

Work and the Human Condition

Winter Research Project

The Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources pertinent to a specific topic. The researcher (you) compiles a list of sources, primary and secondary. “Annotated” means that you provide commentary on each source. In your annotated bibliography you will provide the bibliographic information in correct format. (For our purposes, follow MLA conventions.) Following the bibliographic listing, you will provide a *concise* annotation for your reader. This means that you will give your reader, who is someone who may be researching a similar project, a one paragraph description of what she/he can expect to find in this source. You will, for example, want to tell your reader about the nature and scope of the work: Is this a short newspaper report published in December 1920 in the New York Times, or is it an analysis of maritime policy leading up to a longshore strike in 1916, published in 2007? Keep in mind what *you* would like to know. If there is an extensive list of other sources at the end of the book or article, that would be helpful for your reader. If the information is poorly documented, you should let your reader know that, too. Perhaps the source has wonderful illustrations, links to other useful sources, or especially helpful notes; mention that, too. The point is to write annotations that are precise, concise, and focused.

[A Sample—Concocted from the books on my study shelf, so don’t be too critical—*the project is fictional, but now that I think about it, pretty interesting.*]

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[Note: --Start with a brief introductory paragraph, then begin the bibliography, listing alphabetically by last name of author]

The following bibliography, while not inclusive, covers some useful sources for a forthcoming study: "The Importance of Place in American Thought."

Edmundson, Mark. *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism, and the Culture of the Gothic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997.

Focusing primarily on American popular culture—movies, television, and literature, Edmundson argues that American culture in the 1990s turns to the Gothic formula as a way of understanding complex human behavior and relationships. He argues that "addicted" is "our current word for the traditional Gothic term 'haunted'"(xiv). He examines as well the "facile transcendence" of New Age panaceas. Finally, referring extensively to Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Edmundson posits an American culture tending to go where the Gothic pushes us, to a sadomasochistic narrative of power and revenge. Divided into three sections, "American Gothic," "The World According to Garp," and "S and M Culture," Edmundson's book is especially useful for the study of film, literature and television in modern American society. Notes are thorough and useful and the index is complete and helpful.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.

Jackson's historical analysis of American suburban movement begins with a careful and well documented examination of 19th century thought and early suburbs. Jackson ties his analysis to a complex context of technological innovation, changes in the economy and employment, and cultural ideas expressed in physical environment. He says, "This book is about American havens. It suggests that the space around us---the physical organization of neighborhoods, roads, yards, houses, and apartments—sets up living patterns that condition our behavior"(3). "American havens" encompasses one of his major assertions: that Americans have traditionally wanted to separate themselves from the seeming chaos of urban life. The scope of the book is ambitious, taking the reader from the early 19th century to the 1980s. Jackson includes detailed appendices and extensive chapter notes.

Miller, Perry. Ed. *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956.

Miller's collection contains the essays, poetry, and sermons of major writers in Puritan New England. For each, the place—New England—and the author's sense of ownership and divine mission is central. The book is a valuable anthology of these early (and influential) Americans.

Oakes, Timothy. "Place and the Paradox of Modernity." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87.3 (Sep., 1997): 509-531.

Oakes examines the concept of place, arguing that while scholars have posited modernism as a movement that devalued place as a "relevant vehicle for understanding social change" (510); in fact, modernist writers like Hardy and Williams used place as a central trope. He notes that their vision of place was central to their examination of modernism's complexity and paradoxes. From his critique of literary sources, he moves to an assertion that the same approach would be useful to cultural geographers interested in evaluating the cultural politics of place and contemporary socio-economic rupture and change. The article is useful, clearly written, and applies literary critique to the seemingly distant disciplinary focus of cultural geography.

Pratt, Geraldine. "Grids of Difference: Place and Identity Formation." *Cities of Difference*. Fincher, Ruth and Jane Jacobs, Eds. New York: Guilford Press, 1998. 26-48.

Once one has waded through a rather turgid, discipline specific prose style, Pratt has interesting analysis of the ways that identities are "territorialized in contemporary North American cities and the varying scales at which boundaries are produced" (27). She bases her exploration on a study of Worcester, MA, so provides a useful contrast and comparison to early New England culture. She uses three vignettes to raise issues of multiculturalism. The essay includes good resource materials, but is useful perhaps only for the very specialized researcher.

Rotella, Anthony. *October Cities: The Redevelopment of Urban Literature*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1998.

A literary historian, Rotella examines the relationship between urban life and the literature it produces. The book is divided into three parts: "The Decline and Fall of the Old Neighborhood," "The Neighborhood Novel and the Transformation of the Inner City," and "The City of Feeling in Crisis." In his 355 page examination of a short period in American literature and urban history (1950-1965), Rotella uses three sites, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Manhattan, and provides analysis of writers based in these specific times and places. He looks at the cities as literary constructs and as geographic/social entities. Extensive chapter notes.

Stafford, Kim. *Having Everything Right: Essays of Place*. New York: Penguin, 1986.

This is a collection of reflective essays about specific places in the Pacific Northwest. Stafford uses natural history, Indian stories and observations based on his relationship with each place he includes.

Whitaker, Craig. *Architecture and the American Dream*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1996.

Whitaker writes, “I am a practicing architect, not a historian; consequently, this book is not an attempt to write history, but an effort to set form a point of view. . . It is an assertion that cultural values, more than any other attribute, determine how we shape our man-made environment”(ix). The author includes hundreds of photographs, drawings and plans. He begins with the American penchant for choice and continues to look at what is not chaos, but a recognizable American feel. Whitaker includes extensive chapter notes, a bibliography that covers sources from a broad spectrum of disciplinary foci, and meticulous and useful credits for the illustrations.

And so on, for you—continuing to include 20-30 sources, to include both primary and secondary sources. You might have artifacts that serve to inform your study. You might include interviews with experts in the area. Maps and government documents might be useful, as well as records of organizations—e.g. union documents, social clubs, etc. You might find photographs or historical society records. Kinds of sources will depend to some extent on your research topic.