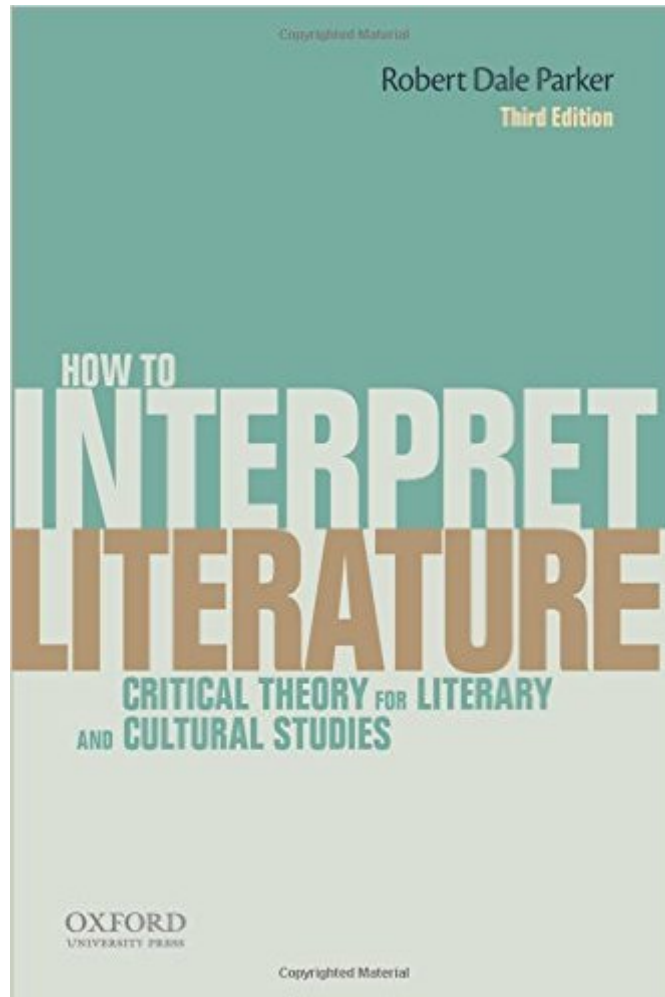


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# How To Interpret Literature: Critical Theory For Literary And Cultural Studies



## Synopsis

Offering a refreshing combination of accessibility and intellectual rigor, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, Third Edition, presents an up-to-date, concise, and wide-ranging historicist survey of contemporary thinking in critical theory. The only book of its kind that thoroughly merges literary studies with cultural studies, this text provides a critical look at the major movements in literary studies since the 1930s, including those often omitted from other texts. It is also the only up-to-date survey of literary theory that devotes extensive treatment to Queer Theory and Postcolonial and Race Studies. *How to Interpret Literature* is ideal as a stand-alone text or in conjunction with an anthology of primary readings such as Robert Dale Parker's *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies*. Distinctive Features\* A conversational and engaging tone that speaks directly to today's students\* Wider coverage than any book of its kind\* A rich assortment of pedagogical features (charts, text boxes, photos, and suggestions for further reading)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read the first edition, from 2008. It's an excellent book--it works hard to be clear and to give concrete examples, both of how the various theories can apply to everyday life and of how they would be used to interpret literature in a student paper. It also realizes that this recent theory is embedded in specific personalities, and so it gives the names and pictures of important stars in theory. It even explains spelling and pronunciation mistakes that students often make with key

terms. This is a less sophisticated book than the book that it names as its inspiration (Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory*). While it is clearly and helpfully written, it lacks Eagleton's beautiful prose, startling humor, and rhetorical force. But for all that, I think this is the book I'd assign if I had to teach a theory class, most of all because its coverage is more recent. (And that's the 2008 version--the new version is even more current.) It's also the first book I'd choose for self-study. It's not the deepest, but it's the clearest and it's one of the broadest. If you're entering graduate work (as I am once again), you can read it in a weekend and feel well-prepared to plunge back in.

Let me begin with this: as an English/Lit major who reads nothing but fiction, fiction, and more fiction in my free time, this book is one of my favorite books ever. I had fun reading this book, I looked forward to every chapter. It clearly outlines all of the terms I wish I had known my whole life, names ideas that you didn't even know had names. Every page I read I was thinking "Yes!! This is what I've been trying to articulate!" I rented this book but by the end of the semester I had marked it up and didn't want to part with it so much that I decided to pay the difference and kept it. I don't know who actually reads textbook reviews but if you read mine, I would really recommend getting this one. Even if you don't need it. I shudder to think what my academic life would be like right now without it. I'm still using it in my classes a year later, and I will probably take it with me when I graduate and go on to teach or to be taught. Let me end with this: buy this book

Helpful book for those trying to learn about Literary Theory for the first time. We used it in my Literary Theory and Criticism graduate-level English course.

An entertaining and informative read. The prose are rarely dry, though the first couple chapters felt too long. I had this as my textbook for a class last semester, and learned a lot. The examples given were engaging and gave the class things to discuss, which helped some of the students who had trouble with the material to learn it. I would recommend adding good essay examples at the end of chapters.

A great secondary source for introducing various literary theories. My only complaint is that some examples tend to drag on, but that may be helpful for others.

Incredibly, this book does not include Russian Formalism which emerged earlier than New Criticism and had more influence on literary theory during XX century. Theoretical Cold War?

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