

THE LITERARY ENCYCLOPEDIA

Scope and Purposes

The Literary Encyclopedia is a collaborative global project that provides a description of most literary and cultural texts of scholarly interest in the English-speaking world, as well as informed guidance to critical reading, cultural topics and the historical context of cultural production. In addition to writing first published in English, it has very good coverage of German and Russian literature, substantial coverage of French, Italian, Classical Greek & Latin, and growing coverage of Hispanic, Scandinavian, Polish and other Central & East European, Japanese and other literatures. We intend to cover all literatures as resources permit. For more information, please check out our page at

<http://www.litencyc.com/litencycdescribed.php>

The publication is written and owned by a network comprising more than 2250 contributors and distinguished editors who are mostly university teachers around the world. Since all articles are reviewed by qualified editors before publication, and our contributors have research publications in the area of their contribution, *The Literary Encyclopedia* can be cited with confidence in scholarly essays.

Current Contents and Use in Teaching

The primary value of *The Literary Encyclopedia* is to enable teachers to refer students to a reliable and accessible reference work. To date we have published over 5500 profiles of major writers, works and topics and these are all articles aimed at a "higher introductory" level for university / college reading - neither too long nor too short; neither too simple nor too complex. Please see the sidebar on the homepage for updating statement of contents in numerical terms.

The Literary Encyclopedia also provides basic bibliographical information for more than 27,000 primary works which are indexed by date, genre and country. This listing often includes minor works which were not listed in printed resources for want of space. If you wish to create a list of novels written by women and published in the United States between 1920 and 1925, *The Literary Encyclopedia* can answer your request in a few seconds.

We have also recently begun to add lists of **recommended secondary reading** in a software application which enables and ensures updating at least annually. The publication therefore has increasing value for researchers: we already have over 11,000 recommended bibliographical items (books, journal articles, editions) listed and our aim is to achieve 15,000 citations by the end of 2010.

In 2008 we also launched an application which displays selected writers' **chronologies** on a month-by-month, or even day-by-day basis and will be adding more writers to this application in the coming years, aiming eventually for finely detailed calendars of writing lives. By way of example, the Joyce lifeline has 560 entries:

http://www.litencyc.com/php/newlifeline.php?id_author_0=5181&Add=Add&rank=4; the entry on Dickens has over 400 entries, including 160 for major pieces of journalism that Dickens wrote:

http://www.litencyc.com/php/newlifeline.php?id_author_0=5085

Topics & events: We are also devoted to giving clear and succinct guidance to cultural contexts and in the course of 2009 and 2010 we added over 5000 records, many of these accompanied by short historical notes, which correlate to writing by date and country. We have a further 10,000 records being checked and annotated at the moment and are aiming for considerable detail in this part of our work: all major acts of parliament, wars, battles, epidemic diseases, scientific and technological inventions, cultural shifts.

Another useful teaching tool is provided by **'bookshelves'**, where subscribers can create lists of articles, and even customised timelines, to support a particular course. For an example of this, please see the 19th century bookshelf which brings together some self-evident profiles of authors and texts with a selection of essays from our topics database:

<http://www.litencyc.com/php/viewbookshelf.php?portfolioid=19>

Advanced Search & Browse: we have an excellent Advanced Search functionality, and a browse function which allows the listing of all people, works, topics and events and contributors, by name, date, title or institutional affiliation (as appropriate). The **Advanced Search** looks for entries which have indexing values that match those that you have set in the search. So if you set the 'Activity of person' value to "Poet", it will display all the people in the database who have

been tagged as a Poet. If you then add another search criteria – say, Country as “England” it will show all English writers who have been tagged as Poets. You can add further criteria such a gender, or further nuance existing criteria in terms of, say, ‘country of birth’ and/ or ‘country of activity’, or ‘primary activity’ and ‘primary and secondary activity’. You can also add date-ranges. This search can therefore produce very accurate listings of entries, of, for instance, all female poets (whether primarily poets or ‘also poets’ – depending on the search criteria set) active in England between 1750 and 2000. Because multiple indexing values are used by our databases, you may find that a writer you think of as primarily an English novelist (but who may also have been an occasional writer of poetry) might appear on this list if you have chosen the criterion ‘primary and secondary activity’ for calibrating your search for poets. A similar architecture is used for searching works and topics and events.

Related articles& thematic groups: this recently developed function offers ‘thematic groups’ and ‘related articles’, which are built and added to by contributors and are available to all users of the Encyclopedia. They often provide clusters useful for particular courses (for instance, ‘African American Drama’, ‘Children’s Literature’ or ‘Dystopian and Apocalyptic Fiction’), or simply join together articles which are related in theme, content and subject-matter (e.g. ‘Marxist Theory and Philosophy’, ‘English Romanticism’, ‘Avantgardes’ etc.). This function is present as a menu in the left panel of any article (if this article has been included in any thematic group or linked to any other article in our database). For an instructive example, see our entry on Salman Rushdie at <http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=3889>

Finally, we have enabled **Hyperwords** searches within the *Encyclopedia*: this procedure enables any user to click on any word and open a menu listing various kinds of searches they can perform. Thus, one clicks on “Romeo” and rapidly searches for articles where this word is headword, or articles where this word occurs.

Access

All members of a subscribing school/ university have full and free access via their school/ university servers. They can also create personal user accounts by entering a valid institutional email address on this page <https://www.litencyc.com/php/members/login.php>. Personal accounts enable the user to access the publication from anywhere in the world and to make personal bookshelves. Access via Shibboleth and Athens are also available since May 2008.

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