

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

An Introduction to Literary Criticism

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I

THE RELATIONSHIP OF READING AND WRITING

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

JOSEPH ADDISON, English essayist

How can I know what I think till I see what I say?

E. M. FORSTER, English novelist and essayist

READING AND WRITING IN COLLEGE

Reading and writing seem to be inseparable acts, rather like two sides of the same coin. Sometimes we even say the three words as if they were only one: reading-and-writing. Their connections are echoed in the advice every successful writer gives fledgling ones to "read, read, read." So, too, we know that good readers grow more perceptive and insightful if they "write, write, write."

It all sounds so easy and natural. When we encounter a book that touches our emotions or disturbs our assumptions, for example, we want to share our reactions with someone else. We may call a friend to talk about it, or if there is nobody to listen, we may turn to writing to explain what we are thinking and feeling about what we have read. It is then we all too often discover that putting what we think about a novel or a poem down on paper in a form that someone else will find interesting (and intelligible) is not so simple. In school, where reading and writing are assigned, the problem can be more serious. Students sometimes struggle not only with expressing their opinions but also with finding them. Reading works that someone else has chosen for them, students may have trouble identifying something to write about. In the worst-case scenario, they may not even understand what they've read very well.

Academic survival depends on developing skills that will allow you to explore the meaning, aesthetics, or craft of a text and then write about the insights you've discovered. They are the skills of a literary critic, a person who examines how a piece of writing works, what it has to say about the culture or author that produced it or

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about human nature in general, why it was written, in what ways it is similar to other works, and how it ranks in comparison with them. In short, to be a successful critic you need to be a resourceful reader, one who can utilize the principles of more than a single school of literary analysis and write with insight and understanding, as well as clarity and grace.

The writing you are asked to do in literature classes can take many forms, from marginal notes to quick journal entries and freewriting sessions, perhaps eventually going through many drafts to become a full-blown piece of academic discourse. But, of course, it may also take final form as a letter to a friend, a poem for your eyes only, or the answer to an essay question on an examination. The purpose and audience for your writing will determine how your critical pieces take shape and what that shape is. What does not change is that the reading-writing connection can be a valuable one for you, because by writing responses to what you read, you are likely to understand it better, remember it longer, relate it to other experiences more often (both those you have and those you read about), and use it more effectively.

We read and respond, then talk and write. The text we ultimately publish, whether as rough notes, a reading log, a creative effort, examination questions, or a research report, is literary criticism, an effort to share our experiences with someone else.

ENGAGING THE TEXT

Regardless of the assignment you are given, practicing literary criticism requires more than a single effort or skill. Even answering a question in class requires that you think about your response before speaking. Written criticism takes even more care. Whether you are dealing with a long research paper or an essay question on an exam that has a time limit, the job calls on you to carry out several complex tasks, and the process can be overwhelming if you try to think about them all at once. As a result, getting started is the hard part for many people. Where to begin isn't always obvious. To gain some control over the process, you can use some fairly simple techniques to help make your initial approach. They take little time but can pay big dividends later.

The techniques suggested as starting points here involve connecting reading and writing so that you can discover what you have to say. They include making marginal notations, keeping a reading log, and using prewriting strategies. It is likely that some of them will work better for you than others. For example, some readers find that making entries in a log disrupts their enjoyment of a text, but others make it a regular part of their reading process. You will have to be the judge of which strategies are most effective for you and which you find to be unproductive. The important step is to incorporate those that help into your own reading-writing process. Here are some that you may want to make a routine part of your approach to engaging a text.

ADDING MARGINAL NOTATIONS

One of the reasons that reading and writing seem to be two parts of a whole is that they sometimes take place at the same time. During the first reading of a work,

for example, you may find yourself underlining sentences, putting question marks or checks in the margins, highlighting passages, or circling words that you don't understand. In fact, you may not think of such cryptic markings as writing at all, but they are representations of what you are thinking and feeling as you go through a text. And because nobody takes in a work completely the first time through, they can serve as starting points for the next reading. They will help you find those passages and ideas that you wanted to think about some more or perhaps didn't understand at all. You will be glad when you return to a work that when you were there the first time, you left some footprints to follow when you came back. Look at how a first-time reader responded to Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay."

NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY

Nature's first green is gold, → How can green be gold?
Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf's a flower,
But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Lots of rhyme in this poem!

Opening sounds get repeated, too.

The advantage of marginal notations is that they don't interrupt your reading very much. They are, however, usually too terse and superficial to serve as the basis of a full-scale analysis. Several other techniques that will connect your reading with your writing in more substantive ways include keeping a reading log and using prewriting strategies.

KEEPING A READING LOG

You will have the rough beginnings of a reading log if you have made marginal and textual notes while you were reading. A log simply amplifies the process and thus requires a separate notebook for your comments. You may even want to skip the marginal markings and use the notebook from the beginning.

Several different kinds of information, depending partly on how familiar you are with a work, will be appropriate for your reading log. When you read something for the first time, you are likely to make notes about relatively basic information. If you are reading a narrative, for example, you may want to answer such questions as the following:

- ◆ Where is the action happening?
- ◆ What are the relationships of the characters?
- ◆ Which character(s) do I find to be the most interesting?
- ◆ Which one(s) do I care for most?
- ◆ Which one(s) do I dislike the most?

You might even want to pause in the middle to speculate about the following:

- ◆ What do I want to happen?
- ◆ What am I afraid will happen?
- ◆ What do I think will happen?
- ◆ What have I read that prompted the answers to these questions?

If you are reading a poem, you may want to record answers to questions like these:

- ◆ Who is the speaker of the poem?
- ◆ What do I know about him or her?
- ◆ What is the occasion for saying it?
- ◆ Where is it taking place?
- ◆ Who is listening?
- ◆ Which lines seem to be the most important ones?
- ◆ Do they give me insight into the poem as a whole?

Another way of beginning to think about a work is to jot down questions, memories it has called up, arguments with the ideas, or speculations about how the author came to write it. These considerations will help connect you with what you have read, not simply focus your attention on the text itself. They will make it more meaningful to you as an individual. It is often in personal interaction with a work that you begin to make meaning as a writer-critic.

When you are more familiar with the work, you will want to address more complex issues in your reading log or journal. You have several different models to follow, including the following:

- ◆ A learning log (sometimes called a double-entry log or a dialectical log) in which you divide a page into vertical halves, noting page numbers, phrases, or words from the text on one side and your own response on the other. On your side of the page you may express confusion, record definitions of words you don't know, question connotations, argue with the text, note the recurrence of an image—whatever you think you need to return to later.
- ◆ A dialogue journal that uses the same format but devotes one side of the page to your comments and leaves the other half for comments from another reader (student, friend, teacher, etc.).
- ◆ A "what if?" journal that asks for a response to hypothetical questions, such as these: If you could talk to the author (or one of the characters or the narrator), what questions would you ask? What objections would you raise?
- ◆ A vocabulary journal that records all the words you are unfamiliar with.
- ◆ A personal writing journal that can include informal freewrites on a passage or a scene; a descriptive paragraph, poem, or short narrative about an experience the text brings to mind; or an imagined conversation between two characters.

At the end of a reading, a summary paragraph about your reactions as recorded on your half of the double-entry log will help you pull together what you think about the work. A word of caution: don't let too much time pass between the reading a work

and writing your summary paragraph. Responses fade quickly, and the longer you wait to set down your feelings and ideas, the less pointed and vibrant they will be.

USING HEURISTICS

Sometimes the notes made in your reading log are an end to the process. Perhaps you do not need or want to do anything more with the work in question, and so you leave it to go on to other texts. However, if you have been assigned a class paper dealing with a particular poem or have an upcoming examination over a given novel, you will want to continue your study.

The point now is to stimulate your own thinking, to find out more about your responses to the reading than the immediate, brief notes in your reading log can tell you. One of the ways to probe further is to use prewriting strategies, the same discovery processes you have used in other writing situations. You are in a good position to do so, as comments from the reading log can serve as starting places. There are many ways of beginning, and you should use the ones that are helpful and productive for you. Some of the most popular techniques include brainstorming, listing, freewriting, making analogies, and clustering. If you want to know more about how they work, you can find explanations in most writing handbooks and rhetoric texts.

SHAPING A RESPONSE

Up to this point, you have mostly been gathering your responses and ideas, thinking through the work and your involvement in it. As you learn about all of the different critical perspectives to follow, you will begin to read more deeply and with more understanding. Although these perspectives are presented here as discrete approaches to analysis and criticism, in actual practice they rarely stand alone. You will find that they often complement and supplement each other. The strategies just discussed can be used to explore them, helping you to achieve greater understanding and pleasure from what you read.

At some point—and you will have to be the judge of when that happens—you will want to share your ideas with someone else. Whether you simply talk about a work with a friend, make an oral class presentation, or prepare a fully developed written text, you will need to make some decisions about how to present your opinions and ideas. To do so, you will want to be aware of the context of your presentation: its purpose, audience, and voice.

DETERMINING A PURPOSE

As noted earlier, marginal notations and log entries are often made without any purpose beyond recording them. However, independent presentations usually have another reason for being, one that determines how you proceed. Relatively short analytical essays (such as those based on comparison and contrast or on cause and

effect), and even personal essays, are commonly assigned in college literature classes, but on occasion you may be asked to produce a longer paper. For example, you may be required to examine the issues treated in the work, the controversies and ideas it presents. You can examine characters in a narrative or describe and analyze the structure of a work. More closely focused still are papers about imagery, symbolism, prosody, or point of view. There is, obviously, no shortage of possible topics. Two of the most troublesome (and critical) forms in which you are likely to be asked to write are those of examinations and research papers. The rest of the chapters in this book will discuss making literary analyses and composing extended papers that report them from a wide variety of perspectives, but here are some suggestions for how to proceed when your purpose is to answer essay test questions or compose a research paper.

ANSWERING ESSAY QUESTIONS

Assuming that you have carefully prepared for an exam, you have several strategies that can help you write effective answers to the essay questions you find on it. First, recognize the intent behind the questions. Some are designed simply to assess whether you have read assignments or whether you have ingested specific information. On the other hand, sometimes an instructor expects you to demonstrate that you have done more than memorize material—that you can draw inferences from it, relate it to other information, evaluate it, agree or disagree with it. In short, you may be asked to show that you can think critically about a subject. Finally, on some rare occasions you may be expected to be creative. A question such as, "If you could invite any three authors whose work you have studied to a party with each other, whom would you invite and what do you think they would talk about?" asks for more than data or even inferences. It expects you to be inventive and imaginative.

A second consideration involves how extensive the answer should be. If the directions ask for "brief identifications," you should be highly specific and to the point, reserving valuable time for the rest of the examination. If, on the other hand, you are directed to "discuss thoroughly," you will need to begin with a broad statement of fact or opinion and then move into its explanation by citing causes, comparisons, examples, or other more specific proof and logic.

Finally, an important point to keep in mind while composing any answer is that you must address the question that is asked. Probably the biggest cause of low scores on essay examinations is that students do not keep to the topic or follow directions. All too often they stray off into discussing a related topic—for example, giving a plot summary instead of making a comparison of two characters. One way to stay on task is to begin a discursive answer by partially restating the question. For example, if your test question reads, "How does the imagery found in the poems of Robert Frost reflect his own life?" you should begin your answer in the same way, saying something like, "Robert Frost's life is reflected in his poems in images such as birch trees, stone walls, and snowy evenings, which are typical of New England, where he lived."

WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

A research paper differs from other papers that deal with literary topics in two ways. First, it involves the use of secondary sources, publications about the work you are discussing. The pieces of writing discussed earlier usually require using only the literary work itself. Second, because it will be presented as academic discourse, the style will be more formal than that of some of the other work you have done.

Many of the conventions that you follow will depend on your instructor. Although some general guidelines almost always apply, you should be sure that you understand and use the guidelines that are given for your particular assignment. They may vary somewhat from the suggestions that follow.

- You will enjoy the project more if you choose a topic that interests you. Because you will be spending many hours working with it, you will not want to suffer through dealing with a subject you find boring or irrelevant.
- Keep a reputable handbook for writers at your side. Many helpful books can guide you step-by-step through the process of finding the materials you need in the library, taking relevant notes, and documenting sources. If your instructor has suggested or required a particular one, be sure to get it and use it.
- Start early. Good research cannot be done quickly. You will need time not only to write the paper but, even before composing a draft, to consider the various data and opinions that you read in order to come up with your own ideas.
- With all the work that goes into a research paper, it should be more than a scrapbook of other people's ideas. It should reflect your own. If you begin to feel that you have nothing to contribute to the rich critical dialogue that has preceded your study, you can use several strategies to find your own opinions. First, remember that you can argue with other critics. If you disagree with the conclusions drawn by one of your secondary sources, you have the basis for critical argument. Another way of finding your own point of view is to look at a work from a perspective that has not been traditionally used. For example, feminist critics are providing some surprising new readings of well-known texts by looking at them (for the first time) through women's eyes. Finally, you can interact with the work on a personal level by asking yourself early on how you respond to it and why. Some brainstorming on that topic may lead you to ideas that you can go on to investigate and test by examining the ideas of other critics.
- Your paper will probably run between five and fifteen pages, although length is one of those matters that instructors often stipulate. Regardless of how long it is, in its final form it should have an introduction, a well-developed discussion section, a conclusion, and a list of sources cited. Not only should the introduction announce the topic to be discussed, and perhaps your particular focus, but it should also provide an attractive, inviting beginning. The discussion section, as the heart of your explanation or argument, should follow a clear plan of development, using examples from the work itself and references to secondary sources to strengthen your case. The conclusion need not be long if you have been clear in

the preceding sections. It should simply provide a satisfying sense of completion to the paper.

KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

Just as your purpose will affect what you write and how you write it, the audience (your reader) too will influence both the information you include and the form and style you use to communicate it. Imagine, for example, that as a result of driving too fast on a rain-slick street, you were responsible for sliding into the back of another car. How would you write an account of the accident for the police report? To your parents? In a letter to a friend who habitually drives too fast? In each case the basic facts would be the same, but the details would vary. The language would change, because different readers provide different obligations and opportunities. The same situation is true for writing literary criticism.

When you are making notes in a reading log, the primary audience is yourself. Consequently, you are not likely to worry about writing in complete sentences or editing for correctness. You may have even developed a personal shorthand to save time. When you use those notes as the basis of a commentary to be shared with a writing group, however, you will need to revise them so that they are more easily understood by others. That is, you will move to standard forms of expression.

The research paper is likely to be the most formal assignment you are asked to carry out. It is written in academic prose, a relatively impersonal, formal, tightly organized type of discussion that is addressed to a well-informed and intelligent audience whom you may not know personally. Traditionally this situation has meant that the writer avoids all colloquialisms, slang, abbreviations, or references to the self, probably includes some technical terms and headings for the different sections, and always documents references to other scholars' work. Some of this impersonal formality seems to be receding currently, with more acceptance of the use of the first-person personal pronoun *I*. However, readers of research reports retain a strong preference for formal academic prose, which you will probably want to honor.

CHOOSING A VOICE

Your writer's "voice" changes just as your audible one does in different situations. As the audience grows more distant and unknown, your writing continues to become more formal and impersonal. When, for example, you write an answer to an essay question on an examination, you are hoping to assure an instructor, who may or may not know you well, that you have mastered a body of material or a set of skills or that you have the ability to think critically. The expression will, of necessity, differ significantly from the short notes you made for yourself in your log.

One reason that the audience affects the form and language of your writing, your voice, is that you change roles as you deal with different people. Remember the car accident you hypothetically had on the slick street? When writing to the police and

to your parents, you were dealing with authority figures, people you were expected to treat with deference and respect. When you composed the accident report, you were acting as a responsible citizen trying to get the facts down as clearly as possible. With your parents, you were probably acting as a defendant trying to explain that it wasn't entirely your fault. In the letter to your friend, on the other hand, you were writing as an equal, making remarks that were half-informative and half-entertaining. Your personality changed with the audience, thereby causing your written "voice," the representation of who you were in that piece, to change as well.

When you are writing literary criticism, your voice will differ, depending not only on the audience but also on the purpose of your piece. Short, personal questions and reminders are basically starting points for more serious thinking later. Reading logs are ruminative in nature; they explore ideas, possibilities for dialogues with others. You take examinations to exhibit what you know and can do. The purpose of the research report is to explore a topic in depth, possibly turning up new and interesting perspectives on it in the process. Basically you are moving through several roles, from novice to questioner, authority figure, and researcher and critical thinker. As your persona changes in each case, your voice will change, adjusting to the role you have assumed.

HELPING THE PROCESS

In writing classes, you have probably already been introduced to the process by which a piece moves from a rough draft (based on exploratory beginnings discussed earlier) to a final, polished one that is ready to be shared with readers. Remember that the process is not a lockstep affair. Instead of a sequence of separate stages, each one completed before the next is begun, it is a fairly jumbled procedure in which you move forward and then go back to change what you have already done, thereby necessitating changes in what follows. The main point to remember is that effective writing is usually the result of numerous false starts, multiple versions, a substantial number of small changes, and maybe even some big ones.

The chapters that follow will give you ample suggestions for prewriting, drafting a text, and revising it. They will also provide lists of printed sources and Web sites that can help you find information about the approach you are using to analyze a poem or a piece of fiction. You can also set up some collaborative efforts of your own, as well as refer to additional mechanical and printed aids that can help you with just about everything from comma splices to the composing process in general. Here are some suggestions for both collaboration and more impersonal assistance.

COLLABORATION

One of the myths about writing is that it is a solitary activity. We have all seen cartoons of the lonely poet waiting for inspiration by the light of a flickering candle. Real writers, however, know that they are not alone at all. They are heavily dependent on

an audience that responds to what they've written. Only by getting reactions from other readers can a writer know if the work has succeeded or where it has missed the mark. A beginning writer also profits from working with supportive peers who can sense strengths and weaknesses that she is unaware of. In the end, the story or poem belongs to the person who wrote it, but a little help from one's friends along the way can be invaluable.

Collaboration can begin by a simple sharing of initial reactions to a work. A brief reading of the comments and questions recorded in a reading log, for example, can form the basis for discussion of any aspect of a story or poem. If everyone agrees, then everyone can feel validated; if opinions vary widely, which is the more likely event, there is much to be examined and discussed.

Although the instructor has the responsibility for arranging shared sessions in class, you can do much on your own. It may mean making arrangements to meet outside of class, but the rewards can be worth the trouble. If you want to have the support and suggestions of your friends and colleagues, you can do much of what a teacher would ask you to do in a workshop situation. Consider trying the following suggestions.

If you are ready for more extended sharing than has been described so far, a brief freewriting of five to ten minutes, or perhaps some clustering or listing, can provide material for discussion. If you do not feel comfortable working with a group, you may find it more productive at this stage to be paired with another person. The two of you can simply read each other's informal responses and react to them, or you can be more organized about the process by consciously finding one thing to agree with or to compliment. Later, when you feel ready, your pair can be combined with another to form a group of four to continue your discussions and sharing. If you have more than one such group, you can hold a larger session in which each quartet selects its strongest piece to share with everyone.

Sometimes you will want or need to share something longer than the short pieces of freewriting or journal entries. One way to generate a more extended discourse is to try what Richard Adler calls "answering the unanswered question." That is, ask yourself what you do not understand or where you wish you had more information. Another possibility is to use David Bleich's technique of first asking yourself what you think is the most important word in the work, then the most important passage, and, finally, the most important feature. For each answer, specify why you find it to be the most important. Your answers will reflect you as an individual with a unique perspective on the text. Your experiences and opinions will lead you to shape a response that is different from those of your colleagues. You will have a unique response to share with them.

When you share a more fully developed piece of writing, you will probably need to follow a more formal process. Several models of collaborative revising are helpful. The element common to all of them is their positive nature. Collaboration is most productive when it takes place in an atmosphere of support and affirmation, not one steeped in negative criticism. The point is to help each other achieve more effective writing by making helpful comments.

One popular model of a writing group involves having the writer read her piece to the entire group, not stopping until she reaches the end, then pausing briefly for the group to write brief responses to it. Another uses a series of questions that the group is asked to answer about each writer's paper. They can be formulated to suit the needs of the occasion, but they usually involve questions such as the following:

- ◆ What is the main idea of this paper?
- ◆ Did the opening sentence make you want to hear the rest? Why or why not?
- ◆ Were there enough examples to make the major points clear?
- ◆ Were the examples interesting, appropriate, and vivid?
- ◆ Did you have a satisfying sense of closure at the end?

Whatever approach your group chooses, remember that, as the writer, you have the final say in what happens in your paper. You are free to implement or reject the suggestions you receive. Most of the time, however, it is a good idea to pay attention to what your audience says.

On some occasions you may find it impossible to assemble a writing group to help you shape or polish a piece of writing, but there are a few strategies you can use when working alone. They can help you distance yourself from your work so that you are more likely to see and hear it as another reader might. You can, for example, read the piece aloud. Your ear will pick up problem areas (wrong words, missing punctuation, even underdeveloped points) that your eye has missed. Listen as a stranger to the language, and ask yourself what is missing, what is unclear. It is easier to remove yourself from the author's seat if you allow yourself time to forget what you have written. That is, if you can put a piece away for several days without reading it or even thinking much about it, then when you take it out again, it will sound as if someone else has composed it. You may be surprised at the awkward passages you discover when you come back to a text with fresh eyes (and ears).

REFERENCE MATERIALS

In addition to the assistance that critical friends can provide, you will also find it helpful to keep a good reference book or two by your side while you are writing. Remember that handbooks, dictionaries, and rhetoric texts are all helpful in composing, revising, and editing your manuscript.

Today the solitary writer can also benefit from technological assistance. The computer is no substitute for a human reader (yet), but it does an excellent job of finding misspelled words and is (sometimes) helpful in identifying ungrammatical constructions. Even highly skilled writers use such devices to create final copy that is as close to being error-free as possible. Also, the opportunities computers provide for producing visually attractive copy have made it mandatory that the papers you produce have a professional look to them. No excuses will justify a sloppy presentation. Any reader expects a clean, well-designed format that invites attention.

Technology can also help you find material that will enrich your reading. The information available on the Internet is increasing at an astonishing rate that shows

no signs of slowing down. Information from the Internet has many advantages for the user, not the least of which is its easy accessibility. However, anyone who uses it should be aware of some of its shortcomings. Simply put, it is not always reliable. First of all, because of the easy access, anyone can create a Web site or post comments to various groups. The result is that not all information on the Internet can be trusted. You must always question the source of material that you find there. Even addresses that end in *.edu*, which some people tend to assume are reputable ones because they are located at universities, can pose problems. As students come and go and courses change, these sites are very likely to move or disappear without warning. As a result, even some of those listed in this book may no longer be active.

SUMMING UP

As you have seen in this chapter, the relationship of reading and writing is not a simple one. Making analyses and writing papers that explain them are made manageable, however, by adopting a method that does not require you to work on all of its aspects at once, a method that instead allows you to concentrate on one or two tasks at a time. Engaging a text, shaping a response, and finally sharing it with other readers is demanding but satisfying, because it not only leads us to new insights about ourselves and our world but also puts us in touch with a community of thinking people.

◆ RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

New Web sites devoted to various literary interests are coming online in ever-increasing numbers. Some of them are general sites that deal with a wide variety of critical approaches; some are more specialized. Lists of the latter will appear in the discussion of each school of criticism.

GENERAL INFORMATION SITES

A few Web sites that provide general information and criticism about individual figures, movements, and areas of study include the following:

<http://muse.jhu.edu/>

A site that allows you to subscribe online to several educational journals in the arts and humanities.

<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/elab/elab.html>

A guide to using hypertext technology. Known as the Electronic Labyrinth, it evaluates hypertext and its potential for writers.

<http://www.academic.marist.edu/1/hsite.htm>

A list of hypertext sites and critical essays.

<http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/lit.html#hypertext>

An American Studies site that provides links to an extensive set of resources.

<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~daniel/>

A list of links to sites featuring student writing and projects on a variety of literary topics.

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/>

Information on any arts or literature topic. The site is named Voice of the Shuttle.

<http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/>

A clearinghouse for email discussion lists on literary topics, including criticism. Known as the Spoon Collective, it has information on how to subscribe to various email discussion lists and general information about the subject matter of specific ones.

LITERARY CRITICISM SITES

On the Internet you can also find Web sites that address literary theory in general. They present primary sources, definitions of terms, bibliographies, and other information that can be helpful supplements to your study. Some good sites are listed below.

<http://www.cumber.edu/litcritweb/>

Called the LitCrit Web, this site tells you about or links you to information about a variety of critical theories and critical practice.

<http://www.home.earthlink.net/mandal/Michele/projects/hyper/hypercritical.html>

A student site that defines and explores the theories behind several schools of criticism.

<http://www.rnnet.edu/~jmkng/amlit/crit2.html>

A page posted by a student that gives an essay on different types of literary criticism.

http://fyl.unizar.es/FILOLOGIA_INGLESA/BIBLIOGRAPHY.HTML

A bibliography of literary studies and criticism listing over 100,000 entries, specially focused on English-speaking authors and on criticism or literary theory written in English. It can be searched in Spanish.

http://130.179.92.25/Arnason_DE/Backmaterials.html

An extensive glossary of critical terms. It also has notes on formalist and structuralist material, with a list of links to discussions of theoretical background.

http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/

General information on literary theory.

<http://www.newi.ac.uk/rdoover/popfic/critical.htm>

Very brief summaries of various theories.

<http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/~felluga/theory.html>

An undergraduate introduction to critical theory.

<http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/index.html>

A list of links to information on several types of literary criticism.

SUGGESTED READING

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 7th ed. Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt, 1999.
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