

## Essay 09

I read 100% of the assigned reading carefully and highlighted in the book.

Literary criticism is concerned with the composition and rhetorical style of a text in order to see the world of the text including its literary context, structure, rhetorical devices employed and literary mood evoked. It may include source criticism and rhetorical criticism to the extent that they help the literary understanding of the text. Structuralist criticism is a synchronic, ahistorical approach to reading a text that focuses on its underlying deep structures that convey universal truths. Canonical criticism is also a synchronic reading of a text that is foremost interested in the theological message of a text as a part of the whole sacred scripture (canon) for the faith community.

These critical methods aid the conscientious Bible reader's understanding of a text multidimensionally by helping explore through the text's literary world into what the writer might have intended (literary), pay attention directly and deeply to the text's final, present form to discover treasures of underlying truths (structuralist), and gain a holistic, theological perspective on a text that is informed by the wisdom of the entire canon (canonical).

An example of literary criticism for Luke 4:16-30 allows for understanding it as an inaugural passage of Jesus' ministry and one imbued with many of the Lukan themes. An example of structuralist criticism for the Parable of the Prodigal Son would focus on the binary oppositions in the text that communicate such dynamics as being lost and found or absent and present, rather than analyzing how the text itself came to be in its current form. An example of canonical criticism (for a Christian) is in approaching the Book of Isaiah not as a compilation of

three different Isaiah's according to a historical-critical view but as a united, harmonious whole within the canon so that the messianic indications are understood as such and connect the Old Testament book to Christ in the New Testament.

Literary criticism of Proverbs 31 might ask whether the chapter of the wife of noble character had always been the concluding chapter of the book or if it had a development through history. Structuralist criticism would not be interested in the history behind this chapter, but rather ask such questions as how the list of noble traits echoes universal, moral truths of a good character.