

FINDING LITERARY CRITICISM

Literary criticism is usually available for works written by authors with established literary reputations. There is often a fine line between book reviewing and literary criticism and, therefore, you may find **STUDY GUIDE #8 FINDING BOOK REVIEWS** helpful for finding criticism of recent works or works of lesser-known writers.

This study guide will help you find criticism of:

1. **novels**
2. **short stories**
3. **plays**
4. **poems**

Since it is not always possible to find criticism of a particular novel, short story, play, or poem, you may have to look for general criticism of an author's works and apply what you need to the work you are studying.

USING THE ONLINE CATALOG

Follow these steps to locate criticism of an author's work through the King's College online catalog:

- From the [Basic Search](#) page, click on the arrow next to the drop-down menu.
- Select [Exact Subject Browse](#)
- Enter the [author's name, last name first](#) (e.g. O'Connor, Flannery)
- The author's name may appear with many subdivisions after it. Several of the subdivisions may be helpful, but look particularly for "[Criticism and interpretation](#)," and click on it. You will access the records for all the books available in King's College Library dealing with critical analysis of the works of the author that interests you.

To find information in books that cover a broader range of topics, use Exact Subject Browse and enter more general terms such as the ones written below:

American Literature -- History and Criticism
American Drama -- History and Criticism
English Fiction -- 20th Century -- History and Criticism

Do not try this general approach until you have used at least some of the indexes named in this study guide. The following information lists print and electronic indexes that provide citations for sources of literary criticism. In some cases, the electronic databases may provide full text critical articles. The remainder of this guide gives titles of general or specialized sources that contain literary criticism of novels, short stories, plays, and poems.

If you are unable to locate the information you need, please consult a Reference Librarian.

PRINT INDEXES

The print Indexes and Abstracts are located in the Reference Department.

Essay and General Literature Index. 1900 to 1994.

Contains a large amount of analytical material for biography and criticisms of individual books. Gives a list of essays by a given author as well as essays about the author and the author's works.

Humanities Index. 1974 to 1996.

Indexes articles about literature. Includes a separate section for book reviews.

MLA International Bibliography. 1921 to 1992.

The primary index for language, literature, and folklore. Published by the Modern Language Association.

ELECTRONIC DATABASES

Academic Search Premier. Mid-'60s to date.

The database provides full text articles for nearly 4,600 scholarly publications on a wide variety of subjects. Provides abstracts and indexing for more than 8,000 periodicals.

Lexis Nexis Academic. Mid-'70s to date.

Provides criticism and reviews that appear in newspapers, journals, and magazines. Includes articles from the current daily papers and goes back as far as twenty years.

Literature Resource Center. 1926 to date.

Contains "an immense collection of biographies, bibliographies, critical essays, work overviews, author-related websites, and timeline events." Gives information about all genres of literature from all time periods.

MLA International Bibliography. 1963 to date.

The primary electronic index for language, literature, and folklore from the Modern Language Association.

GENERAL CRITICISM

R
928
K962A

American Authors, 1600-1900: a Biographical Dictionary of American Literature. 1938.

Contains biographies of over 1,250 authors of major and minor significance.

R
928
K962B1

British Authors Before 1800: a Biographical Dictionary. 1952.

Contains 650 biographies of authors of both major and minor significance. After each article is a list of the author's principal works (with the date of original publication) followed by selected source material about each author.

R
928
K962B

British Authors of the Nineteenth Century. 1936.

Contains 1,000 biographies of authors of the English Empire. Preference is given to writers of belles lettres, but concise biographical sketches are also given for more eminent figures from other disciplines.

- R
928
C767C **Contemporary Authors.** 1962 to date.
Presents bio-bibliographical guide to current writers in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, journalism, drama, motion pictures, television and other fields. Provides personal facts about the author, author's writing, work in progress, and professional sidelights.
- R
928
C767C4 **Contemporary Literary Criticism.** 1973 – 2007.
Gives critical commentary and general information on authors who were living or who had died after December 31, 1959
- R
803
M272C **Cyclopedia of World Authors.** Revised 3rd Edition. 1997. 5 Vols.
Gives biographical sketches and lists of works of several hundreds of authors.
- R
928
D561D **Dictionary of Literary Biography.** 1978 - 2006
An excellent source for biographical information and an overview of the author. Each volume is dedicated to a specific genre or theme.
- R
928
K962E **European Authors, 1000-1900.** 1967.
Contains 967 biographies of European writers who were born after 1000 A.D. or died before 1925.
- R
820.9
M862L **Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors.** 1935. 8 Vols.
Covers the years 680-1904. Gives brief biographical data of an author and selected quotations from criticism of his works. Exact references are provided.
- R
928
L712L **Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800.**
Contains critical discussions of the author's work.
- R
016.8
M272M **Magill's Bibliography of Literary Criticism.** 1979. 4 Vols.
Provides scholarly literary criticism in the fields of fiction, drama and poetry for works from the Gilgamesh Epic to the present day. Emphasis is on criticisms of the 1960's and 1970's. Criticisms are grouped under an alphabetical author arrangement.
- R
803
M272M **Masterplots: 510 Plots in Story Form from the World's Fine Literature.** 1949.
Vols. 1 & 2.
- R
803
M272M **Masterplots: 250 Plots in Story Form from the World's Fine Literature.** 1952.
Vols. 3 & 4.
- R
803
M272M **Masterplots: 500 Plot-Stories and Essay-Reviews from the World's Fine Literature.**
Third Series. 1960. 2 Vols.
- R
803
M393M **Masterplots II: American Fiction Series.** 1986. 4 Vols.
- R
809.3
M393M1 **Masterplots II: Short Stories Series.** 1986. 6 Vols.

- R
803
M272M3 **Masterplots: 2,010 Plot Stories and Essay Reviews from the World's Fine Literature.**
1976. 12 Vols.
- R
820.9
M72M4 **Modern American Literature.** 1999. 5 Vols.
The source provides critical commentary for American authors.
- R
809.8896
M72M1 **Modern Black Writers.** 1995.
Provides information about authors from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States.
Entries include excerpts from critical commentaries.
- R
820.9
T247M **Modern British Literature.** 1966 -1985. 5 Vols.
Includes critical excerpts for British authors. British authors are defined as writers of
English, Welsh, Scottish origin and present or past members of the Commonwealth.
- R
820.9
M72M **Modern Commonwealth Literature.** 1977.
Presents critical commentary for countries that were current or past members of the British
Commonwealth.
- R
928
N622N **Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism.**
Reprints commentary written about the author. Every fourth volume is devoted to literary
movements.
- R
810.8
An270 **The Oxford Companion to African American Literature.** 1997.
Entries provide biographical information along with a short general critique.
- R
920
So 54s **Something About the Author.**
Provides information about children's authors and illustrators. Though the entries do not
contain criticism, this is a good starting point.
- R
803
M272M **Survey of Contemporary Literature.** 1977. 12 Vols.
Gives updated reprints of essay-reviews, includes bibliographical reference sources, and
provides literary criticism and content for many of the outstanding books published in the
U.S. since 1954. Updated by **Magill's Literary Annual** series.
- R
928
T918T **Twentieth Century Literary Criticism.** 1978 to date.
Presents significant passages from literary criticism on authors who died between 1900
and 1960. An additional bibliography for further reading follows the excerpted criticism.
Every fourth volume is devoted to literary topics.
- R
016.42
En36Y **The Year's Work in English Studies.** 1922 to 1993.
A selective critical narrative survey of scholarly books and journal articles in the fields of
English language and literature in English in Britain, America, Africa, Australia, Canada,
the Caribbean, and India. Works on English literature are grouped under chronological
period. Has author and subjects index.

SPECIALIZED SOURCES OF CRITICISM

A. NOVELS

R
016.8093
Ad33C

The Contemporary Novel: a Checklist of Critical Literature on the British and American Novel Since 1945. 1972.

Includes book materials and periodical articles; cutoff date is 1960 for periodicals and 1969 for books.

R
809.3
C767C52

Contemporary Novelists. 6th ed. 1995.

Gives for each author a brief biographical sketch, a bibliography of published works, and a critical essay by a contemporary scholar. References to other critical studies are limited to those suggested by the biographee.

R
016.8093
K214C

The Continental Novel: a Checklist of Criticism in English, 1900-1966. 1968.

Includes English language criticism of the French, Spanish and Portuguese, Italian, German, Scandinavian, Russian and East European novel.

R
016.8093
K214C1

The Continental Novel: a Checklist of Criticism in English, 1967-1980. 1983.

Extends the coverage of the previous volume to include the years 1967-1980.

R
809.3
C869C

Critical Survey of Long Fiction: English Language Series. 1983. 8 Vols. and **Foreign Language Series.** 1984. 5 Vols. A supplement covers both series.

Provides individual critical assessment of works by 272 major novelists. Each article consists of seven sections; principal long fiction, other literary forms, achievement, biography, analysis, major publications other than long fiction, and bibliography. Also included are twenty essays on the history and development of the novel and the novella.

R
016.823
P182E

English Novel Explication. 1973 plus supps.

Extends the coverage of the **English Novel** 1578-1956, to include criticisms beginning with 1958, which have appeared in books and periodicals, in English and foreign languages.

B. SHORT STORIES

R
803
C869C

Critical Survey of Short Fiction. 1981. 7 Vols. plus supps.

Consists of three parts: essays, authors, and current authors. Long, detailed essays range in information from social and historical to philosophic and religious to the technical and semantic. Author part gives a list of principal short-fiction works, indicates influences on the author's works, as well as his influences on other authors' works. Most of the entries represent writers who have not yet received full critical recognition.

R
803
C869D

Short Story Criticism: Excerpts from Criticism of the Works of Short Fiction Writers. 1998-to date.

Provides passages of criticism found in other sources, plus biographical information and a bibliography for writers of all eras and nations.

R
016.8
W154T

Twentieth-Century Short Story Explication. 1977 plus supps.

Cites short story explication from books, monographs, and periodicals after 1920.

C. PLAYS

R
016.812
Ed23A **American Drama Criticism: Interpretations 1890-1977.** 2nd ed. 1979 plus supps.
Lists interpretations of American plays published in books, monographs, and periodicals. Authors included are or were citizens of the U.S., except for a few Canadian and Caribbean dramatists whose works were or are being performed in this country.

R
809.2
C869C **Critical Survey of Drama, 2nd Revised Edition.** 2003
International in scope. Covers principal drama, other literary forms, achievements, biography, and an analysis of the playwright's work.

R
809.3
C767C5 **Contemporary Dramatists.** 5th ed. 1993.
Gives brief biographies of over 300 contemporary dramatists writing in English. Includes signed commentary on the writer's work (often with comment by the bio-grapher), and lists of publications.

R
808.082
An24C **Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama.** 1971.
Gives entries for playwrights, plays, national developments in specific countries, and some terms. Presents fairly lengthy discussions of a limited number of plays.

R
016.822009
C677D **Drama Criticism.** 1966-71. 2 Vols.
Vol. 1: "A Checklist of interpretation since 1940 of English and American plays;"
Vol. 2: "A Checklist of interpretation since 1940 of classical and continental plays."

R
809.2
D79D2 **Drama Criticism.** 1991.
Designed for beginning students of theater and for the casual playgoers. Introduces students to the most frequently studied playwrights of all time periods and nationalities.

R
016.8092
B745D **Dramatic Criticism Index.** 1972.
Gives a bibliography of commentaries on playwrights from Ibsen to the avant-garde. Arranged alphabetically by the author's name, it includes nearly 12,000 entries in English on 300 American and foreign playwrights, the majority of them from the twentieth century.

D. POETRY

R
809.2
AL26A **American and British Poetry. A Guide to the Criticism.** 1984-1996.
Entries arranged by poet's name and lead to critiques for specific poems. The time periods cover 1925-1990.

R
809.3
C767C51 **Contemporary Poets.** 5th ed. 1991.
Offers biographical and bibliographical information on the poets selected. The entry on each poet consists of biography, full bibliography, sometimes a comment by a poet, and a signed essay on the poets.

- R
809.1
C869C **Critical Survey of Poetry.** 2002. 8 Vols.
Provides information such as the author's principal work, achievements, biography, analysis, & a bibliography of works. Includes the works of international poets.
- R
811.54
M259C **Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary American Poetry.** 1973.
Handbook includes biographical and bibliographical information, but is intended mainly "as a guide to the actual process of reading contemporary American poetry."

The following three titles index poetry explications. A poet's entry includes a list of works, and under each work is a bibliography composed of journals and books.

- R
016.8081
K963P1 **Poetry Explication: A Checklist of Interpretation Since 1925 of British and American Poems Past and Present.** 1980.
Presents poetry explications covering the time period 1925-1977. Poets are listed alphabetically. Underneath the heading there is a list of poems with citations to explications found in journals and books.
- R
016.8081
G941G **Guide to American Poetry Explication.** 1989.
A multi-volume series that follows the same format as **Poetry Explication.**
- R
016.8081
M366G **Guide to British Poetry Explication.** 1991.
A multi-volume series that follows the same format as **Poetry Explication.**

If you need further assistance in finding literary criticism, please speak with a Reference Librarian.

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