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Review of Sanja Ignjatović's manuscript *Introduction Literary Studies*

Introduction Literary Studies is a 300-page manuscript that aims to serve as a comprehensive guide for readers new to the field of literary studies. Covering an extensive range of topics—storytelling, literary theory and criticism, poetics, periodization, key concepts in literary studies, genre theory, literary figures and devices, and the general characteristics of prose, drama, and poetry—this text is an ambitious undertaking designed primarily for undergraduate and graduate students or general readers with an interest in literature.

I would advise the author to change the title *The Literary Can of Worms: Introduction to Literary Studies* to a more sober title *Introduction to English History and Culture*. The “Can of Worms” is much too slangy, and does not give credit to the seriousness of the book, besides it repeats twice the word “literary”, and it does not specify that it refers to the English-speaking context. This is the one strong objection I have.

The manuscript addresses a broad spectrum of foundational topics essential to understanding literary studies. It begins with storytelling, exploring narrative techniques across various literary forms, and progresses to more complex subjects such as literary theory and criticism, which encompass major approaches like psychoanalysis, Marxism, phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism, New Historicism, hermeneutics and reception theory, the many waves of feminism, postcolonialism, critical race theory, ecocriticism. None are excluded. The author mentions even Anti-Theory and the future of theory in her exhaustive all-encompassing tableau of critical schools. Poetics is included to examine the craft of literature, covering elements like meter, rhyme, and imagery, while periodization organizes literary history into distinct eras and analyses the codification and systematization of literature into analytical categories in literary history. Key concepts—such as canon, intertextuality, and authorship—provide readers with critical vocabulary, and genre theory clarifies the conventions of fiction, poetry, and drama. The text also details literary figures and devices (e.g., metaphors, similes) and outlines the defining traits of prose, drama, and poetry. Very useful is the chapter on literary figures and devices, the general characteristics of prose (plot, narrative discourse, fiction and non-fiction, narrative discourse, mediating authority, narrativity, eventfulness) etc. The 14-page long bibliography at the end of the book and the Index provide additional orientation to a student avid for knowledge.

The book's structure is one of its strongest features. Chapters are organized logically, guiding readers from basic concepts to more advanced topics in a progressive manner. This scaffolding approach ensures accessibility, making it an effective entry point for novices while still providing a framework that can support further study. The writing is clear, engaging, and deliberately avoids excessive jargon, which is crucial for an introductory text. When technical terms are introduced, they are accompanied by straightforward explanations, ensuring that readers—whether undergraduates or curious laypeople—can follow along without feeling overwhelmed. The tone strikes a balance between informative and approachable, maintaining reader interest.

A standout feature of the manuscript is its use of examples drawn from most recent studies, most of them published after 1990. This makes this handbook especially up to date and



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extremely informative. Sometimes the author applies theoretical concepts specific to British culture to a local Balkan context making her examples vividly alive for the readers and showing the universality of modern experience. This characteristic, together with its casual and humorous style, makes this handbook extremely appealing. Abstract themes become concrete and relatable to everyday life thus enlarging the book's scope. Furthermore, by including works of postcolonial literature and theory, and marginalized literary traditions the author enhances its inclusivity and relevance in today's globalized literary landscape.

"Kurzgesagt" is an extremely clarifying summing-up of concepts and theoretical issues that are very useful as a conclusion to the many themes treated in this book.

Concepts are very clearly presented to the reader. I wish I had had a textbook like this when I was a student. One of the advantages of this textbook is that it is a very comprehensive encyclopaedia which explains in a nutshell the essential concepts of very complex areas illustrated with the most recent trends, schools of thought. The reader becomes immersed in the most recent state of the art in every domain. The bibliography is very comprehensive and very recent which adds significant value to the book. These elements encourage active intellectual engagement with the many schools of critical theory and provide resources as well as "Further Reading" for readers eager to explore new topics, making the text particularly useful in educational settings.

Introduction to Literary Studies is a commendable introductory text that successfully distils a complex and multifaceted discipline into an accessible 300-page volume. Its logical structure, clear writing, and effective use of examples make it a solid foundation for students and scholars alike. The book has the potential to become an accessible resource in introductory literature courses and a valuable guide for anyone seeking to understand the essentials of literary studies. For all the above I strongly recommend the publication of this book. I am confident it will become an "instant" classic and a hit.



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