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Five Approaches of Literary Criticism, by Wilbur Scott, 1962

The Formalistic Approach

✓ p. 179 "Without question, the most influential critical method of our time is the formalistic."

¹Other names are frequently used: aesthetic, textual, ontological, or most frequently, the "new criticism."

p. 180,181 Besides the important contributions of Eliot and Richards, a factor in the development of formalistic criticism was the reaction against the Victorian and Neo-humanist emphasis on the moral uses of literature, the academic interest in historical and literary tradition and the biography of the author, and the willingness of impressionists to make of each literary experience an odyssey of the critic's personality. It is also likely that there was some reaction against the Marxist's stress on social values, and the psychological stress on the neuroses of writers. In any case, the atmosphere of the thirties was ripe for just such an approach as the formalistic critics then began to practice.

Other approaches mentioned by this book are:

1. The Moral Approach
2. The Psychological Approach
3. The Sociological Approach
4. Formalistic
5. The Archetypal Approach: Literature in the Light of Myth

Archetypal *

p. 247 The major work of Sir James George Frazer, the Scottish anthropologist, was, of course, *The Golden Bough*, which appeared in 12 volumes from 1890 to 1915. They constitute a monumental study of magic and religion, tracing numerous myths back to prehistoric beginnings.

See pages 253-281 dealing with Hamlet and Orestes. Sources and similarities. Is the field of tragedy so limited by nature that these similarities are inevitable? Some truth, but not enough to explain the close similarities. Feels there must be some connection between these two traditions. Explanation he says lies in "a great unconscious solidarity and continuity, lasting from age to age, among all the children of the poets . . . an "almost eternal durability" of primitive conceptions and even primitive rites. What is already known to happen in religion may also occur in imaginative drama.