

The value of literary review and the part we play essay example

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Critical Review in Literature

Most literature, both fiction and non-fiction, is meant to draw readers in passed the font type and literary style into the essence of the text. As the reader engages with what is written he or she gets lost in an imaginary world or pulled into the intellectual musings of a great historian or philosopher.

Books or famous literary works such as *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien or *Grief Observed* by C. S. Lewis are great reminders of the value of a good book.

The primary purpose of books is for communication. The second purpose is either entertainment or that which the author had in mind. In essence the act of critically analyzing a book is to observe what is being communicated and the styles and techniques the author uses to communicate those ideas.

Every work of literature, whether it be amateur or professional, will be built upon the elements of voice and style. The author's unique and individual voice will shine through the story. The difference between acclaimed writers and aspiring writers is sometimes the development of voice. The word voice can be substituted for tone. Observing the tone of a literary piece can reveal valuable information on a particular author's other works. A great example of the use of tone would be Mark Twain's work entitled, "The Damned Human Race." In this work he uses an extremely sarcastic tone or voice to illustrate his opinions of humanity. This particular work is also a good example of literary style. In this particular piece he uses a dry humor embedded in a reasoning or scientific and methodical report.

One reason that critical analysis of literature is important is that critical works increase the appreciative value of the best communicated works. More importantly it helps keep track of the progression of literary tools such as style and voice. It also helps to sharpen the tools as authors of future generation can implement and improve upon the tools of the greats of generations past. Another way in which critical reviews of literature help is that they help us to track the influence of one great author over another great author. So, although the critical reading of a literary work is often done in an aloof and rather boorish manner it does have its uses for aspiring writers and others who study and critique literature.

The essence of plagiarism is the direct copying and or modifying of a written idea or work and claiming it as one's own. It is mostly done in an attempt to circumvent the difficulties of deciphering a text and laying out well-reasoned and concise ideas about that text. This is cheating. However, not all instances of plagiarism are the results of a student blatantly trying to take a short cut. Many will attempt modify the idea of another writer and claim the idea as their own. In some circles this called paraphrasing and in others this is called plagiarism. While citing a text and identifying it as the words of another in order to report on it or offer a criticism on that text is the proper and permissible use of copying and pasting or directly typing a text the use of the text as one's own idea is plagiarism.

The question then is: when should I use someone else's ideas in my own work? The answer to that question can seem complicated on the surface but then is quite simple upon further observation. A paper or review should be

built upon the writer's own ideas. Any cited or paraphrased text should be used to prove or enhance a point within the context of presenting a unique idea. How does that work? Writers must distinguish their own ideas from the paraphrase or text in question. The work cannot be used as a part of one's own assortment of ideas. Therefore, the first rule in avoiding plagiarism is to come up with your own ideas and means of expressing them. Although most of us will come up with ideas that have already been discovered and explored we'll find our own discoveries unique in and of themselves because of our own personal uniqueness and experience.

On the more practical side, it is important to understand that paraphrasing is permissible but in order to make a paraphrase one's own work the word and syntax of a quote must be change. The change must be enough to change the meaning of the quote or statement; thereby making the statement new, fresh, and free of the snares of plagiarism.

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