

CRITICAL AWARENESS

AN APPROACH TO LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

Critical Awareness: An Approach to Literary Criticism and Theory is a study guide to revisit the basic tenets of Literary Criticism and Theory. It is a re-studying and analysis of Classical Literary Criticism and Modern Literary Theories by some of our contemporary literary scholars, who have, through their understanding, redefined and simplified the basic elements of Criticism and Theory in Literature.

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ANTHOLOGY AND REFERENCE BOOK OF
RESEARCH ARTICLES ON LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

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Reading Oriented Criticism: An overview

Prof. H. M. Arif
Dr. Aareena Nazneen (Co-author)

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of Reader-Oriented Criticism, highlighting its philosophical foundations in Hermeneutics and Phenomenology. It explores how the reader, rather than the author or the text, plays a decisive role in the construction of literary meaning. Through the critical insights of theorists such as Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Stanley Fish, and Georges Poulet, the study emphasizes the interactive and subjective nature of reading. It discusses the evolution of reader-response theory from ancient philosophical roots to modern literary discourse. The paper highlights the significance of the reader's consciousness, identity, and context in shaping textual interpretation.

Keywords: Reader-Oriented Criticism, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Reception Theory, Subjective Interpretation

Reading is the primary requisite for acquiring knowledge. It is a thinking and a psycholinguistic guessing activity. Reading is the process of recognizing the author's intention with synthetic and analytical experience. It involves three elements: Author, Content, and Reader through various activities.

Criticism encompassing ancient history became the first substantial and long-lasting work in literature in the Fourth Century BC. Its initial trace is Plato's thoughts. The period also witnessed Socrates, Aristotle, and Theophrastus offering literary theories that have become a topic of concern for the human mind in some form or another. These are some of the source theories on which the philosophy of postmodern criticism is founded.

The emergence of Reader Oriented Criticism reformed the methods and attitudes to reading specific texts. Introduced in the seventies, the genre drew the attention of great theorists of the time. Exploring the unnoticed areas of any piece of work, they discoursed the nature and spirit of the text from various perspectives. Emphasizing the supremacy of a Reader over the author or the text, the claim was made that it is the reader who prominently determines the essence and directions of an infinite horizon of authorship. The text symbolizes a pack of