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:

- novels
- short stories
- plays
- 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 novel, short story, play, or poem you are studying.

**USING THE ONLINE CATALOG**

Criticism about an author's work can often be found by looking under the author's name as a subject heading in the online catalog. Books may also be listed under the author's name as a subject heading followed by the subdivision ‘--Criticism and Interpretation’, e.g. Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968 -- Criticism and Interpretation.

For information in books with broader topics, consult the online catalog under subject headings similar to these:

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

Do not try this general approach, though, until you have used at least some of the indexes listed below. The following two sections (Indexes and General Criticism) list general publications which indicate where literary criticism can be found or give literary criticism of novels, short stories, plays, and poems, respectively.
INDEXES

Indexes  
Essay and General Literature Index.  1960 to date.  (also available online through WilsonWeb)

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

Indexes  
Humanities Index.  1974 to date.  (also available online through WilsonWeb)

Subject fields indexed include archaeology and classical studies, area studies, folklore, history, language and literature, literary and political criticism, performing arts, philosophy, religion and related subjects.  Also has a separate book review section with entry under author of the book reviewed.

Indexes  
MLA International Bibliography.  1969 to date.  (also available online through EbscoHost)

Lists articles, books, and dissertations on international literature, folklore, and linguistics.  Literary criticism is arranged by the country and the century in which the author wrote.

GENERAL CRITICISM

Ref.  
928
C767C4

Selected excerpts from critical writings on contemporary authors.  Includes well-established authors, as well as today's novelists, poets, playwrights, short story writers, scriptwriters and other creative works.

Ref.  
Twentieth Century Literary Criticism.  1978 to date.  vols. 1-174.
809
C629

Presents significant passages from literary criticism on authors who died between 1900 and 1960.  An author section includes author heading, biographical and critical introduction, list of principal works, and excerpts of criticism arranged chronologically in each author section to provide a perspective on any changes in critical evaluation over the years.  Each piece of criticism is accompanied by a complete bibliographical citation.  An additional bibliography for further reading follows the excerpted criticism.

Ref.  
809.9
C87

A survey of modern criticism on English and American literature from the beginnings to the twentieth century.  Presents excerpts from critical studies appearing in books and periodicals.
Ref.  
Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors. 1935. 8 Vols.  
(Also have 1966 ed. Ref. 820.9 M862L2)

M86L

Covers the years 680 - 1904 and gives brief biographical data of an author and then 
selected quotations from criticism of his works. Extracts are of some length and are 
given with exact references. Sequels to this publication are: Modern American 
Literature and Modern British Literature.

Ref.  
Magill's Bibliography of Literary Criticism. 1979. 4 vols.

M27m

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 providing ease 
of use.

Ref.  
Magill’s Survey of Contemporary Literature. 1971. 7 vols. &  
Magill’s Literary Annual. 1970 - present.

The first title above contains in 7 volumes essays / reviews about 1500 outstanding books 
from 1954 - 1969. The second title is the annual continuation of the first title which 
contain each year a survey of the top 100 then 200 outstanding titles for each year.

Ref.  
Masterplots; 2,010 Plot Stories and Essay Reviews from the World's Finest 
Literature. 1976. 12 Vols. & Masterplots Revised 2nd ed. 1996. (Also have 
MasterPlots II. 1986-1994 & MasterPlots II - American Fiction Series, Juvenile 
& Young Adult Series, and Poetry Series)

Contains digests and essay reviews of titles from world literature. Also includes 
bibliographical data, list of principal characters and their relationship, and "Critique"-- 
critical analysis of the original work, and plot summary.

Ref.  

En3Y

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 treated index.
SPECIALIZED SOURCES OF CRITICISM

SHORT STORIES

809.3103
M25c

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. Current author part contains articles written by the authors themselves (unsigned) and those written by others (signed). Most of the entries represent writers who have not yet received full critical recognition.

PLAYS

809.2
D72

Lists book and periodical materials.

BIOGRAPHICAL-CRITICAL SUMMARIES

C82

A 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 personal and professional sidelights. There are also never-before-published interviews with certain authors. A cumulative index to author names is in the last volume of each series.

928
C68

Gives brief biographies of over 300 contemporary dramatists writing in English. Includes signed commentary on the writer's work (often with comment by the biographee), and lists of publications.

928
C69

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.
928 C7

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.

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