

# Literary Criticism

## About this Guide

This guide is designed to assist users locate scholarly information about authors and their works. Included are resources that cover interpretation, critical evaluation, and the historical development of various literary genres such as poetry, drama, novels and short stories. All resources listed are available through the Adelphi Libraries print and/or online collection, many of which are accessible through the library webpage. If you need more assistance please ask for help at the Reference Desk or call (516) 877-3574 to speak with a librarian.

## What is Literary Criticism and where do I find it?

"Literary criticism" is the evaluation, analysis, or interpretation of literary works. It is usually in the form of a critical essay or extended book review. Criticism may examine a particular literary work, or may look at an author's writings as a whole, or may compare and contrast works by time period or with other authors.

## Finding Author Information:

**ONLINE Resources:** Looking for reference works or articles about an author and/or his works. Try these online resources using our electronic databases. Database descriptions are from the database web sites.

[Twayne Author Series](#) (Gale) - spans the literary tradition through hundreds of years and includes 600 authors from around the world. The entries offer an introduction and critical interpretation and discussion of an author's life and works.

[Literature Criticism Online](#) (Gale) - provides online access to the full collection of **Something About the Author**, *Something About the Author Online* provides first-time comprehensive online access to all volumes ever printed in Gale's™ acclaimed and long-standing *Something About the Author* series, which examines the lives and works of authors and illustrators for children and young adults and is the preeminent source on authors and literature for young people. *Something About the Author Online* includes both the main series and **Something About the Author Autobiography Series**, totaling more than 217 volumes, 12,000 entries, and nearly 17,000 images - all delivered in an easy-to-use 24/7 online format that matches the exact look and feel of the print originals.

**Dictionary of Literary Biography** provides more than 16,000 biographical and critical essays on the lives, works, and careers of the world's most influential literary figures from all eras and genres. Comprised of the award-winning *Dictionary of Literary Biography* series, which over its 30-year history has been dedicated to making literature and its creators better understood and more accessible to students and interested readers, *DLB Complete Online* includes the DLB main series, the DLB Documentary Series, and the DLB Yearbook Series - all delivered in an easy-to-use 24/7 online format that matches the exact look and feel of the print originals.

**NOTE:** Enter your author's name in the search box and limit your results below by selecting the desired series (Something about the Author, Something about the author Autobiography, or Dictionary of Literary Biography).

[Biography Reference Bank](#) (Wilson) - covers 500,000 people from antiquity through today. Combines the in-depth, original profiles of Wilson Biographies Plus Illustrated, the thorough periodicals coverage of Biography Index, and full-text articles, page images, and abstracts from the complete range of Wilson databases, to bring you Wilson's largest biography database yet.

### **Finding Online Articles on an Author's Work/s**

If you can't find many articles on your topic, you may want to try a periodical index which focuses on the academic field of literature. Many are available online while older version of years covered may only be available in printed format. Academic libraries often subscribe to this kind of subject index online with index coverage for older works available in print. One such subject index that is well known for finding literary criticism is the Modern Language Association's *MLA International Bibliography*, which includes scholarly writings on literature, languages, linguistics, and folklore.

All these databases can be searched by keywords as well as by the author or title of a work. Before you start you might ask a librarian to assist you formulate your search query or to recommend which databases might be best for your particular research project.

[Academic Search Complete](#) (Ebsco) - will find journal articles, some in full text. This index may be good for very new authors or very famous authors. Enter the title of the book with the words 'and book review'. Example search: 'Lovely Bones and book review'.

[Essay & General Literature Index](#) (Wilson) - this is an index to essays published in collections in the humanities and social sciences. This covers, but is not limited to literature. This is a good source for recent essays on topics.

[Gale Literature Resource Center](#) (Gale) - a current, comprehensive, and reliable online resource for research on literary topics, authors, and their works. Its coverage includes all genres and disciplines, all time periods, and all regions of the world. **What you'll find in *Literature Resource Center***

- Full-text scholarly articles from more than 360 academic journals and literary magazines—the majority peer-reviewed—as well as excerpts from scholarly monographs, literary correspondence and diaries. (After your search, select the Literature Criticism tab.)
- Reviews of books of all sorts, from children's literature to adult fiction, from popular non-fiction to scholarly studies. (After your search, select the Reviews and News tab.)

- Substantive biographical essays on more than 130,000 authors, providing insights into life and times, works, and critical reception. (After your search, select the Biographies tab.)
- Full text of thousands of poems and short stories published in contemporary journals and magazines. (After your search, select the Primary Sources/Literary Works tab.)
- Overview essays on thousands of books and literary topics. (After your search, select the Topic and Work Overviews tab.)
- Links to editorially selected websites on authors and their works, as well as pictures of well-known authors and audio interviews and reviews. (After your search, select the Multimedia tab.)

[Humanities Full Text Search](#) (Wilson) - provides citations and some full text in a broad range of subject areas including literature, art, archeology, music, performing arts, philosophy, religion, history, and gender studies. Some original works of poetry, fiction, and drama are included. Indexing dates back to 1984, with select full text coverage beginning in 1994.

[Humanities International Complete](#) (Ebsco) - covers a broad range of subjects in the humanities, providing the full text of 770 journals as well as book chapters, with journals dating as far back as 1925.

[Literature Criticism Online](#) (Gale) - provides online access to the full collection of Contemporary Literary Criticism, Drama Criticism, Poetry Criticism, Shakespearean Criticism, Short Story Criticism, Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism, Literature Criticism from 1400-1800, Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism, and Children's Literature. **More comprehensive than Gale's Literature Resource center but may be a bit more cumbersome to use. This database contains 95 percent of the print versions.**

[MLA International Bibliography](#) (Ebsco) - provides citations from items worldwide in the areas of literature, language, linguistics and folklore. The databases indexes journals, series, books, essay collections, papers, proceedings and dissertations from over 6,500 sources dating from 1963.

**NOTE:** Due to the volume of international sources in this database we suggest that you limit your search to English language sources. To do this enter your search terms and look below to 'limit to' and next to the 'language phrase' limiter select 'English' from the drop down menu and hit search.

[Project Muse](#) - provides the full text of scholarly journals in fields including literature, history, visual and performing arts, cultural studies, education, political science, gender studies, and economics. Years of coverage vary by title with selected titles beginning as early as 1993.

**\*\*Note:** if you receive any gateway errors when using the link above, use this alternate URL: <http://0-muse.uq.edu.au.alicat.adelphi.edu/>

[Readers Guide Retrospective](#) (Wilson) - a database containing comprehensive indexing of the most popular general-interest periodicals published in the United States during the years 1890 through 1982.

[Twayne Author Series](#) (Gale) - spans the literary tradition through hundreds of years and includes 600 authors from around the world. The entries offer an introduction and critical interpretation and discussion of an author's life and works.

**FINDING Books:** Looking for books about an author or criticism of his works? Search for books in the library catalog.

A subject heading search is helpful for locating critical works. Enter your author's name in the search box and select 'Subject' from the drop down menu in **ALICAT** (Adelphi Library Catalog). Examples:

- Steinbeck, John.
- Shakespeare, William
- Sophocles

The result list that appears will be from our **ALICAT CLASSIC** version of the catalog. If a list of subject headings for the same author appears, look especially for the subdivision '**Criticism and Interpretation**'. (A subject heading consisting of just author's name will also lead to books of criticism and interpretation but will probably include biographies as well.)

Then: Find discussions of a particular work by locating the books you find under these subject headings on the shelf. Look up the title of the work in the index at the back of each book.

Also: Within the list of subject headings in the catalog for an author, you may even find headings that lead to books devoted entirely to a specific work.

Examples:

- Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968. Grapes of Wrath
- Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.
- Faulkner 1897 1963, characters.

-or-

Enter your author's last name with the words 'and criticism' under the keywordPlus search box in **ALICATPlus Catalog** (Adelphi Library Catalog).

Examples:

- Faulkner and criticism

- Shakespeare and Hamlet

When the result list appears look to the left where you will find the 'refine by' list. Click on 'Subject' located under 'Found In'

**Using Reference materials for analysis of literature by genre:** The Magill's series for each genre provides critical essays on the history and development of the genre. Masterplots' series provides plot analysis of individual works and lists principal characters. Use both of these sources for analysis of authors' individual works.

#### **General:**

Masterplots - (3 sets). Check each set for your author. Last volume of each set contains index by author and title. (Ref. PN 44 .M33 1976) (Ref. PN44 M33 1996)

Masterplots Cyclopedia of World Authors (Ref. PN41 .M26 1958)

Magill's Bibliography of Literary Criticism. (4 Volumes). Ref. Z6511 .M25

#### **Drama:**

Critical Survey of Drama Ref. PN1625 .C68 2003

Critical Survey of Drama: English Language Series Ref. PN1625 .C75 1985

Critical Survey of Drama: Foreign Language Series Ref. PN1625 .C74 1986

Drama Criticism. Ref. PN 1601.D59

Masterplots II Drama Series Ref,PN6112.5 .M37 2004

#### **Novels:**

Critical Survey of Long Fiction (Ref. PR821 .C7 1983,)

Critical Survey of Long Fiction (Ref. PR821 .C7 1991)

Critical Survey of Long Fiction: English and Foreign Language Series Ref. PN3451 .C75 2000

Magills Literary Annual (1976- ) (Ref. PN44 .M35) If you know the year of a particular book check the literary annual for that year to locate a review . See below *Magills Survey of Contemporary Literature* for earlier notable works.

Magills Survey of Contemporary Literature (1954-76) PN44 .M34 1977 updated reprints of 2,300 essay-reviews from Masterplots annuals, 1954-1976, and survey of contemporary literature supplement : with 3,300 bibliographical reference sources

Masterplots Revised category American Fiction Series Ref. PN843 .M15 1985

Masterplots II American Fiction Series (Ref. PN846 .M37 1986 )

Masterplots II American Fiction Series (Ref PS373 .M37 2000)

Masterpieces in African American Literature Series Ref. PS153.N5 M264 1992

Masterplots II African America Literature series Ref. PS153.N5 M2645 1994

English Novel Explication: Criticism to 1972. Ref. Z2014 .F5 P26 and supplement

**Poetry:**

Masterplots II Poetry Series (Ref. PN1110.5 .M37 1992) and Supplements (Ref. PN1110.5 .M37 1992 suppl.)

Critical Survey of Poetry 2nd ed. (Ref. PN1021 .C7 2003)

Critical Survey of Poetry (Ref. PN1111 .C7)

Critical Survey of Poetry: English Language Series Ref. PR502 .C85 1992

Critical Survey of Poetry: Foreign Language Series Ref. PR502 .C86 1984

Poetry criticism : excerpts from criticism of the works of the most significant and widely studied poets of world literature PN 1010. P499

Guide to American Poetry Explication. Vol. 1, Colonial & 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Ref. Z1231 .P7 G85 1989 v. 1

Guide to American Poetry Explication. Vol. 2, Modern & Medieval. Ref. Z1231 .P7 G85 1989 v. 2

Guide to British Poetry Explication. Vol. 1, Old English – Medieval. Ref. Z2014 .P7 M34 1991 v. 1

Poetry Explication. Ref. Z2014 .P7 K8 1980

**Short Stories:**

Masterplots II Short Stories Series Ref. PN3326 .M27 2004

Critical Survey of Short Fiction (Ref. PN3451 .M3)

Critical Survey of Short Fiction PN3321 .C7 2001

Short Story Criticism PN 3377. S386

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