

Annotated Bibliography & Reflective Essay

Due: October 15, 2009

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Over the next 15 weeks, we will read, study and discuss various critical models of literary theory. We will also discuss how to apply those models to literature – this is literary criticism. In order to understand how other scholars use theoretical models to analyze literature, this assignment asks you to find **five** contemporary literary critical articles that focus on *Heart of Darkness* (not in the *Heart of Darkness* critical edition that we are using for class or any other case study).

Because of the furloughs, the library session has been cut from our schedule. However, there are many online tutorials for searching the MLA Bibliography, JSTOR and Project Muse for your articles: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/english> In addition, we have our very own Librarian, Toby Matoush. Please contact her for research help (toby.matoush@sjsu.edu).

The first step in this project will be to retrieve the articles – either by printing them (JSTOR or Project Muse), photocopying them (from books in the library) or requesting them through Interlibrary Loan or Link+. There will be hundreds of articles on *Heart of Darkness*. Begin with current articles and work backwards; do not go back more than 15 years. You need to obtain only 5 of them. Remember that ILL or Link+ may take a week or more to deliver. Plan your research schedule accordingly.

Choose literary criticism articles that you feel will represent different critical approaches to *Heart of Darkness*. After reading the articles carefully, write the following information for each article annotation:

- complete bibliographical information, in correct MLA format
- a brief statement, in your own words, of the thesis and main arguments of the article
- an analysis of which critical approach (or combination of approaches) you feel this article represents, using evidence from the article to show how it manifests the characteristics of that approach discussed in class
- a description of your personal response to this article, explaining whether you thought the article presented a convincing analysis of the novel, including the reasons for your response (without using “I”)

Each annotation should be 300-500 words. More explicit guidelines for writing an annotated bibliography are on the back of this sheet. The articles need to be submitted with your Annotated Bibliography.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Also include a 600-word description of the research process you used. What sources did you consult (e.g. online catalogue, bibliographies, WWW, etc.)? What did you find most helpful? least helpful? Describe any problems you encountered in your search. You should use details here; use of “I” is allowed.

FORMATTING & SUBMITTING THE ASSIGNMENT

A paper copy of the Annotated Bibliography is due *at the beginning of class on the due date*. Late papers will receive the penalization indicated on our Greensheet. Failure to follow the below requirements will result in a lower grade. Please read them carefully!

- Place the Reflective Essay first
- Type and double-spaced in 12pt font with one inch margins
- Name, date, course and section number typed at the top left corner of the first page
- Name and page number typed in upper right corner of every page following the first page
- Staple the pages together (DO NOT FOLD OR PAPERCLIP YOUR PAGES)
- Proofread everything before you turn it in; there should be no spelling or typographical errors
- Submit a print copy and your 5 articles to me in class
- Submit to Turnitin.com for verification

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the thoroughness of your research, the clarity and comprehensiveness of your annotation, your writing and the proper use of MLA format. See the English Department Grading Policy on the Greensheet for a breakdown of letter grades.

How to Create an Annotated Bibliography

Selecting the Sources:

The quality and usefulness of your bibliography will depend on your selection of sources. Consider these questions to help you find appropriate limits for your research:

- What **kind of material** am I looking for? (academic books and journal articles? government reports or policy statements? articles from the popular press? primary historical sources? etc.)
- Am I finding **essential studies** on my topic? (Read footnotes in useful articles carefully to see what sources they use and why. Keep an eye out for studies that are referred to by several of your sources.)

Creating the Bibliographic Entry

After you have obtained your articles or book chapters, create an annotated bibliography.

An annotated bibliography gives an account of the research that has been done on a given topic. Like any bibliography, an annotated bibliography is an alphabetical list of research sources. List the works you find using the proper format for bibliographic citations (the MLA form for "Works Cited" as described in MLA Handbook). Place an asterisk next to each work that is available in King Library.

MLA (Modern Language Association) Style

- MLA documentation is generally used for disciplines in the humanities, such as English, languages, film, and cultural studies or other theoretical studies. These annotations are often summary or analytical annotations.
- Title your annotated bibliography "Annotated Bibliography" or "Annotated List of Works Cited."
- Following MLA format, use a hanging indent for your bibliographic information. This means the first line is not indented and all the other lines are indented four spaces.
- Begin your annotation immediately after the bibliographic information of the source ends.

Annotating an Article

In addition to bibliographic data, an annotated bibliography provides a concise summary of each source and some assessment of its value or relevance. The below guidelines will help you annotate your articles.

Summarizing the Argument of a Source:

An annotation briefly restates the main argument of a source. An annotation of an academic source, for example, typically identifies its thesis (or research question, or hypothesis), its major methods of investigation, and its main conclusions. Keep in mind that identifying the argument of a source is a different task than describing or listing its contents. Rather than listing contents (see Example 1 below), an annotation should account for **why** the contents are there (see Example 2 below).

Example 1: Only lists contents:

Mclvor, S. D. "Aboriginal Women's Rights as 'Existing Rights.'" *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 2/3 (1995): 34-38.

This article discusses recent constitutional legislation as it affects the human rights of aboriginal women in Canada: the *Constitution Act* (1982), its amendment in 1983, and amendments to the *Indian Act* (1985). It also discusses the implications for aboriginal women of the Supreme Court of Canada's interpretation of the Constitution Act in *R. v. Sparrow* (1991).

Example 2: Identifies the argument (*research question **method & main conclusions):

Mclvor, S. D. "Aboriginal Women's Rights as 'Existing Rights.'" *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 2/3 (1995): 34-38.

This article seeks to define the extent of the civil and political rights returned to aboriginal women in the *Constitution Act* (1982), in its amendment in 1983, and in amendments to the *Indian Act* (1985).^{*} This legislation reverses prior laws that denied Indian status to aboriginal women who married non-aboriginal men. On the basis of the Supreme Court of Canada's interpretation of the *Constitution Act* in *R. v. Sparrow* (1991), Mclvor argues that the Act recognizes fundamental human rights and existing aboriginal rights, granting to aboriginal women full participation in the aboriginal right to self-government.^{**}

Reading Strategies

The following reading strategies can help you identify the argument of your source:

- Identify the author's thesis (central claim or purpose) or research question. Both the introduction **and** the conclusion can help you with this task.

- Look for repetition of key terms or ideas. Follow them through the text and see what the author does with them. Note especially the key terms that occur in the thesis or research question that governs the text.
- Notice how the text is laid out and organized. What are the main divisions or sections? What is emphasized? Why? Accounting for why will help you to move beyond listing contents and toward giving an account of the argument.
- Notice whether and how a theory is used to interpret evidence or data. Identify the method used to investigate the problem/s addressed in the text.
- Pay attention to the opening sentence(s) of each paragraph, where authors often state concisely their main point in the paragraph.
- Look for paragraphs that summarize the argument. A section may sometimes begin or conclude with such a paragraph.

Assessing the Relevance and Value of Sources

Your annotation should now go on to briefly assess the value of the source to an investigation of your research question or problem. Try to assess the source's contribution to *Heart of Darkness*.

- Are you interested in the way the source frames its research question or in the way it goes about answering it (its method)? Does it make new connections or open up new ways of seeing a problem? (e.g. bringing the Sparrow decision concerning aboriginal fishing rights to bear on the scope of women's rights)
- Are you interested in the way the source uses a theoretical framework or a key concept? (e.g. analysis of existing, extinguished, and other kinds of rights)
- Does the source gather and analyze a particular body of evidence that you want to use? (e.g. the historical development of a body of legislation)
- How do the source's conclusions bear on your own investigation?
- In order to define its contribution, you will need to assess the quality of the argument: why is it of value? what are its limitations? how well defined is its research problem? how effective is its method of investigation? how good is the evidence? would you draw the same conclusions from the evidence?

Identifying the Critical Model

We will have discussed several critical models by the time this assignment is due. Use your notes, the Payne *Dictionary, Texts and Contexts* or the Norton articles to help you identify the specific critical model. Be sure that you understand this model and provide evidence from the article to discuss its critical point of view. It is possible that critics also use a few models mixed together.

Some language for talking about texts and arguments:

It is sometimes challenging to find the vocabulary in which to summarize and discuss a text. Here is a list of some verbs for referring to texts and ideas that you might find useful:

account for	clarify	describe	exemplify	indicate	question
analyze	compare	depict	exhibit	investigate	recognize
argue	conclude	determine	explain	judge	reflect
assess	criticize	distinguish	frame	justify	refer to
assert	defend	evaluate	identify	narrate	report
assume	define	emphasize	illustrate	persuade	review
claim	demonstrate	examine	imply	propose	suggest

The evidence indicates that . . .

The article assesses the effect of . . .

The author identifies three reasons for . . .

The article questions the view that . . .

Web Sources for writing Annotated Bibliographies:

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated_bibliographies.html

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/annotatebib.html>