

## ROBERT WRIGHT : TIPS ON WRITING REVIEWS

From time to time in university-level humanities courses, you will be asked to write a book review. Despite their brevity, book reviews tend to be at least as difficult to write as essays and require, therefore, serious preparation.

It is extremely important to note that a book *review* is not a book *report*. The purpose of a review is not to describe the contents of a book in narrative form but to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a book, to estimate its contribution(s) to knowledge, and to provide an opinion to its prospective readers of its general worth.

The best strategy for familiarizing yourself with the ways and means of writing book reviews is to read some. All scholarly journals publish book reviews - I would direct your attention to the *Canadian Historical Review* and the *Journal of Canadian Studies* in particular - as do most literary magazines and arts supplements in daily newspapers. (The Saturday editions of both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* have book review sections.) Academic book reviews are readily available in any number of sources at university and public libraries. It will be considered part of your undergraduate training to familiarize yourself with the genre if you have not already done so.

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