**Critical Approaches**

**Moral/Intellectual** - An interpretive literary approach that is concerned primarily with content and values. To study literature from the moral/intellectual perspective is therefore to determine whether a work conveys a lesson or a message and whether it can help readers lead better lives and improve their understanding of the world (Roberts, 2014, p. 1567).

**Topical/Historical** – An interpretive literary approach that stresses the relationship of literature and authors to its historical period (Roberts, 2014, p. 1569).

**New Critical/Formalist** – An interpretive literary approach based on the French practice of explication de texte (i.e., the detailed explanation of a text), stressing the form and details of literary works (Roberts, 2014, p. 1571).

**Structuralist –** An interpretive literary approach attempting to find relationships and similarities among elements that might originally appear to be separate and discrete (Roberts, 2014, p. 1573).

**Feminist Criticism** – A critical approach designed to raise consciousness about the importance and unique nature of women in literature (Roberts, 2014, p. 1575).

**Gender Studies** – A critical approach that brings attention to gender rather than to sexual differences, based on the concept that the masculine/feminine divide is socially constructed and not innate (Roberts, 2014, p. 1659).

**Economic Determinist/Marxist** – An interpretive literary approach based on the theories of Karl Marx (1818–1883), stressing that literature is to be judged from the standard of economic and social inequality and oppression (Roberts, 2014, p. 1578).

**Psychological/Psychoanalytical** – An interpretive literary approach stressing how psychology may be used in the explanation of both authors and literary works (Roberts, 2014, p. 1580).

**Archetypal/Symbolic/Mythic** – The explanation of literature in terms of archetypal patterns (e.g., God’s creation of human beings, the search for paradise, the sacrifice of a hero, the initiation or “test” of a young person) (Roberts, 2014, p. 969).

**Deconstructionist** – An interpretive literary approach that rejects absolutes but stresses ambiguities and contradictions (Roberts, 2014, p. 1584).

**Reader-response** – An interpretive literary approach based on the proposition that literary works are not fully created until readers make *transactions* with them by *actualizing* them in the light of their particular knowledge and experience (Roberts, 2014, p. 1586).

Reference

Roberts, Edgar V., Robert Zweig. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing, 6th Edition*. Pearson Learning Solutions, 01/2014. VitalBook file.