida's critique of structuralism also heralded the advent of deconstruction that--like post-structuralism--critiques the notion of "origin" built into structuralism. In negative terms, deconstruction--particularly as articulated by Derrida--has often come to be interpreted as "anything goes" since nothing has any real meaning or truth. More positively, it may be posited that Derrida, like Paul de Man (de-MAHN) and other post structuralists, really asks for rigor, that is, a type of interpretation that is constantly and ruthlessly self-conscious and on guard. Similarly, Christopher Norris (in "What's Wrong with Postmodernism?") launches a cogent argument against simplistic attacks of Derrida's theories:

On this question [the tendency of critics to read deconstruction "as a species of all-licensing sophisticated 'freeplay'"], as on so many others, the issue has been obscured by a failure to grasp Derrida's point when he identifies those problematic factors in language (catachreses, slippages between 'literal' and 'figural' sense, subliminal metaphors mistaken for determinate concepts) whose effect--as in Husserl--is to complicate the passage from what the text manifestly means to say to what it actually says when read with an eye to its latent or covert signifying structures. This 'free-play' has nothing whatsoever to do with that notion of an out-and-out hermeneutic license which would finally come down to a series of slogans like "all reading is misreading," "all interpretation is misinterpretation," etc. If Derrida's texts have been read that way--most often by literary critics in quest of more adventurous hermeneutic models--this is just one sign of the widespread deformation professionnelle that has attended the advent of deconstruction as a new arrival on the US academic scene. (151)

In addition to Jacques Derrida, **key** poststructuralist and deconstructive figures include Michel Foucault (fou-KOH), Roland Barthes (bart), Jean Baudrillard (zhon boh-dree-YAHR), Helene Cixous (seek-sou), Paul de Man (de-MAHN), J. Hillis Miller, Jacques Lacan (lawk-KAWN), and Barbara Johnson.

**Key Terms :**

**Aporia** (ah-por-EE-ah)- a moment of undecidability; the inherent contradictions found in any text. Derrida, for example, cites the inherent contradictions at work in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's use of the words *culture* and *nature* by demonstrating that Rousseau's sense of the self's innocence (in nature) is already corrupted by the concept of culture (and existence) and vice-versa.

**Différance** - a combination of the meanings in the word *différance*. The concept means 1) *différer* or to differ, 2) *différance* which means to delay or postpone (defer), and 3) the idea of difference itself. To oversimplify, words are always at a distance from what they signify and, to make matters worse, must be described by using other words.

**Erasure (sous rature)** - to highlight suspect ideologies, notions linked to the metaphysics of presence, Derrida put them under "erasure," metaphorically pointing out the absence of any definitive meaning. By using erasure, however, Derrida realized that a "trace" will always remain but that these traces do not indicate the marks themselves but rather the absence of the marks (which emphasize the absence of "univocal meaning, truth, or origin"). In contrast, when Heidegger similarly "crossed out" words, he assumed that meaning would be (eventually) recoverable.

**Logocentrism** - term associated with Derrida that "refers to the nature of western thought, language and culture since Plato's era. The Greek signifier for "word," "speech," and "reason," *logos* possesses connotations in western culture for law and truth. Hence, logocentrism refers to a culture that revolves around a central set of supposedly universal principles or beliefs" (Wolfreys 302 - see *General Resources* below).

**Metaphysics of Presence** - "beliefs including binary oppositions, logocentrism, and phonocentrism that have been the basis of Western philosophy since Plato" (Dobie 155, see *General Resources* below).

**Supplement** - "According to Derrida, Western thinking is characterized by the 'logic of supplementation', which is actually two apparently contradictory ideas. From one perspective, a supplement serves to enhance the presence of something which is already complete and self-sufficient. Thus, writing is the supplement of speech, Eve was the supplement of Adam, and masturbation is the supplement of 'natural sex'....But simultaneously, according to Derrida, the Western idea of the supplement has within it the idea that a thing that has a supplement cannot be truly 'complete in itself'. If it were complete without the supplement, it shouldn't need, or long-for, the supplement. The fact that a thing can be added-to to make it even more 'present' or 'whole' means that there is a hole (which Derrida called an originary lack) and the supplement can fill that hole. The metaphorical opening of this "hole" Derrida called *invagination*. From this perspective, the supplement does not enhance something's presence, but rather underscores its absence" (from Wikipedia - definition of supplement).

**Trace** - from Lois Tyson (see *General Resources* below): "Meaning seems to reside in words (or in things) only when we distinguish their *difference* from other words (or things). For example, if we believed that all objects were the same color, we wouldn't need the word *red* (or *blue* or *green*) at all. Red is red only because we believe it to be different from



blue and green (and because we believe color to be different from shape). So the word red carries with it the trace of all the signifiers it is not (for it is in contrast to other signifiers that we define it)" (245). Tyson's explanation helps explain what Derrida means when he states "the trace itself does not exist."

**Transcendental Signifier** - from Charles Bressler (see *General Resources* below): a term introduced by Derrida who "asserts that from the time of Plato to the present, Western culture has been founded on a classic, fundamental error: the searching for a transcendental signified, an external point of reference on which one may build a concept or philosophy. Once found, this transcendental signified would provide ultimate meaning. It would guarantee a 'center' of meaning...." (287).

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**Suggested Websites:**

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- Deconstruction: Some Assumptions - Dr. John Lye, Brock University
- Deconstruction - Stanford University
- Deconstruction - Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- Poststructuralism - Wikipedia
- Structuralism/Poststructuralism - Dr. Mary Klages, University of Colorado at Boulder

## POSTMODERNISM

Though often used interchangeably with post-structuralism, postmodernism is a much broader term and encompasses theories of art, literature, culture, architecture, and so forth. In relation to literary study, the term postmodernism has been articulately defined by Ihab Hassan. In Hassan's formulation postmodernism differs from modernism in several ways:

Modernism	Post-Modernism
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Hypotactic	Paratactic
Totalization	Deconstruction
Presence	Absence
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Synthesis	Antithesis
Urbanism	Anarchy and fragmentation
Elitism	Anti-authoritarianism

In its simplest terms, postmodernism consists of the period following high modernism and includes the many theories that date from that time, e.g., structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and so forth. For Jean Baudrillard, postmodernism marks a culture composed "of disparate fragmentary experiences and images that constantly bombard the individual in music, video, television, advertising and other forms of electronic media. The speed and ease of reproduction of these images mean that they exist only as image, devoid of depth, coherence, or originality" (Childers and Hentzi 235).

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- Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.
- McHale, Brian. *Postmodern Fiction*.

**Suggested Websites:**

- "Postmodernism" - Dr. Mary Klages (University of Colorado at Boulder)
- "Postmodernism is Fiction" - Pomono College
- Postmodernism - Georgetown University
- Postmodernism - Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- Postmodern Thought - Dr. Martin Ryder - University of Colorado at Denver
- Postmodernism - Paul Newall, Galilean Library

## NEW HISTORICISM

New Historicism (sometimes referred to as Cultural Poetics) emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, largely in reaction to the lingering effects of New Criticism and its ahistorical approach. "New" Historicism's adjectival emphasis highlights its opposition to the old historical-biographical criticism prevalent before the advent of New Criticism. In the earlier historical-biographical criticism, literature was seen as a (mimetic) reflection of the historical world in which it was produced. Further, history was viewed as stable, linear, and recoverable--a narrative of fact. In contrast, New Historicism views history skeptically (historical narrative is inherently subjective), but also more broadly; history includes all of the cultural, social, political, anthropological discourses at work in any given age, and these various "texts" are unranked - any text may yield information valuable in understanding a particular milieu. Rather than forming a backdrop, the many discourses at work at any given time affect both an author and his/her text; both are inescapably part of a social construct. **Stephen Greenblatt** was an early important figure, and **Michel Foucault's** (fou-KOH) intertextual methods focusing especially on issues such as power and knowledge proved very influential. Other **major figures** include Clifford Geertz, Louis Montrose, Catherine Gallagher, Jonathan Dollimore, and Jerome McCann.

### Key Terms:

**Discourse** - [from Wolfreys - see General Resources below] - "defined by Michel Foucault as language practice: that is, language as it is used by various constituencies (the law, medicine, the church, for example) for purposes to do with power relationships between people"

**Episteme** - [from Wolfreys - see General Resources below] - "Michel Foucault employs the idea of episteme to indicate a particular group of knowledges and discourses which operate in concert as the dominant discourses in any given historical period. He also identifies epistemic breaks, radical shifts in the varieties and deployments of knowledge for ideological purposes, which take place from period to period"

**Power** - [from Wolfreys - see General Resources below] - "in the work of Michel Foucault, power constitutes one of the three axes constitutive of subjectification, the other two being ethics and truth. For Foucault, power implies knowledge, even while knowledge is, concomitantly, constitutive of power: knowledge gives one power, but one has the power in given circumstances to constitute bodies of knowledge, discourses and so on as valid or invalid, truthful or untruthful. Power serves in making the world both knowable and controllable. Yet, in the nature of power, as Foucault suggests in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, is essentially proscriptive, concerned more with imposing limits on its subjects."

**Self-positioning** - [from Lois Tyson - see General Resources below] - "new historicism's claim that historical analysis is unavoidably subjective is not an attempt to legitimize a self-indulgent, 'anything goes' attitude toward the writing of history. Rather, the inevitability of personal bias makes it imperative that new historicists be aware of and as forthright as possible about their own psychological and ideological positions relative to the material they analyze so that their readers can have some idea of the human 'lens' through which they are viewing the historical issues at hand."

**Thick description** - a term developed by Clifford Geertz; [from Charles Bressler - see General Resources below]: a "term used to describe the seemingly insignificant details present in any

cultural practice. By focusing on these details, one can then reveal the inherent contradictory forces at work within culture. "

#### Further References:

- Brannigan, John. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1998.
- Cox, Jeffrey N. and Larry J. Reynolds, eds. *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1984.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
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- Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
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- ---. *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
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- Hunt, Lynn, ed. *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1989.
- McCann, Jerome. *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory*. OUP, 1985.
- Montrose, Louis. "New Historicisms." *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. New York: Modern Language Association, 1992.
- Morris, Wesley. *Toward a New Historicism*. Princeton: PUP, 1972.
- Vesser, H. Aram, ed. *The New Historicism*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

#### Suggested Websites:

- General Introduction to New Historicism - Dr. Dino Felluga
- The New Historicism in Literary Study - D. G. Myers
- New Historicism - Wikipedia
- Definition of New Historicism - Bedford-St. Martin's Press
- New Historicism - Dr. Barbara McManus
- New Historicism (long .pdf file) - Martin Windisch - University of Stuttgart

## RECEPTION AND READER-RESPONSE THEORY

**Reader-response** theory may be traced initially to theorists such as **I. A. Richards** (*The Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism and How to Read a Page*) or **Louise Rosenblatt** (*Literature as Exploration* or *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*). For Rosenblatt and Richards the idea of a "correct" reading--though difficult to attain--was always the goal of the "educated" reader (armed, of course, with appropriate aesthetic apparatus). For **Stanley Fish** (*Is There a Text in this Class?, Surprised by Sin: The Reader in "Paradise Lost" and Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of the Seventeenth-Century Reader*), the reader's ability to understand a text is also subject a reader's particular "interpretive community." To simplify, a reader brings certain assumptions to a text based on the interpretive strategies he/she has learned in a particular interpretive community. For Fish, the interpretive community serves somewhat to "police" readings and thus prohibit outlandish interpretations. In contrast **Wolfgang Iser** argued that the reading process is always subjective. In *The Implied Reader*, Iser sees reading as a dialectical process between the reader and text. For **Hans-Robert Jauss**, however (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, and Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*), a reader's aesthetic experience is always bound by time and historical determinants.

### Key Terms:

**Horizons of expectations** - a term developed by Hans Robert Jauss to explain how a reader's "expectations" or frame of reference is based on the reader's past experience of literature and what preconceived notions about literature the reader possesses (i.e., a reader's aesthetic experience is bound by time and historical determinants). Jauss also contended that for a work to be considered a classic it needed to exceed a reader's horizons of expectations.

**Implied reader** - a term developed by Wolfgang Iser; the implied reader [somewhat akin to an "ideal reader"] is "a hypothetical reader of a text. The implied reader [according to Iser] "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect -- predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader" (Greig E. Henderson and Christopher Brown - Glossary of Literary Theory).

**Interpretive communities** - a concept, articulated by Stanley Fish, that readers within an "interpretive community" share reading strategies, values and interpretive assumptions (Barbara McManus).

**Transactional analysis** - a concept developed by Louise Rosenblatt asserting that meaning is produced in a transaction of a reader with a text. As an approach, then, the critic would consider "how the reader interprets the text as well as how the text produces a response in her" (Dobie 132 - see *General Resources* below).

### Further References:

- Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 1962
- Bleich, David. *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism*. 1978

- Bloom, Harold. *A Map of Misreading*. 1975.
- Booth, Stephen. *An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969.
- Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. 1981.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader*. 1979.
- Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980.
- Holland, Norman. *5 Readers Reading*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1975.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1974.
- ---. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982.
- ---. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. U of Minneapolis P, 1982.
- Mailloux, Steven. *Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction*. 1982
- Holland, Norman. *The Dynamics of Literary Response*. 1968, *5 Readers Reading*. 1975
- Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy*. New York: Methuen, 1982.
- Richards, I.A. *How to Read a Page*. 1942.
- ---. *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*. 1929. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935.
- Riffaterre, Michael. *Semiotics of Poetry*. 1978.
- Rosenblatt, Louise. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1978.
- Suleiman, Susan R., and Inge Crosman, eds. *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*. Princeton UP, 1980.
- Tompkins, Jane, ed. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980.

#### Suggested Websites:

- "Reader Response: Various Positions" - Dr. John Lye - Brock University
- Reader Response Theory and Criticism - Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- Reader-Response Criticism - Wikipedia
- "The Author, the Text, and the Reader" - Clarissa Lee Ai Ling, The London School of Journalism
- Definition of Reader-Response Criticism - virtualLit
- "Reader-Response Theory of Stanley Fish" by Chris Lang
- Wolfgang Iser (and reader-response theory) by David Albertson - Stanford Presidential Lectures in the Humanities and Arts



## FEMINISM

To speak of "Feminism" as a theory is already a reduction. However, in terms of its theory (rather than as its reality as a historical movement in effect for some centuries) feminism might be categorized into three general groups:

1. theories having an essentialist focus (including psychoanalytic and French feminism);
2. theories aimed at defining or establishing a feminist literary canon or theories seeking to re-interpret and re-vision literature (and culture and history and so forth) from a less patriarchal slant (including gynocriticism, liberal feminism); and
3. theories focusing on sexual difference and sexual politics (including gender studies, lesbian studies, cultural feminism, radical feminism, and socialist/materialist feminism).

Further, women (and men) needed to consider what it meant to be a woman, to consider how much of what society has often deemed inherently female traits, are culturally and socially constructed. Simone de Beauvoir's study, *The Second Sex*, though perhaps flawed by Beauvoir's own body politics, nevertheless served as a groundbreaking book of feminism, that questioned the "othering" of women by western philosophy. Early projects in feminist theory included resurrecting women's literature that in many cases had never been considered seriously or had been erased over time (e.g., Charlotte Perkins Gilman was quite prominent in the early 20th century but was virtually unknown until her work was "re-discovered" later in the century). Since the 1960s the writings of many women have been rediscovered, reconsidered, and collected in large anthologies such as *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*.

However, merely unearthing women's literature did not ensure its prominence; in order to assess women's writings the number of preconceptions inherent in a literary canon dominated by male beliefs and male writers needed to be re-evaluated. Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* (1963), Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Teresa de Lauretis's *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (1984), Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* (1975), Judith Fetterly's *The Resisting Reader* (1978), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), or Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) are just a handful of the many critiques that questioned cultural, sexual, intellectual, and/or psychological stereotypes about women.

**Key Terms** (*this list is woefully inadequate; suggestions for additional terms would be appreciated*):

**Androgyny** - taken from Women Studies page of Drew University - "...suggests a world in which sex-roles are not rigidly defined, a state in which 'the man in every woman' and the 'woman in every man' could be integrated and freely expressed' (Tuttle 19). Used more frequently in the 1970's, this term was used to describe a blurring, or combination of gender roles so that neither masculinity or femininity is dominant."

**Backlash** - a term, which may have originated with Susan Faludi, referring to a movement (ca. 1980s) away from or against feminism.

**Écriture féminine** - *Écriture féminine*, literally women's writing, is a philosophy that promotes women's experiences and feelings to the point that it strengthens the work. Hélène Cixous first uses this term in her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in which she asserts, "Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies. *Écriture féminine* places experience before language, and privileges the anti-linear, cyclical writing so often frowned upon by patriarchal society' (Wikipedia).

**Essentialism** - taken from Women Studies page of Drew University - "The belief in a uniquely feminine essence, existing above and beyond cultural conditioning...the mirror image of biologism which for centuries justified the oppression of women by proclaiming the natural superiority of men (Tuttle 90)." Tong's use of the term is relative to the explanation of the division of radical feminism into radical-cultural and radical libertarian.

**Gynocentrism** - "a term coined by the feminist scholar-critic Elaine Showalter to define the process of constructing "a female framework for analysis of women's literature [in order] to develop new models [of interpretation] based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt to male models and theories" (Bressler 269, see *General Resources* below).

**Jouissance** - a term most commonly associated with Helene Cixous (seek-sou), whose use of the word may have derived from Jacques Lacan - "Cixous follows Lacan's psychoanalytic paradigm, which argues that a child must separate from its mother's body (the Real) in order to enter into the Symbolic. Because of this, Cixous says, the female body in general becomes unrepresentable in language; it's what can't be spoken or written in the phallogocentric Symbolic order. Cixous here makes a leap from the maternal body to the female body in general; she also leaps from that female body to female sexuality, saying that female sexuality, female sexual pleasure, feminine jouissance, is unrepresentable within the phallogocentric Symbolic order" (Dr. Mary Klages, "Poststructuralist Feminist Theory")

**Patriarchy** - "Sexism is perpetuated by systems of patriarchy where male-dominated structures and social arrangements elaborate the oppression of women. Patriarchy almost by definition also exhibits androcentrism, meaning male centered. Coupled with patriarchy, androcentrism assumes that male norms operate through out all social institutions and become the standard to which all persons adhere" (Joe Santillan - University of California at Davis).

**Phallogocentrism** - "language ordered around an absolute Word (logos) which is "masculine" [phallic], systematically excludes, disqualifies, denigrates, diminishes, silences the "feminine" (Nikita Dhawan).

**Second- and Third-Wave feminism** - "**Second-wave feminism** refers to a period of feminist thought that originated around the 1960s and was mainly concerned with independence and greater political action to improve women's rights" (Wikipedia). "**Third-wave feminism** is a feminist movement that arguably began in the early 1990s. Unlike second-wave feminism, which largely focused on the inclusion of women in traditionally male-dominated areas, third-wave feminism seeks to challenge and expand common definitions of gender and sexuality" (Wikipedia).

**Semiotic** - "[Julia] Kristeva (kris-TAYV-veh) makes a distinction between the semiotic and symbolic modes of communication:

- Symbolic = how we normally think of language (grammar, syntax, logic etc.)
- Semiotic = non-linguistic aspects of language which express drives and affects

The semiotic level includes rhythms and sounds and the way they can convey powerful yet indefinable emotions" (Colin Wright - University of Nottingham).

**Further References on Psychoanalytic and French Feminism:**

- Cixous (seek-sou), Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa" or "Sorties: Out & Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays."
- Flax, Jane. *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*, 1990.
- Gallop, Jane. *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, 1982.
- Grosz, E. A. (Elizabeth A.) *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*. Boston : Allen & Unwin, 1989.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca, N.Y : Cornell University Press, 1985. HQ1154 .I7413 1985
- Kristeva (kris-TAYV-veh), Julia. *The Kristeva Reader*. Ed. Toril Moi, 1986.
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- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London ; New York : Methuen, 1985. PN98.W64 M65 1985
- Oliver, Kelly, ed. *French Feminism Reader*. Rowman & Littlefield. 2000
- Stanton, Domna. "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva." *The Poetics of Gender*. Ed. Nancy K. Miller, 1986.

**Further References on Gynocriticism and Liberal Feminism:**

- Eisenstein, Zillah R. *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, 1981.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *the Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1979.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." 1985.
- ---. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelist from Brontë to Lessin*. Princeton: PUP, 1977.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary A. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*.

**Further References on Gender Studies, G/L Studies, Cultural, Radical, and Socialist/Materialist Feminism:**

- Brooks, Ann. *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory, and Cultural Forms*, 1997.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* 1993 .
- Crow, Barbara A., ed. *Radical Feminism: An Historical Reader*, 1999.
- Daly, Mary. *Quintessence ... Realizing the Archaic Future: A Radical Elemental Feminist Manifesto*, 1999.
- Heller, Dana, ed. *Cross-Purposes: Lesbian Studies, Feminist Studies, and the Limits of Alliance*, 1997.
- hooks, bell. *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, 1994.
- James, Joy. *SHADOWBOXING: Representations of Black Feminist Politics*, 1999 .
- Showalter, Elaine, ed. *Speaking of Gender*, 1989.
- Spector, Judith, ed. *Gender Studies: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*, 1986.
- Vicinus Martha, ed. *Lesbian Subjects: A Feminist Studies Reader*, 1996.

#### **Suggested Websites:**

- Approaches to Feminism - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- "What is Feminism and Why Do We Have to Talk About It So Much?" by Dr. Mary Klages - University of Colorado at Boulder
- Feminism and Women's Studies - Carnegie Mellon U
- Women's Studies Online Resources (Dr. Joan Korenman -Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- Feminist Theory Website by Kristin Switala (Virginia Tech University)
- Women's Studies Website - Karia Tonella, University of Iowa
- Feminist Theory: An Overview - Elixabeth Lee - The Victorian Web
- Feminist Majority Foundation
- Feminist Theory - Wikipedia
- Feminist Theory Resources

## GENRE CRITICISM

Study of different forms or types of literature. Genre studies often focus on the characteristics, structures, and conventions attributed to different forms of literature, e.g., the novel, short story, poem, drama, film, etc. More recent inquiry in genre criticism centers on the bias often inherent in genre criticism such as its latent (or overt) racism and sexism.

### Further Resources - Fiction:

- Coe, Richard, Lorelei Lingard, and Tatiana Teslenko, eds. *The Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre: Strategies for Stability and Change*. Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2002.
- Cohn, Dorit. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978. (discussion of first and third person narratology) PN 3448 P8 C6
- Derrida, Jacques. "The Law of Genre." Derek Attridge, (ed.) *Acts of Literature*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 221 - 252.
- Duff, David, ed. *Modern Genre Theory*. Pearson Education Limited, 2000.
- Echer, Michael J.C. *The Conditioned Imagination from Shakespeare to Conrad*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977 (argues that in approaching a work of literature that involves an "exo-cultural" character or theme we must take into account the "culturally conditioned imagination" on the creation of a work of art) PR 408 .S64 E25
- Fabb, Nigel. *Language and Literary Structure: The Linguistic Analysis of Form in Verse and Narrative*. Cambridge: CUP, 2002.
- Fowler, Alistair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982 - (on the nature of literary genres and how they are formed) PN 45 .5 F6
- Hale, Dorothy. *Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present*. Stanford UP, 1998.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. Waterloo: Wilfred Lauren UP, 1980 (PN 3503 .H8)
- Heiserman, Arthur. *The Novel Before the Novel: Essays and Discussions About the Beginning of Prose Fiction in the West*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1977 ( traces beginnings of prose fiction to about the fourth century, A.D. ) - PA 3040 .H38
- Keilman, Stephen B. *The Self-Begetting Novel*. New York: Columbia UP, 1980 - (a study of the narrative method in specific texts) PN 3503 .K4
- McKeon, Michael, ed. *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. John Hopkins Press, 2000.
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shloinith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London and New York: Methuen, 1983 - excellent brief book providing overview on narratology (PN 212 .R55)
- Rosen, Alan. *Dislocating the End: Climax, Closure, and the Invention of Genre*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Smith, Barbara Hernstein. *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979 - argues that

- novels are usually imitations of nonfictive writing acts, such as the production of histories or biographies (PN 54 .SE)
- Spilka, Mark. *Towards a Poetics of Fiction: Essays from Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977 - collection of essays on various modern views and approaches to fictional critical theory (PN 3331 .T65)
  - Suleiman, Susan R. *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre*. New York: Columbia UP, 1983 - constructs a viable model of the *roman a these* as a genre (PQ 671 .S94)
  - Torgovnick, Marianna. *Closure in the Novel*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981 — categorizes endings or closure in novels into three types: circular, parallel and incomplete (PN 3378 .T6)
  - Watson, George. *The Story of the Novel*. London: Macmillan, 1979 — discusses the elements that make a novel memorable; treats three types of English novels: memoir novel, letter— novel and the novel in the third person (PN 3491 .W3)
  - Stowe, William W. *Balzac, James, and the Realistic Novel*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983 - uses three novels by James and three by Balzac to construct a basis of “systematic realism” in the novel (PN 3499 .578)

#### Further Resources - Poetry:

- Baker, Carlos. *The Echoing Green: Romanticism, Modernism and the Phenomenon of Transference in Poetry*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984 - elegantly written discussion of Wordsworth, Coleridge Byron, Shelley and Keats and then Yeats, Frost, Pound, Eliot, Stevens and Auden (PS 310 .R66 B34)
- Berg, Viola Jacobsen. *Pathways for the Poet: Poetry Forms Explained and Illustrated*. Millford: Mott Media, 1977 - dictionary of poetic forms (PM 1042 .B47)
- Forrest-Thomson, Veronica. *Poetic Edifice: A Theory of 20th Century Poetry*. Manchester UP, 1978 - argues that poetry “is resolutely artificial, even when it tries to imitate the diction and cadences of ordinary speech”
- Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. New York: Random House, 1979 (this is the revised edition--a description, history and review of theory on poetic meter and form (PH 1505 .F79 — first edition 1965)
- Hill, Archibald. *Constituent and Pattern in Poetry*. Austin: University of Texas P. 1977 - discussion of linguistic patterns in poetry (PN 1042 .H46)
- Haublein, Ernst. *The Stanza*. London: Methuen (Critical Idiom Series) — historical description of stanzaic tradition (PM 1059 .S83)
- Hartman, Charles O. *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980 — essay on the prosody of free verse (PH 1531 .F73 H37) - surveys critical positions and emphasizes re-definitions of the term (PN 56 .P3 P37x)
- McDonald, Peter. *Serious Poetry: Form and Authority from Yeats to Hill*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 2002.
- Nemerov, Howard. *Figures of Thought: Speculations on the Meaning of poetry and other Essays*. Boston: David R. Godine, - lively collection of

essays. on poetry; what poetry is, the language of poetry, etc. (PN 1031 .N44)

- Perkins, David. *History of Modern Poetry: from the 1890's to the High Modernist Mode*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976 - discussion of poetic traditions from 1890 to 1930 (PR 610 .P4)
- Thompson, Denys. *The Uses of Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978 - aims at describing part played by poetry from the earliest times to present day (PN 1111 .T5)
- Welsh, Andrew. *Roots of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977 - traces modern lyrical poetry back to its origins in primitive and folk rhythmical patterns (PN 1126 .W45)

#### Further References - Drama:

- Brockett, Oscar G. *The Theatre: An Introduction*. 4th ed. New York: Holt, Rinhart, and Winston, 1979 - useful reference work (PN 2101 .B7)
- Caputi, Anthony. *Buffo: The Genius of Vulgar Comedy*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1978 - on the history of low comedy and farce, from the Greeks to the present (PN 1922 .C3)
- Goldman, Michael. *On Drama: Boundaries of Genre, Borders of Self*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2000.
- Howarth. W. D., ed. *Comic Drama: The European Heritage*. London: Methuen, 1977 — series of papers that trace the development of comic drama from its beginnings in ancient Greece to the 20th Century (PN 2928 .E8 C6)
- Raber, Karen. *Dramatic Difference: Gender, Class, and Genre in the Early Modern Closet Drama*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2001.
- Salgado, Gamini. *English Drama: A Critical Introduction*. London: Edward Arnold, 1980 - an account of drama in England from its medieval beginnings to the early 1970s; excellent (PR 625 .S2)
- Schleuter, June. *Metafictional Characters in Modern Drama*. New York: Columbia UP, 1979 discusses Pirandello, Genet, Beckett, Weiss, Albee, Stoppard, Handke (PN 1861 .S3)
- Seidel, Michael and Edward Mendelson. *Homer to Beckett: The European Epic and Dramatic Tradition*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977 - sixteen essays on the study of European epic and dramatic traditions (PN 56 .E65 H6)
- Sinfield, Alan. *Dramatic Monologue*. London: Methuen, 1977

#### Further References - Short Story:

- Allen, Waiter. *The Short Story in English*. New York: Oxford UP.— mostly traces “English” language short story (PR829 .A47)
- May, Charles E., ed. *Short Story Theories*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1976 - collection of essays by short story writers and critics approaching short story as a genre form; good annotated bibliography (PN 3373 .S39)

**Suggested Websites:**

- "An Introduction to Genre Theory" by David Chandler
- "Genre Theory & Criticism: Historical Fiction Annotated Bibliography" - Dr. Cora Agatucci
- "Genre Studies" - Wikipedia
- "Genre" - The Museum of Broadcast Telecommunications
- "Bakhtin, Genre Formation, and the Cognitive Turn: Chronotopes as Memory Schemata" by Dr. Bart Kuenen



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL THEORY

As the critical attention to biography waned in the mid-twentieth century, interest in autobiography increased. Autobiography paired well with theories such as structuralism and poststructuralism because autobiography was fertile ground for considering the divide between fact and fiction, challenging the possibility of presenting a life objectively, and examining how the shaping force of language prohibited any simple attempts at truth and reference. Classical autobiographies focused on public figures, were, largely, written by men, and works theorizing autobiography primarily treated men's life writing. Until the mid-1970s, little work was done on theorizing women's autobiographies. **Major theorists** include (and this list, I'm sure, excludes several important writers) Bella Brodski, Paul de Man (de-MAHN), Jacques Derrida (dair-ree-DAH), Paul John Eakin, Leigh Gilmore, Georges Gusdorf, Carolyn Heilbrun, Philippe Lejeune, Françoise Lionnet, Mary G. Mason, Nancy K. Miller, Shirley Neuman, Felicity Nussbaum, James Olney, Roy Pascal, Adrienne Rich, Sidonie Smith, Patricia Meyer Spacks, Domna Stanton, Julia Watson, and Karl Weintraub.

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**Suggested Websites:**

- *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* (journal edited by Rebecca Hogan, Joseph Hogan, and Emily Hipchen)
- "Autobiography" - The Literary Encyclopedia
- *Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography* (book series) edited by William L. Andrews



## TRAVEL THEORY

Interest in travel and travel writing has emerged as the result of an intellectual climate that is interrogating imperialism, colonialism, postcolonialism, ethnography, diaspora, multiculturalism, nationalism, identity, visual culture, and map theory. Travel theory's lexicon includes such words as transculturation, metropolitan center, "imperial eyes," contact zones, border crossing, tourist/traveler, imperial frontier, hybridity, margin, expatriation/repatriation, cosmopolitanism/localism, museology, displacement, home/abroad, arrival/return, road narrative, and diaspora, to name just a few. **Major theorists** include Sara Mills, James Clifford, Anne McClintock, Mary Louise Pratt, Homi Bhabha (bah-bah), Edward Said, Paul Fussell, Steven Clark, Inderpal Grewal, Guy Debord, Umberto Eco, Caren Kaplan, Dean McCannell, James Urry, Jean Baudrillard (boh-dree-YAHR), and David Spurr.

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### Suggested Websites:

(Note: many of these websites were suggested in Dr. Donald Ross's *Snapshot Traveller*)

- International Society for Travel Writing (ISTW) - Dr. Donald Ross, of the University of Minnesota, also hosts a listserv and writes the *Snapshot Traveller* - website
- Studies in Travel Writing - edited by Tim Youngs (Nottingham Trent University)
- The Journal of African Travel Writing
- Literary Traveler (Nomad Group)
- Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE)
- Centre de Recherché sur la Littérature des Voyages (CRLV)

### Other General Literary Theory Websites:

- ACRL - Association of College and Research Libraries - Literary theory resources
- Introductory Guide to Critical Theory by Dino F. Felluga of Purdue University
- Literary Resources - Theory by Dr. Jack Lynch - Rutgers University
- Contemporary Literary Theory - Dr. John Lye (Brock University)
- Voice of the Shuttle Literary Theory Page by Dr. Alan Liu - USCB
- The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism
- Glossary of Literary Theory - University of Toronto
- Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (extensive range of articles on critical theory)
- Swirl - Theory Resources at Southern Oregon University by Warren Hedges
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

### General Resources - Bibliography of Critical Theory Texts

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