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Literary Theory and Writing: Summary Essay  
9-15-19

### Summary Reading Outline

#### 1. In Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction*

- a. Addresses the ambivalence around the term 'literature' and seeks to define what constitutes a writing as literary or not
- b. Interprets different definitions of literature by different literary scholars
- c. Proposes the idea that literature is instead influenced by social ideologies rather than simply stylistic preferences or thematic elements

#### 2. Keyword Search

. Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota, 1996. 1-14. Subjects: literature; writing; literary theory; subjectivity; Formalism; value-judgment; social group; social ideology; pragmatism; social construct.

#### 3. Summary

. Different perspectives/interpretations of literature

- i. Literature cannot be defined by fact vs. fiction
- ii. Literature cannot be determined by its style of writing
- iii. Literature cannot be defined by the overall theme/message of the story
- iv. Literature cannot be subjective by individuals' tastes

1. A book can be considered bad by an individual, but power structures require that it be considered literature, lest it result in the loss of power by the social group

a. Conclusion that literature and what constitutes things as literature is reflective of the power dynamic of different social structures throughout history

#### 4. Evaluation

. Solid claims about how there is some sort of power structure being held over a concept of good and bad.

a. Being considered literature almost feels like the idea that a piece of writing deserves/needs to have power, despite whether you like it or not.

b. How, then, are revolutionary pieces of writing considered literature if they overthrow the power structures at hand?

.Only considered literature now because they inspired a power movement back then

#### 5. Works Cited

. Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota, 1996. 1-14.