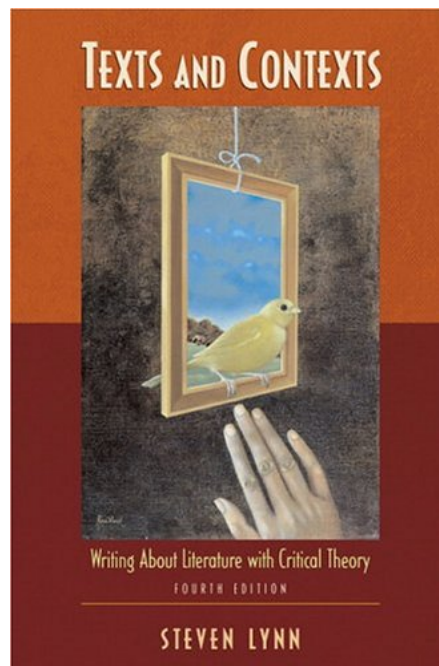




Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory

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Deeply rooted in the views, responses, and history of contemporary critical theories, this text provides students with the knowledge and tools to write about literature effectively. It presents a user-friendly introduction to contemporary critical theories.

Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory Details

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jeni brasfield (Positively Bookish) says

This one was for my ENG 438 LITERARY THEORY.. and by far my favorite text book. I have marked it up with so many notes and highlights and learned so much, especially regarding gender studies. A fantastic add to my personal reference books.

Karl Steel says

Lynn steers past the shoals that sunk my pedagogical interest in the *Guide for the Perplexed* lit theory survey, first, by providing clear examples of how each school of thought reads, and by anticipating objections to the weirdness and political engagement (or at least pretensions to political engagement) of each of these schools. His section on Freud, for example, congenially (which is the tone, throughout) explains that the concept of penis envy "continues even today to drive people up a wall." And the examples are superbly detailed: they walk students from the rudiments of simply understanding some work, to brainstorming, to research, and finally to several examples of good final papers.

I've only a few objections to it. The first is simply medieval crankiness: *Hamlet* and Milton anchor the--how did I end up with this nautical conceit?--they *are* the earliest writings, which means there's nothing from my field. Not a serious problem, by any means, since I wouldn't expect him to read Gerald of Wales in the way I want him read, anyhow. My second objection is more substantial. The Klages survey divided criticism into humanist (outmoded) and posthumanist (hip and with it since at least 1980) and rapidly dispensed with humanist approaches. Given the divisions, her explanations were much more sophisticated than Lynn, and they were generally in line with my own critical interests. Lynn, by contrast, gives us only Freud and provides nothing of Lacan. In fact, he tends towards humanist critiques: his example of a psychoanalytic reading is a *character study* of Hamlet rather than, say, a study of language and representation itself, and he devotes his explanation of "historicist" readings to doing a *biographical* exegesis of the relationship between John Cheever's life and a short story. In short, there's just not enough *cultural* critique.

These problems hardly sink the book, however, and I just might assign it next semester, if only because its explanations of New Criticism, poststructuralism, and feminist and gender critique are pretty good, and the last chapter on doing research is flawless. I can always victimize the *Hamlet* reading, and a few of the others, to create a communal (mis?)conception of sophistication in a class that would otherwise feel entirely victimized by the critical tradition.

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Okay, I just checked the price. At 50\$+, it's way too expensive.

Marilyn Anderson says

It was hard to get through, but it was interesting. I had to read it for AP English IV

Erin says

Wasn't able to finish this before the end of the semester, though I did read the assigned sections and therefore ended up reading most of the book. Hopefully I'll get to finish it up at some point, since it was a good introduction to literary theory, especially for someone like me who had never been in that type of class before.

Kassy says

Texts and Contexts is a very accessible, often fun, survey of critical schools in literary thought. Lynn employs whimsical drawings, a travel metaphor, and excellent step by step examples, which are all very helpful. I read it for a class, but I would suggest it to anyone wondering about the ways that we view literature within modern, post modern, and contemporary thought.

sologdin says

mid-level undergraduate primer that lays down basic concepts for several schools of literary interpretation: romanticism, formalism, historicism, structuralism & post-structuralism, psychologism, feminism, &c. (the edition that I had in school relegated Marxism to a footnote.)

probably good for its intended task of preparing the student for more detailed study of literary theory. best part is the trippy illustrations.

Laura says

We read through this whole book for my Lit Crit class. I thought it did a fairly nice job of summarizing all the different types of literary criticism and I enjoyed the random cartoons throughout the book. I also thought it was funny because the tone of voice for the book was very casual and sounded a lot like my teacher, which is probably why he picked it for our course reading. I'd only recommend if you were interested in this subject.

*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2009...>

jacky says

This text was not as useful to me as Guerin's text. I am not sure if that is because I was already familiar with Guerin's by the time I was required to read this or because Guerin's was just better.

Meredith Links says

I had to read this for my introduction to English Studies class.

Deanna says

I have read most of this book now. PAINFUL would be a good way to describe it. I am still will be using it until I finish my BYU writing class. Painful, would be another way to describe this class. The only thing keeping me going in this writing class is that I will get to do lots more history classes after this.

I know that just because something is painful it doesn't mean that it isn't good for me. So I keep repeating, "Taking this class is good for me," over and over.
