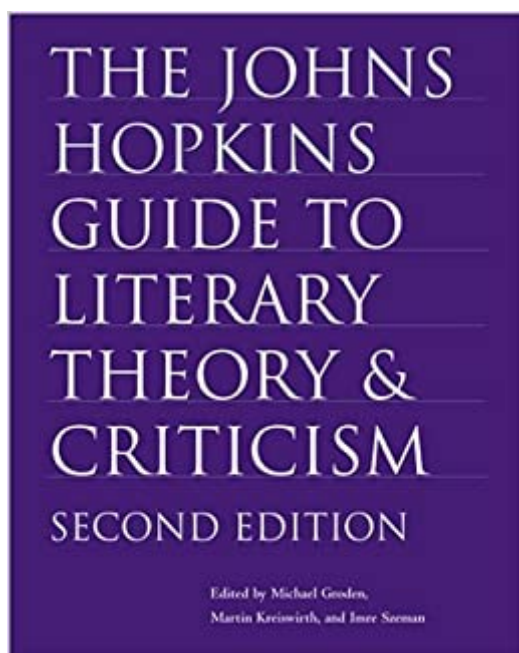


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# The Johns Hopkins Guide To Literary Theory And Criticism



## Synopsis

The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism has become the indispensable resource for scholars and students of literary theory and discourse. The long-awaited second edition includes 48 new entries and subentries and has been revised throughout, taking account of ten years of rapidly changing scholarship. While concentrating on the explosion of contemporary critical and theoretical works, the Guide presents a comprehensive historical survey of ideas and individuals ranging from Plato and Aristotle to twentieth-century scholars. It includes more than 240 alphabetically arranged entries on critics and theorists, critical schools and movements, and the critical and theoretical innovations of specific countries and historical periods. It also examines developments in other disciplines which have shaped literary theory and criticism. An international, encyclopedic guide to the field's most important figures, schools, and movements, the new edition reflects the state of literary theory and criticism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This self-defensively "postmodern" guide provides 226 essay-length overviews of critics, schools, movements, and national and ethnic groups important to the study of literary theory and criticism. The descriptive entries, which include a primary and secondary bibliography and an abundance of cross references that facilitate exploration, are authoritative and well written. The entries in Hugh Holman's Handbook to Literature (Macmillan, 1992. 6th ed.) are both much shorter and more accessible, but individual critics are not included. Magill's Critical Survey of Poetry (Salem Pr., 1992.

rev. ed.), on the other hand, gives critical analyses of poets but deals only briefly with terms and concepts. By covering terms and critics, this guide does the work of both sources, filling a niche for scholars and graduate students in literature and related fields.- Peter Dollard, Alma Coll. Lib., Mich.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

With coverage ranging from Plato and Aristotle to Richard Rorty and Edward Said, this work is an overview of major landmarks of criticism from classical antiquity to the present day. Included, in addition to literary critics, are theorists whose affiliation or discipline is not primarily literary studies: philosophers, political theorists, anthropologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists. For example, an essay on Hegel appears between those on Hazlitt and Heidegger. The editors state that they shortened the entries on twentieth-century critics in an effort to entice the reader into making selective sorties into earlier entries, earlier in the historical sense. In addition to those figures who have affected literary theory and criticism, the work includes important groups, schools, and movements; major national or ethnic schools of criticism; and theoretical innovations of specific countries and historical periods. The 226 entries are arranged alphabetically so that such entries as Caribbean Theory and Criticism, Chicago Critics, Chinese Theory and Criticism, and Chomsky, Noam appear in that order. Entries on Arabic, African, biblical, feminist, gay, Indian, psychoanalytic, and Russian criticism are joined by essays on film theory, cultural studies, hermeneutics, postmodernism, and stylistics. Each contribution is signed. The authors are literary scholars from leading universities throughout the U.S. and Canada with a few from institutions in other countries. Each entry is followed by at least one bibliography; most have two, a primary and a secondary one. Ample cross-references are noted within entries in small-capital letters. Related references appear at the end of each entry. Quotations are signaled by parenthetical page numbers that refer to works in the bibliographies. The appended material includes a list of contributors with academic affiliations, an index of names, and an index of topics. Histories and anthologies of literary theory and criticism abound, but there are few encyclopedic works that treat critics, schools, and movements in a reference format. This more scholarly work complements Gale's Contemporary Literary Critics, which gives biobibliographic information about modern critics but treats no schools or movements. Another recent work, the Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms (Univ. of Toronto, 1993), also emphasizes contemporary themes. The Johns Hopkins Guide is an excellent overview with a wider time frame. Academic libraries with strong literature programs, especially graduate programs, will want to own it. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable

edition of this title.

A must have for the first-year grad student in any literary field! The introductory essay by Richard Macksey has a supportive subtext for such a student.

A must-have for research. Much improved edition!

I own the first edition of this book, and wouldn't be without it as I pursue my deepening interest in theory and criticism. It covers the very broad range of topics and disciplines that comprise and contribute to this field in short but in-depth essays rather than brief "encyclopedic" entries. I will note that these essays are generally aimed at the specialist who is already acquainted with basic facts and issues pertaining to a topic, and the entries are therefore often beyond the range of what the beginning student will be looking for in his/her novice explorations (and for which other references should be consulted). As an example of how substantial and "chewy" these essays can be, I'll quote from the entry on the Frankfurt School (written for the first edition by Vincent P. Pecora, who begins a discussion of "five motifs running through critical theory" in this way): "(The first motif) was the reinterpretation of Marxian social science in light of the growing discrepancies between dialectical materialism as theory and as practice. This meant the rejection of any simple totalization of history, of more mechanical relations of reflection between cultural superstructure and economic base, and of the proletariat as the necessary subject-object of historical progress (see especially the early Horkheimer and Pollock here). While class struggle was never denied, it lost its place of centrality amid the larger pressures of monopolization and rationalization. Such a perspective also entailed arguments, such as those between Pollock and Neumann in the 1940s, over the specific relation of capitalism to Nazism..." This excerpt doesn't reflect either a general writing style or opacity of content for the Guide as a whole, but it's a fair sample of what the editorial approach elicits: The aim is not only (and sometimes not at all) to provide a basic or "entry-to-topic" level of information, but to present short, expert essays by specialists on those topics--and in many cases, all but the most well-informed reader may strain to follow discussions that presume a sophisticated level of prior acquaintance and knowledge. I'll also note that non-expert users of this reference should almost always find valuable background, context, and information on significant issues and controversies related to the individual critics, movements, epochs, and topics discussed. But such users will probably also want to have access to more basic guides and introductions to terms and topics as they explore the Hopkins essays. As one other reviewer notes, this is a reference that will reward its

owner for many years, and that thought is borne out by the fact that 10 years elapsed between the first and second editions--an indication of the Guide's scholarly approach and intended shelf life among its academic users.

### Great book

This is an expensive book, but if you love literature and want to add depth to your affair, break your budget and buy it. I spent several days completely absorbed in it. I suspect you will too. If not, you can always use it for weight lifting.

Theory, so called, is vast and complex and historical and contradictory. This volume is brief and clear and present oriented and structural. That the field and its survey are incommensurate is necessary, but the user should be aware of these limitations. The entries are clear and non-dogmatic but they must betray the liabilities of summary: concise average readings that hide problems, relations, and other voices. At root, modern theory is not intelligible without philosophical contexts that go to the pre-socratics, but that cannot appear here. Some choices of inclusion and exclusion seem odd: a separate entry for Orwell and none for Deleuze, for instance. But on the whole, this book is useful and well done. I bought it which is my highest rec.

I'm going back into a Masters Program and plan to teach English for a living. Already this book has proved to be a valuable resource when surveying various schools of criticism. The cross-referenced index is a bit confusing, but this is a nice book that you may want to sit down with and read for awhile anyway. I've found some wonderful items in here, and it's fun to flip through, looking for previously unknown literary schools that may catch my interest. It's a great reference book, but also a compelling source of information and direction. I laid out the bucks for this book because I know it will be a handy reference for the next thirty years. Already it's directed me to some outside reading that has proved quite profitable. I'll keep this guide close by as long as I am a student of Literature.

Provides a concise, and yet sufficiently nuanced and complex, summary of theoretical schools, practitioners, terms, and trends. Hefty and yet readable reference material -- cross-indexed with more thorough bibliographies for each entry.

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