

the dictionary of literary biography

the dictionary of literary biography stands as an indispensable resource for scholars, students, and literary enthusiasts seeking comprehensive biographical information about authors from various periods and regions. This extensive reference work offers detailed profiles of literary figures, situating their lives and works within broader historical and cultural contexts. Designed to support academic research and general inquiry alike, the dictionary of literary biography spans a wide variety of genres, movements, and languages, making it a versatile tool in literary studies. Its meticulously researched entries provide insights not only into the authors' personal histories but also into their creative contributions and critical receptions. This article explores the history, structure, and significance of the dictionary of literary biography, highlighting its role in literary scholarship and its practical applications. The discussion will include an overview of its editorial approach, the scope of its coverage, and the ways it has evolved to meet contemporary research needs.

- History and Development of the Dictionary of Literary Biography
- Structure and Content of the Dictionary
- Editorial Approach and Scholarly Standards
- Scope and Coverage of Literary Figures
- Uses and Applications in Research and Education
- Accessibility and Formats

History and Development of the Dictionary of Literary Biography

The dictionary of literary biography was first conceived in the mid-20th century as a means to consolidate biographical and critical information about authors into a single, authoritative reference work. Published by Gale, it quickly became a foundational resource in literary studies. Over the decades, the dictionary has expanded significantly, incorporating more volumes and covering a broader array of literary traditions and periods. Its development reflects the evolving landscape of literary scholarship, responding to new critical perspectives and the increasing globalization of literary studies. The dictionary's history is marked by continuous editorial refinement and expansion, ensuring that it remains relevant to both historical and contemporary inquiries.

Structure and Content of the Dictionary

The dictionary of literary biography is organized into volumes, each dedicated to a particular literary theme, period, or geographic area. These volumes contain individual entries on authors, which combine biographical

details with critical analysis of their work and significance. Entries typically include the author's background, major works, literary style, influences, and critical reception. The structure facilitates easy navigation for users seeking specific information or thematic overviews. Additionally, many volumes provide introductory essays that contextualize the authors within literary movements or historical frameworks.

Typical Entry Components

Each biographical entry in the dictionary of literary biography is carefully structured to provide a comprehensive portrait of the author. Components typically include:

- Full name and birth/death dates
- Biographical background including education and career
- Major literary works and publications
- Critical interpretation and analysis
- Bibliography and suggested further reading

Editorial Approach and Scholarly Standards

The dictionary of literary biography is renowned for its rigorous editorial standards, which ensure the accuracy and reliability of its content. The editorial team comprises literary scholars and experts who oversee the selection of authors and contributors. Each entry is typically written by a specialist with expertise in the author or literary period concerned. Peer review and fact-checking processes are integral to maintaining the dictionary's scholarly integrity. This meticulous editorial approach guarantees that the dictionary remains a trusted resource for academic research and literary scholarship.

Contributor Expertise

Contributors to the dictionary are selected based on their academic credentials and familiarity with the subject matter. This ensures that entries are not only factual but also critically insightful, reflecting current scholarly debates and interpretations. The collaborative nature of the project enriches the dictionary, bringing diverse perspectives and deep expertise to its entries.

Scope and Coverage of Literary Figures

The dictionary of literary biography covers an extensive range of authors spanning various time periods, geographic regions, and literary genres. Its scope includes canonical figures as well as lesser-known and emerging writers, offering a balanced representation of the literary landscape. The coverage extends across poetry, prose, drama, and non-fiction, encompassing

both historical and contemporary authors. This breadth of coverage supports comparative literary studies and interdisciplinary research.

Geographic and Chronological Range

The dictionary includes literary figures from:

- North America and Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Africa and Asia
- Various historical eras from classical antiquity to the present day

This wide geographic and chronological range allows users to explore literary traditions across cultures and historical contexts.

Uses and Applications in Research and Education

The dictionary of literary biography is widely used in both academic and educational settings. Researchers benefit from its comprehensive and authoritative biographical and critical information, which supports literary analysis, historical contextualization, and biographical studies. Educators incorporate the dictionary into curricula to provide students with reliable background information and to foster critical engagement with literary texts. Additionally, the dictionary serves as a valuable reference for writers, librarians, and general readers who seek in-depth knowledge about authors and their works.

Applications in Academic Research

Some common research applications include:

1. Biographical research on authors for literary criticism
2. Contextual studies linking authors to historical and cultural movements
3. Comparative literature studies involving multiple authors or traditions
4. Reference for bibliographies and citations

Accessibility and Formats

The dictionary of literary biography is available in multiple formats to accommodate diverse user needs. Traditionally published as print volumes, it has also been digitized and is accessible through online databases. This digital format facilitates advanced search capabilities, cross-referencing, and remote access for users worldwide. Libraries and educational institutions often provide access to the dictionary through subscription services,

enhancing its availability. The combination of print and digital formats ensures that the dictionary remains a flexible and accessible tool for literary scholarship.

Benefits of Digital Access

Digital access to the dictionary offers several advantages:

- Keyword and author-based search functionality
- Hyperlinked cross-references within and across volumes
- Regular updates and additions to content
- Convenient remote access for users outside traditional library settings

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Dictionary of Literary Biography?

The Dictionary of Literary Biography (DLB) is a comprehensive reference work that provides detailed biographies and critical analyses of authors from various literary traditions and periods.

Who publishes the Dictionary of Literary Biography?

The Dictionary of Literary Biography is published by Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, known for its academic and educational resources.

How is the Dictionary of Literary Biography organized?

The DLB is organized into volumes that focus on specific literary genres, time periods, or geographical regions, with each volume containing biographies and critical essays on multiple authors.

What types of authors are included in the Dictionary of Literary Biography?

The DLB includes a wide range of authors, including novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists, and other significant literary figures from around the world and throughout history.

Is the Dictionary of Literary Biography available online?

Yes, the Dictionary of Literary Biography is available in an online database format, which allows users to search and access biographies and critical essays digitally.

Who typically uses the Dictionary of Literary Biography?

The DLB is commonly used by students, scholars, researchers, and librarians for literary research, writing, and reference purposes.

How often is the Dictionary of Literary Biography updated?

The DLB is regularly updated with new volumes and entries to include emerging authors and new scholarship in the field of literary studies.

Can the Dictionary of Literary Biography help with literary criticism?

Yes, the DLB provides critical analyses and contextual information that can assist readers and researchers in understanding the significance and impact of an author's work within literary criticism.

Additional Resources

1. Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Novelists, 1890-1920

This volume offers comprehensive biographical and critical essays on American novelists active between 1890 and 1920. It covers key figures who shaped early 20th-century American literature, providing insights into their lives, works, and literary significance. Scholars and students will find detailed analyses of themes, styles, and historical contexts.

2. Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Poets, 1800-1900

Focusing on British poets of the 19th century, this book explores the lives and contributions of Romantic and Victorian poets. It includes critical essays that examine their poetic forms, themes, and cultural impact. Readers gain an understanding of how these poets influenced English literature and society.

3. Dictionary of Literary Biography: Women Writers in the American West

This volume highlights the contributions of women writers who chronicled life in the American West. It features biographical sketches and critical evaluations of their works, addressing themes such as frontier life, gender roles, and cultural identity. The book sheds light on often overlooked voices in American literary history.

4. Dictionary of Literary Biography: Modern British Novelists

Covering British novelists from the early 20th century to the present, this book provides detailed biographies and critical appraisals. It discusses major literary movements and the evolving narrative styles that shaped modern British fiction. The volume is an essential resource for understanding contemporary literary developments.

5. Dictionary of Literary Biography: African American Writers, 1900-1945

This edition focuses on African American authors who wrote during the first half of the 20th century, including figures from the Harlem Renaissance. It provides biographical information alongside critical analysis of their contributions to literature and social thought. The book highlights themes of racial identity, resistance, and cultural expression.

6. *Dictionary of Literary Biography: European Drama, 1900-1950*

This volume examines influential European dramatists and the evolution of drama in the first half of the 20th century. It covers a range of styles from realism to avant-garde, offering insights into playwrights' lives and their works' social and political contexts. The book serves as a guide to understanding dramatic innovations and trends.

7. *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Contemporary Poets of the United States*

Focusing on living American poets, this book presents biographical profiles and critical commentary on their poetry. It explores diverse voices and styles, reflecting the multicultural and dynamic nature of contemporary American poetry. Readers gain an appreciation of current poetic trends and individual artistic contributions.

8. *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Latino and Latina Writers*

This volume celebrates the literary achievements of Latino and Latina authors across genres and generations. It includes discussions of cultural heritage, bilingualism, and identity politics in their works. The book is a valuable resource for understanding the richness and diversity of Latino/a literature.

9. *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Children's Literature Authors*

Dedicated to authors who have shaped children's literature, this book offers biographies and critical evaluations of their works. It addresses themes such as imagination, morality, and education, exploring how these writers influenced young readers worldwide. The volume is useful for educators, librarians, and literary scholars alike.

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