

WHAT IS LITERARY THEORY?



LITERARY THEORY

Literary theory is the lens or filter that you use to view a piece of writing. It highlights some features and downplays other features.

FORMALISM

You only use the language within the text to analyze it. You may look at word choice, literary devices, and grammar.



PSYCHOANALYTICAL

You use the author or the characters' subconscious motivations to analyze the text. Concepts you may use include the ego, the id, the superego, the conscious mind, and the subconscious mind.

MARXIST

You look at the economic systems of the time (and their associated ideologies) to analyze the text. Concepts you may use are class, base, and superstructure.



FEMINIST

You look at the gender roles that different characters play or are expected to play by society. Concepts you may use include gender and patriarchy.

POSTCOLONIAL

You look at the impact of colonialism on a story. Concepts you may use include identity and resistance.



READER RESPONSE

You focus on readers and the role they play in making a story come to life. Concepts you may use include perception and experience.