

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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H.M. Arif, Arshi Khan, Mursalin Jahan, Zeba Rizvi



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Chronicles of Indian History- A Reflection of Queer Carnality

Dr. Sugandha Agnihotri

ABSTRACT

The 1990s saw the emergence of queer theory, a critical theory, from women's studies and queer studies. This multidisciplinary discipline studies and challenges how society defines gender and sexuality. From women's studies and queer studies, queer theory is a branch of post-structuralist critical theory that first appeared in the early 1990s. An interdisciplinary subject called queer theory encourages people to view the world from different perspectives. It is a method of thought that combats social injustice, questions established academic methodologies and destroys conventional beliefs about gender and sexual identities. Depending on how it is used, the phrase "queer theory" can signify several things. However, generally speaking, it refers to the study and theorization of gender and sexual behaviors that are not exclusively heterosexual and that question the idea that heterosexual desire is "normal." [5] As sociology moved toward social constructivism, queer theorists frequently criticized essentialist perspectives on gender and sexuality. Instead, they frequently examine such ideas as social and cultural processes by scrutinizing the classifications, dichotomies, and linguistic expressions that are purportedly used to represent them.

Keywords: Queer, LGBTQA+, Subaltern, Gender- Biases.

INTRODUCTION

Politics and queer theory invariably praise transgression in the form of overt deviation from the norm. Then, these "Norms" are shown to be just that—norms, not natures or inevitable outcomes. In a large portion of this work, gender and sexual identities are recognized as clearly disobedient categories and configurations.

— Jay Stewart

Gloria Anzaldúa and other academics coined the phrase "queer theory" informally in the 1990s. They were influenced by French post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, who opposed identity politics and saw sexuality as socially produced. In 1990, Teresa de

Lauretis spearheaded the inaugural symposium on queer theory. Early queer theorist David Halperin notes in his article “The Normalization of Queer Theory” that de Lauretis’ use of the word “queer,” which was beginning to be used in a “gay-affirmative sense by activists, street kids, and members of the art world,” and the word “theory,” which was seen as very academically weighty, caused some controversy at first. The word began to gain academic legitimacy in the early 1990s.

Gay and lesbian studies, the intellectual arm of the LGBT rights movement, gave rise to queer theory. Studies of literature and culture that emphasized sexuality as a central concept emerged from a broad social and activist movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. The gay liberation movement may be said to have started with the Stonewall Riots of 1969, which were sparked after police stormed New York’s Stonewall Tavern, a well-liked gathering spot for gays.... Groups such as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), the Gay Liberation Movement (GLF), and the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) fought for the rights of homosexuals and lesbians in terms of law, medicine, and society. The experiences of these movements were incorporated into queer theory, which also offered philosophical and critical perspectives on the nature of the body, the geography of sexuality, and the topic of sexual identity.

Around this time, homosexual artists like Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol, as well as Hollywood celebrities like Rock Hudson, started emerging with their sexual preferences. There was a revolution in sexual consciousness. Critical essays and collections started to emerge as evidence of academic interest, and in 1974, *College English* published a special issue on homosexual writing and politics. These days, queer theory is politically associated with postcolonial studies, African-American cultural critique and theory, and women’s studies. What unites them on one platform is their shared commitment to social justice, liberation for the oppressed, and centering the underprivileged. The queer theory examines the historical and cultural portrayals of homosexuals and lesbians as abnormal, ill, or criminals while emphasizing sexuality as a crucial area for the critical interpretation of cultural materials. Because it demonstrates how cultural representations contribute to the very real material oppression of gays, queer theory flows between literary analysis and activism.

Since queer theory is interested in the relationships between the politics of cultural representation and institutional-state interpretations of sexuality, it is, therefore, more applicable in the arena of cultural studies than it is in traditional literary studies. It is fascinated by the power dynamics, societal assessments, and institutional structures that support heterosexual and gay stereotypes. According to Suparna Bhaskaran’s map of the goals and possibilities for queer sexuality studies, queer sexuality encompasses tales of nonmaterial degeneration, modernity, tradition, economic (re)production, and growth and underdevelopment (2004, 148). She highlights the connections between queer sexuality and imperialism, caste, the law, and AIDS campaigning. Consequently, the cultural settings of queer sexualities are the focus of queer theory.