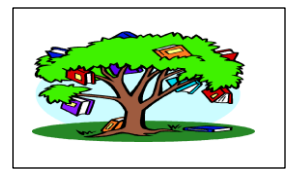


# Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



## Interactive Criticism

### New Criticism (Formalism)

#### Assumptions

- ❖ A piece of writing is to be understood "in itself" without regard to historical or biographical context, author's intention, archetypes, or even the reader's response.
- ❖ Analysis is by close reading to find the elements within the text alone.
- ❖ Seeks to avoid:
  - Intentional fallacy: confusing the meaning of a work with author's purported intention
    - Found in letters, diaries, and interviews
  - Affective fallacy: interpreting the text according to psychological or emotional response

#### Positives

- ✓ New criticism is politically uncontroversial.
- ✓ It is best used when balanced with other methods.

#### Negatives

- It makes criticism too scientific.
- Many things go into understanding a text and discerning its meaning and impact.

#### Questions to ask

- ✚ What do the word choice, grammar, structure and organization reveal?
- ✚ What are the complexities in the text, such as paradox, irony, and ambiguity?
- ✚ What is the unifying idea or theme that resolves tensions?

## Reader Response

#### Assumptions

- ❖ Something written makes an impact only if it is read, received, understood, and acted upon.
- ❖ The response of the reader (what goes on in the emotions, intellect and will) reflects upon the meaning of the text, the veracity of the representations, and even the intentions of the writer.

#### Positives

- ✓ Easy enough to do this type of criticism because the analysis is based on the reader's response. It is not necessary to do secondary research.

#### Negatives

- Makes meaning & veracity relative to a mind that did not create the work.

#### Question to ask

- ✚ What is going on with me as I read this and why?