
Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman, eds. *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*. 2nd Edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. 985p.

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The second edition of *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* is a massive accomplishment. The editors—Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman—have updated an already-extensive resource manual for the scholar and student of literary theory and criticism; moreover, the conveniently cross-referenced reference work invites continued study of the field and its major figures. Groden, Kreiswirth, and Szeman shamelessly emphasize contemporary figures and movements in the discipline, but they also illustrate the historical scope of critical theory with extensive and valuable entries on influential early thinkers and movements. Richard Macksey, in his probing Foreword, notes that this new edition is marked by the same “polemical spirit” that characterized ancient Greek thought (vii). Macksey explains that *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* “should serve to remind us of what was implicit in critical theory’s long history of agonistic disputation. Much that is original and insightful in genuine criticism depends upon the angry response to what is perceived as bad criticism” (xi). The recent update of this indispensable reference volume clearly continues this tradition of “agonistic disputation.” The 241 alphabetized entries include 46 new entries and sub-entries, and these additions are certainly telling. And yet, what is perhaps more indicative of the “angry response” of this book is its subtraction of 30 listings. The second edition of *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* is an impressive critical accomplishment that undoubtedly deserves praise, and the accomplishment of the work helps to remind us of our disciplinary history and its various processes of inclusion and exclusion.

The editors have added numerous listings for writers whose work has become influential—if not dominant—in recent years. Among the additions in the second edition are new entries for intellectuals such as Jean Baudrillard, Donna Haraway, Emanuel Levinas, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Terry Eagleton, Slavoj Žižek, Pierre Bourdieu, Stuart Hall, Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and Judith Butler. These thinkers have undoubtedly established powerful voices in the past ten years, and their representation in the *Guide* is a valuable revision. In addition, new records on schools, concepts, and developments such as Aesthetics, Ethics, Gender Theory and Criticism, Genetic Criticism, Globalization, Hypertext Theory and Criticism, Irish Theory and Criticism, Law and Literature, Multiculturalism, Native Theory and Criticism, Performance Studies, Race and Ethnicity, Translation

Theory, and Visual Culture bespeak the critical expansion of the discipline. The new edition of the *Guide* does not abandon more traditional modes of inquiry like Russian Formalism, New Criticism, or New Historicism, but it does accentuate the recent polemical trends, especially trends that emphasize the contemporary cultural efficacy of a literary text. Groden, Krieswirth, and Szeman map a discipline that treats the issues of Globalization, Race, and Gender as integral to the very methods of literary study. As Macksey suggests in his Foreword, this recent edition may have a goal, but it is a shameless and transparent goal. The editors remind us that the study of English is no longer a single discipline, but a rich and diverse field of study that ventures into vast cultural and intellectual arenas.

Indeed, the scope of the second edition of *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* may indicate that English was never a single discipline. Entries on major philosophical figures such as Kant, Aristotle, Plato, and Hume emphasize the inevitable immersion of literary study within philosophical discussions; moreover, listings on topics and movements such as Aesthetics, Cultural Studies, Film Theory and Criticism, Prague School Structuralism, and Psychoanalytic Theory and Criticism illustrate that literary study's critical interrelationships with other disciplines is neither new nor surprising. The editors' decisions to remove 30 entries may be the most revealing feature of the new edition. Gone are listings for Susan Sontag, Wallace Stevens, Edmund Wilson, René Girard, William Empson, Gustave Flaubert, John Dewey, Ralph Waldo Emerson, M.H. Abrams, W.H. Auden, Ben Jonson, Geoffrey Hartman, Murray Krieger, D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, and Adrienne Rich. These and other excisions demonstrate the new edition's focus on contemporary thinkers and issues as well as its tendency to de-emphasize the role of poets, novelists, and mid-20th-century thinkers in contemporary discussions of theory and criticism. Figures such as Auden, Emerson, and Rich still receive attention under other entries (e.g., Emerson is discussed under the listing for American Theory and Criticism), but the absence of independent records for such figures is indicative of an enduring shift in our presentation of the field of literary study. While we are still interested in Emerson's comments on the poet, we are now more concerned with understanding such comments within the context of a tradition of American Theory and Criticism. The updated *Guide* does not negate the importance of these omitted thinkers, but it does reposition their ideas within larger critical discussions, and this revision serves as a useful emblem for the larger revision of our field: we still study literary figures and texts, but we often discern and categorize our reasons for pursuing such texts and figures before we begin our study.

The second edition of *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism* has already received harsh and cynical criticism from the media. In *The New York*

Times Book Review of May 22, 2005, Christopher Hitchens jibes: “one can state with confidence that the editors and contributors to this volume consider themselves to be subversives of the most audacious kind.” He concludes that “class, race and gender, and the yearnings of all ethnic and sexual minorities, are virtually assumed to be inherent in the agenda” (18). Hitchens’ critique of the *Guide* bespeaks a nostalgic yearning for a time of simpler literary study when critical theory denoted a stable domain of inquiry; and while I agree with many of his criticisms of the current field of English studies, his review of this updated reference manual seems to charge the editors with what they themselves explicitly claim to be doing: i.e., emphasizing contemporary figures and movements in theory. The new version of the *Guide* will provide a new generation of scholars and students with an exhaustive reference, but it will also serve as a valuable and critical measurement of the discipline. Groden, Kreiswirth, and Szeman show us how the field of English has changed, and they make no effort to hide their attempt to document this transformation. ✱