



Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to Postcolonialism

By Pelagia Goulimari

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This incredibly useful volume offers an introduction to the history of literary criticism and theory from ancient Greece to the present. Grounded in the close reading of landmark theoretical texts, while seeking to encourage the reader's critical response, Pelagia Goulimari examines:

- major thinkers and critics from Plato and Aristotle to Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, Said and Butler;
- key concepts, themes and schools in the history of literary theory: mimesis, inspiration, reason and emotion, the self, the relation of literature to history, society, culture and ethics, feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, queer theory;
- genres and movements in literary history: epic, tragedy, comedy, the novel; Romanticism, realism, modernism and postmodernism.

Historical connections between theorists and theories are traced and the book is generously cross-referenced. With useful features such as key-point conclusions, further reading sections, descriptive text boxes, detailed headings, and with a comprehensive index, this book is the ideal introduction to anyone approaching literary theory for the first time or unfamiliar with the scope of its history.

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Review

"Pelagia Goulimari sets a new standard for reading theory in context, introducing and summarizing theories and theorists without being reductive, contextualizing the broad intellectual and aesthetic movements from which theory emerges, while constantly keeping the focus on deep literary critical understanding. The critical readings are wonderfully fresh and insightful, with constant illumination of the theory through reference to literary authors such as Beckett, Woolf, and Morrison. This truly is a fresh and lively reading of the theoretical scene, offering inspirational insight for beginners and more experienced critics alike." *Richard Lane, Vancouver Island University, Canada*

"Incredibly useful, and a miracle of concision. A one volume account of over 2500 years of literary criticism that manages to be both informative and readable. I will recommend it to all my students." *John McGowan, University of North Carolina, USA, co-editor of the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*

"Amongst the many texts seeking to introduce readers to literary theory, Pelagia Goulimari's *Literary Criticism and Theory* stands out for its careful and patient reading of critical texts, admirably weaving together older and more recent traditions in a way that helps make coherent sense of the lines of filiation that run through Western and postcolonial understandings of the literary." *John Frow, University of Sydney, AUS*

About the Author

Pelagia Goulimari is a member of the English Faculty of the University of Oxford, where she lectures on literary theory, and a former convenor of Oxford's graduate programme in Women's Studies. She is general editor of *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*. Her publications include *Postmodernism: What Moment?* (2007) and *Toni Morrison* (2009).

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