

Institutionalizing American Literary Theory

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Abstract

Among the literary research approaches that flourished in American academic organizations, one significance is that there is a wonderful connection between the rise of interdisciplinary notions and the interest in literary theory. The emergence of the "New Criticism" after the Second World War was characterized by a way of reading that subverted traditional literary training by focusing on the teaching of the close connection between the literary text and its social history background, which in turn led to research becoming the single goal of learning. On the other hand, the "New Criticism" advocated that every text must be analyzed, focusing on the use of formalism to find the source of its power. Behind this process was the hypothesis "what should a literary work be?" and from this hypothesis, literary theory emerged.

In the end, opposition to the New Criticism gave rise to a few opposing theories, and the result was the emergence of a literary theory, which attempted to compare and evaluate several mutually conflicting theories. Under the influence of French ideas and human science concepts, text not only referred to literary texts but was also expanded to include all texts. Thus, literary theory expanded into "critical theory", which was an attempt to hegemonically control all the texts in a wide array of disciplines. Critical theory is a theory of appraisal, attempting to theorize the source by looking for the theorists' position in their socio-historical background, and later deconstructing theories.