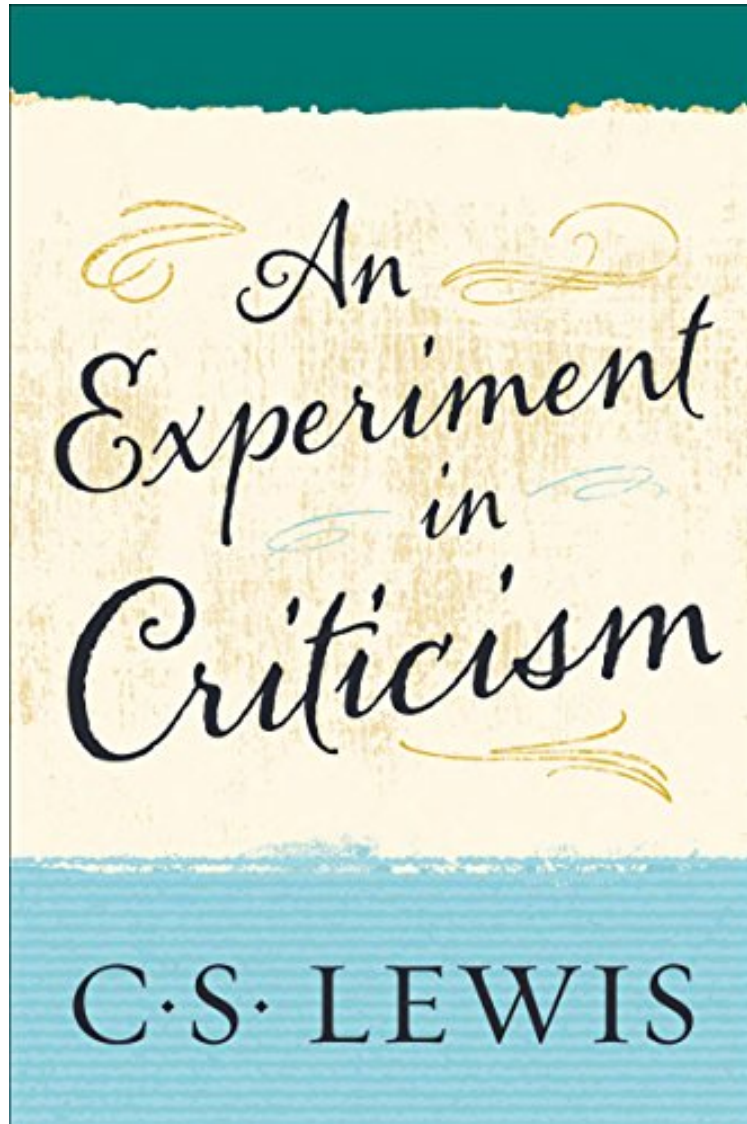


(Download free pdf) An Experiment in Criticism

## An Experiment in Criticism

Von C. S. Lewis

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**Von C. S. Lewis : An Experiment in Criticism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Experiment in Criticism:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An Admirable and Provocative Little BookVon Emmanuel RainsC.S. Lewis is the very embodiment of the open-minded Christian, of which "An Experiment in Criticism" is perhaps the best example.Many Christians today have what C.S. Lewis calls a "problem of belief." If they read books like "Harry Potter" at all (which they usually do not), they quickly voice their disagreement with certain ethical implications or their concern that the books incite dangerous

magical practices (they also frequently voice their disagreement even when they have not read the books). Or they point out that God is totally left out of the picture. Aside from the question whether such qualms are justified, C.S. Lewis would reply that in good reading there ought to be no "problem of belief." "A true lover of literature should be in one way like an honest examiner, who is prepared to give the highest marks to the telling, felicitous and well-documented exposition of views he dissents from or even abominates," says Lewis in "An Experiment in Criticism." "I read Lucretius and Dante at a time when (by and large) I agreed with Lucretius. I have read them since I came (by and large) to agree with Dante. I cannot find that this has much altered my experience, or at all altered my evaluation, of either." In the book, C.S. Lewis maintains that one of the prime achievements in every good fiction "has nothing to do with truth or philosophy or a Weltanschauung" (worldview) at all. This is especially true of Lewis's favorite kind of fiction: fantasy. The primary value he saw in reading fantasy was not that he could learn truths about life but that through it he could be more than himself. He wanted to "see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts," as well as with his own. Reality, even seen through the eyes of many, was not enough. He wanted to see what others had invented. He would therefore (I think) have delighted to enter into the beliefs of J.K. Rowling or Philip Pullman, even though, as a Christian, he would have thought certain aspects of them untrue. His defense for doing this, "for occupying his heart with stories of what never happened and entering vicariously into feelings" which he tried to avoid having in his own person, was that in reading them he became "a thousand men and yet remained" himself. He saw "with a myriad eyes," but it was still he who saw. "Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing," he transcended himself; and was never more himself than when he did. "The man who is contented to be only himself, and therefore less a self, is in prison," he wrote. It is needless to say that in this way C.S. Lewis learned much more from his reading than a person who looks in every book for truths about life, only to find on every page his own face staring at him. Such a person, says Lewis, "attributes to his chosen author what he believes to be wisdom; and the sort of thing that seems wise to him will obviously be determined by his own caliber. If he is a fool he will find and admire foolishness; if he is a mediocrity, platitude, in all his favourites. At best he is a profound thinker himself, and what he acclaims as his author's philosophy might in itself be good, but in reality be merely his own." C.S. Lewis was not like that. He honestly tried to put himself into the shoes of the authors he was reading. Whether or not you agree with C.S. Lewis's approach to reading, if you want to get to know Lewis the READER and not just the writer, "An Experiment in Criticism" is your prime source. An admirable and provocative little book. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A book for those whose lives are shaped by books. Von Ein Kunde Despite the dry title, this book is a must-read for anyone whose life has been shaped by books. In AN EXPERIMENT IN CRITICISM, Lewis explores the experience of reading. He suggests that the majority of people "use" reading, for information, or entertainment, or distraction. Others use reading as a subject to be studied and become experts at technical criticism. But for some few people reading is a much more significant activity. Such people don't use the books they read; they receive them. They return over and over to the same books which provide "a sort of iconography by which they interpret or sum up their own experience." For such readers, reading changes the consciousness, and the experience of reading a particular book may be as significant as experiences of romance, or travel, or spiritual insight for other people. Lewis doesn't suggest that the few readers who have this experience of reading are more intelligent than the many who do not. Other people may create the iconography of their lives based on music, or visual art, or personal relationships. But for those few who read in the way Lewis describes here, reading is central to life. If reading is central to your life, you must experience this book. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. How to experience art. Von Ein Kunde According to Lewis, we judge a person's taste by what he or she reads. Instead, Lewis proposes an experiment: to judge literature by the way person read it. Thus, good literature is that which compels good reading. Lewis begins his discussion of good reading by an analysis of viewing pictures and listening to music - to the experience of art generally. Of the two ways to experience art, receiving and using, receiving art is best because it helps us transcend ourselves. When we receive art we allow our senses to follow the pattern defined by the artist. The art thus enriches our life, allowing us to see or experience something foreign and new. On the other hand, when we use art, we are merely using it to confirm or facilitate ideas, feelings, and beliefs that we already hold. We have not allowed art to enrich our life. Lewis mostly defines good reading by comparing it to bad reading. He, of course, describes in detail these habits. Ultimately, Lewis believes that we read literature to transcend ourselves, and yet paradoxically we are never more ourselves than when we do.

Kurzbeschreibung Why do we read literature and how do we judge it? C. S. Lewis's classic *An Experiment in Criticism* springs from the conviction that literature exists for the joy of the reader and that books should be judged by the kind of reading they invite. He argues that "good reading," like moral action or religious experience, involves surrender to the work in hand and a process of entering fully into the opinions of others: "in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself." Crucial to his notion of judging literature is a commitment to laying aside expectations and values extraneous to the work, in order to approach it with an open mind. Amid the complex welter

of current critical theories, C. S. Lewis's wisdom is valuably down-to-earth, refreshing and stimulating in the questions it raises about the experience of reading. Pressestimmen 'Lewis is at one and the same time provocative, tactful, biased, open-minded, old-fashioned, far-seeing, very annoying and very wise.' Church Times 'This genuinely provocative little book Professor Lewis makes the best case against evaluative criticism that I have read.' David Daiches, New York Times Book ber das Produkt Amid the complex welter of current critical theories, C. S. Lewis's wisdom is valuably down-to-earth, refreshing and stimulating in the questions it raises about the experience of reading.