

**Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* or Cervantes' *Don Quixote*
Due Session 14**

Part of this writing assignment will require research so, the sooner you select your text then the sooner you can begin organizing your secondary sources and including them into the conversation of your essay. You are also welcome to use your most recent and relevant close reading assignment. There must be **3 secondary sources** included in the final essay, and at least **1 secondary source** included in the first draft that is due on Session 14. Think of your sources as Joseph Harris presented the art of quotations in his book. Some of which you will quote *passages* from, others from which you will *paraphrase* from, and some that you might only select *phrases* from. You may include for a secondary source another text for comparative analysis (juxtaposing Cervantes' *Don Quixote* to Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, for example). The primary text – either *The Comedy of Errors* or *Don Quixote* – does not count as a source but must be included in your works cited. Remember: one literary text – either *The Comedy of Errors* or *Don Quixote* – must always remain the primary text of your research project.

First, select a primary text: *The Comedy of Errors* or *Don Quixote*.

Second, for the critical sources that you select, think about how you intend to define your project. What is it about your primary text that you are most interested in and excited to examine? You may have arrived at a topic during the library session with Mark Szarko. (Also, you might allow your field of study or interest to guide the project, that is, if you see its connection with the literary texts we are reading. For instance, when I teach Walt Whitman, my engineers gravitate towards his language for how the tone sounds scientific – Whitman wrote on the technological advances of the mid to late nineteenth century). However, this is all to pose a larger question: How will you define *the literary criticism* that you will perform in your writing of that primary text?

Defining Literary Criticism

Below are several literary approaches to consider, and I will talk about these more extensively in class:

Narrator
Character
Autobiographical
The Archive
New Historicism
Feminist Analysis
Cultural Analysis

Defining Your Project

For now, think about how you want to *define your project*, as Harris advises, but according to the following terms:

- Historical Approach
- Literary Reading
- Author & Narrative Strategy
- Author Project
- Specific Theme
- Theoretical Approach

Now, for this essay, I want to provide you another list. We will talk about this list on Session 12, but take a glance at it beforehand. The list is a more **general introduction** to the field of **literary criticism** and its more expansive possibilities. Essentially, for your draft of Essay 2, you will select one of the forms of criticism below – sometimes in accordance to the sources you have been reading at Hayden Library or online – each actually expands upon the previous lists I have provided above yet *this list* is not as informal.

Formalist Criticism

Intense, close literary reading and step-by-step analysis to understand how various elements in a literary text work together to shape its dynamic effects on the reader

Biographical Criticism

Understanding an author's life to then understand more thoroughly the literary text and explicate its layers yet does not let the *life* of the author distort the *work*

Historical Criticism

An investigation of a literary work by examining the social, cultural, and intellectual context that produced it

Gender Criticism

An examination of how sexual identity influences the production of a literary work by turning to the work of feminists, which could include sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists – for instance, examining representations of women and men, explore author's gender influences, consider structures of literature created by women

Psychological Criticism

Examining psychoanalytic theories to explore behavior of characters, such as sexuality, the unconscious, and repression

Sociological Criticism

Examining literature in the specific context in which it was written, or the historical setting of the text, both of which consider the cultural, economic, and political context, in addition to exploring the relationship between the artist and society

Mythological Criticism

Examination of literature through individual imaginative uses of myths and symbols specific to different cultures and epochs

Deconstructionist Criticism

Focus on how texts do not have a fixed or single meaning, and also, concentrate on studying how language is being used in the text

Reader-Response Criticism

Attempt to describe what happens in the reader's mind while interpreting a text, while traditional criticism assumes that imaginative writing is the creative act, reader-response theory acknowledges how reading is its own creative process

For preparation for this essay, MIT students determined the author and title of their secondary sources from a library workshop session. They also spoke briefly about their secondary sources—date published, where published, school of criticism, who is the author, and what is the title and topic.

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