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Texts And Contexts: Writing About Literature With Critical Theory (5th Edition)



Synopsis

This book helps students analyze and write about literature through the introduction of contemporary critical theories. Step-by-step applications of a particular theory give clear, practical examples of what other texts only cover in the abstract. A wealth of writing strategies, examples, and practice materials enable students to understand the assumptions underlying these theories.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In reviewing this book, I'm reminded about the famous quote that democracy is the worst form of government except for every other one. The task of taking a large, complex topic such as critical theory and presenting it in primer fashion makes it inevitable that there will be places where the more knowledgeable or experienced reader feels like the person undertaking that task is being reductive. And it would be easy enough to pick on the book's idiosyncrasies: the psychoanalytic chapter is too narrowly Freudian, the deconstruction chapter has trouble explaining how the practice (explained fine) developed from the theory, the reader-response chapter neglects later responses to some initial criticisms of the theory. But these are the sorts of complaints that will be levied by those who aren't the target audience, and to make them is to wish for a book that is both an introduction for undergraduates and a more thorough encyclopedia for scholars. The book isn't trying to be the latter. As an introductory work, *Texts and Contexts* is actually pretty good. The prose is clear and avoids overloading students with too much jargon or too many technical terms too quickly. It is also one of the few primers I've run across that tries to address practice rather than just theory--that tries

to show what a _____ critic does rather than just what _____ criticism is. Another plus is that the bibliographies at the end of each chapter, while short, are very serviceable, and provide students with a list of key readings in each area of criticism that can help them get started at being more thorough in the area in which they are most interested in.

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