

## E-VIEWS AND REVIEWS

# Literary Luminescence

By Cheryl LaGuardia

**Literary Reference Center**  
EBSCO Publishing, [www.epnet.com](http://www.epnet.com)  
(Free trial available)

**Literary Reference Center (LRC)** is an electronic database full of full-text material, featuring more than 10,000 plot summaries and synopses, 75,000 articles, 130,000 author biographies, 500,000 book reviews, more than 7500 novels, more than 300 literary journals, 11,000 short stories, 25,000 poems, and 3000-plus full-text author interviews, plus 1000 images of literary figures. Specific contents include Chelsea House's literary criticism series edited by Harold Bloom, the *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, *Beacham's Research Guide to Biography and Criticism*, *Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*, *Literary Encyclopedia*, *Columbia Companion to the 20th Century American Short Story*, all of Salem Press's *MagillOnLiterature*, and the *Masterplots* series.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?** At the Home screen, you can do a simple Search from a search box, an Advanced Search, a Visual Search (resulting in a visual map), access the Literary Glossary, and get Help (from a terrific Help page). Also Browse Authors, Browse Most Studied Authors, Browse Works, Browse Most Studied Works, access the Reference Shelf of online references, link into a Content Spotlight, review individual Book Highlights of volumes in

the collection (and then search within them), or read about an Author in Focus, linking to that writer's Principal Works, Early Life, Life's Work, Summary, and Bibliography.

### CAN YOU AND YOUR PATRONS USE IT?

I started browsing the list of authors, which ranged from Jeppe Aakjær (Danish poet and novelist) to Stefan Zweig (Austrian-born novelist, playwright, and poet). You can go through the list alphabetically or do a simple search by name (and rank your results by relevance). Author entries include language, an abstract about the work, a list of principal works, and links to biographies, literary criticism, reviews, and periodical articles. All the information here, as throughout LRC, can be printed, emailed, downloaded, or added to an online folder. The other Browse features operate similarly.

My search for Jane Austen found 920 results. As in other EBSCO databases, at screen left I could narrow my search quickly by a series of terms, including criticism, literary style, women authors, *Pride & Prejudice* (book), and prose literature. At screen top, I could click on a tab to view particular results only, including Biographies, Literary Criticism, Masterplots, Reviews, Interviews, Reference Books, Periodicals, or Poems/Stories.

Clicking on Interviews brought up interviews with Canadian film di-

rector Patricia Rozema and authors Stephanie Barron, Carrie Bebris, Carol Shields, and Angus Wilson. Clicking the Masterplots tab took me to 17 plot analyses of Austen novels, while a click on Poems/Stories found the delightful Auden poem, "She Shocks Me," from his "Letter to Lord Byron" (*Letters from Iceland*, 1937). When I refined my search, adding "film" to the search box, I got 30 items, mostly articles about film adaptations of Austen books and all but one of them in full text. Also, at screen left, I got a list of suggested terms to extend or narrow my search. I could easily say much more.

**HOW GOOD IS IT?** It's beyond a 10—I give it a 10.5 and rising. It rates even higher for those libraries that can get it at the lower end of the pricing spectrum.

**WHAT'S THE COST?** The annual cost ranges from \$2000 to \$100,000, depending on the size and type of institution. Contact EBSCO.

**THE BOTTOM LINE** This is a beautifully conceived and realized product, with extraordinary content and powerful navigability, for literary researchers from high schoolers to postgraduates.

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