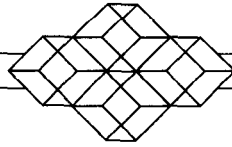




THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY  
THEORY AND CRITICISM



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# The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism

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Vincent B. Leitch, *General Editor*

PROFESSOR AND PAUL AND CAROL DAUBE SUTTON CHAIR IN ENGLISH  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA



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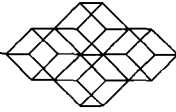
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# Preface

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The most wide-ranging and comprehensive collection of its kind, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* offers one or more selections from 148 figures, representing major developments from ancient to recent times, from Gorgias and Plato to bell hooks, Judith Butler, and Stuart Moulthrop. In contrast to comparable anthologies, it provides generous selections from previously underrepresented fields, such as rhetoric, medieval theory, and criticism by women and people of color, along with a full complement of works from canonical figures such as Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Cleanth Brooks, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Michel Foucault. From canonical authors, it includes classic texts as well as selections newly revalued. The standard works of Western theory and criticism from the ancient Greeks to the present are represented, as are texts from “forgotten” figures such as Moses Maimonides, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Frantz Fanon. The anthology is particularly rich in modern and contemporary theory, providing materials from 93 writers and covering all the main schools and movements, ranging from Marxism, psychoanalysis, and formalism to poststructuralism, cultural studies, race and ethnicity studies, and many more. We have also drawn from vital minor currents, including body studies, media theory, theory of national literature and institutional analysis and history. This anthology consolidates the many gains won through the expansion of theory in recent decades.

In view of current changes, it is worth pausing for a moment to reconsider the configuration and meaning of “theory” itself. Today the term encompasses significant works not only of poetics, theory of criticism, and aesthetics as of old, but also of rhetoric, media and discourse theory, semiotics, race and ethnicity theory, gender theory, and visual and popular culture theory. But theory in its newer sense means still more than this broadly expanded body of topics and texts. It entails a mode of questioning and analysis that goes beyond the earlier New Critical research into the “literariness” of literature. Because of the effects of poststructuralism, cultural studies, and the new social movements, especially the women’s and civil rights movements, theory now entails skepticism toward systems, institutions, and norms; a readiness to take critical stands and to engage in resistance; an interest in blind spots, contradictions, and distortions (often discovered to be ineradicable); and a habit of linking local and personal practices to the larger economic, political, historical, and ethical forces of culture. This theory—or “cultural critique,” as it is more descriptively termed—is less concerned with elaborating conditions of possibility, as is Kantian critique, than with investigating and criticizing values, practices, categories, and representations embedded in cultural texts and surrounding institutions. To an earlier generation, such theory looks like advocacy rather

than a disinterested, objective inquiry into poetics and the history of literature. This revealing fault line that divides traditionalist literary critics from large numbers of contemporary theorists is perhaps today's version of the old Renaissance and neoclassical battles between the ancients and the moderns.

The Table of Contents list figures and texts in chronological order. An Alternative Table of Contents recasts the chronological order, providing lists of figures in four categories commonly used in studying theory: schools and movements; major genres; historical periods; and key issues and topics. Additional ways of organizing the history and subject matter of theory and criticism are possible; the Alternative Table of Contents is meant to be suggestive and not comprehensive. Other figures in the anthology could be included in the existing categories. We decided against combining proponents and opponents in the popular schools and movements categories, as is sometimes done. Thus, for example, neither Leon Trotsky nor Mikhail Bakhtin appear under "Formalism" as its most celebrated critics. To list together antagonists and advocates would have created confusion and unduly multiplied the number of figures in our categories. Within each school and movement, of course, readers will encounter differences and disputes. One of the risks of the categories we employ in the Alternative Table of Contents is that their groupings of figures and topics from different periods and moments unavoidably de-emphasize historical conflicts, evolution, and differences. That noted, the editors hope our readers find the Alternative Table of Contents suggestive and useful. Many ways of configuring the materials in the anthology are outlined in M. Keith Booker's manual for instructors, *Teaching with "The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism": A Guide for Instructors*, a rich source of planning options, classroom strategies, and examination and discussion questions.

The Introduction to Theory and Criticism that follows the two Tables of Contents consists of fifteen brief, semiautonomous sections that introduce students to the field of theory through its main historical periods, its major modern and contemporary schools and movements, its perennial issues and problems, and its key terms. We are aware of no source offering students a quicker, more wide-ranging, or more lucid bird's-eye view of the history and nature of the field. Sections have been subtitled for easy reference in making assignments and in following the trajectory of the discussion.

Each selection in the anthology is fully annotated so that students may focus on the texts and not have to consult reference sources for basic information. Headnotes to each figure cover a range of topics. To begin with, they provide helpful biographical information and historical background. They discuss sources and critical receptions as well as the relevance of the selections for theoretical questions. They highlight each selection's main arguments, where necessary defining key terms and concepts and pointing out related perennial problems in the field. They regularly refer to other works by the authors and note problems identified by later critics. They position the authors in relation to other figures in the anthology, picturing the history of theory not as a string of isolated pearls but as a mosaic in which each work fits into larger frames of ongoing discussions and arguments. Finally, an annotated selected bibliography is given for each figure, covering main texts and editions, biographical sources (when available), the best secondary sources and criticism, and bibliographies related to the author's works (where available).

In choosing the selections the editors have been guided by a range of criteria. We have looked for readable and teachable texts that reflect the scope of the history of theory. This does not mean, however, that challenging and difficult texts are missing. We have favored complete works and self-contained excerpts; snippets are the exception. Yet in a number of cases we have edited texts to focus on topics germane to the field and to save time, space for other selections, and the energy of readers. We have sought out the best editions and translations; for Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Kant, and Hegel, we introduce new, highly regarded translations. From the outset we have followed the practice that no figure or selection could make it into the anthology without the agreement of at least half the editors. We have also made quite a few selections with an eye to pairing or triangulating—for example, we chose the famous closing section on writing from Plato's *Phaedrus*, having in mind Derrida's landmark critique of that text in his *Dissemination*. When they occur, such fruitful counterpoints are indicated in the headnotes and in the Alternative Table of Contents. Of course, innumerable combinations and permutations are possible, and our accounts cannot be exhaustive. But we have noted typographically all cross-references in the headnotes and footnotes by putting in small capitals the names of theorists and critics appearing in the anthology. While we have privileged standard works and contemporary classics of theory, we have also sought to resurrect forgotten texts and to discover overlooked gems. We believe you will be pleasantly surprised.

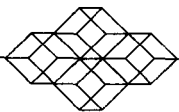
The Selected Bibliography of Theory and Criticism at the end of the anthology is the most comprehensive one in existence, containing works through the close of the twentieth century. It lists leading English-language sources in six main categories: Theory and Criticism Bibliographies; Anthologies of Theory and Criticism; Histories of Criticism and Theory; specialized Glossaries, Encyclopedias, and Handbooks; Introductions and Guides; and Modern and Contemporary Critical Schools and Movements. We have divided the three longest of these parts into convenient subcategories: into historical period in the lists both of anthologies and of histories of criticism and into sixteen autonomous profiles in the schools and movements section. To make the bibliography of schools and movements most useful to students, we have organized and briefly annotated the sources in short essays rather than lists, presenting each of the sixteen profiles in a five-paragraph format: (1) groundbreaking texts; (2) introductions, overviews, and histories; (3) anthologies and readers; (4) school- or movement-specific reference works (handbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.); and (5) "crossover texts." This last category attests to the increasing frequency with which contemporary works of theory are not limited to one or two domains of influence. It can be argued that in recent years many of the most innovative writings have been hybrid, crossover texts, mixing and matching strands from numerous schools and movements, and we have sought to illustrate this significant trend judiciously.

In putting this anthology together, we have faced a number of challenges. One difficulty was coping with the impossibility of including every significant theorist. Our original list of 250 figures had to be shortened to 148: even a very long book such as this one imposes limits. A few of the lengthiest selections—by Longinus, John Dryden, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Adrienne Rich, for instance—had to be trimmed, and each editor had favorite figures

dropped. The enclosure of post–World War II theory in the university and its increased professionalization have meant that contemporary nonacademic critics, literary journalists, and writers have been largely excluded from the theory canon—a trend slowly being reversed, we hope. Theory remains resolutely Eurocentric, but we look forward to a time when it will go global. Our Selected Bibliography posed its own nagging challenges of inclusion and exclusion. To cite just one case, we had to be rigorously selective in the category of guides and introductions to theory, since there are so many available. We trust we have not missed any major resources. Our Subject Index errs on the side of fullness; we calculated that this would help more than hinder the reader seeking assistance.

The editors of this anthology were selected because of their scholarly expertise. They combine knowledge of canonical works with awareness of contemporary trends and extensive experience as teachers. Each was involved in constructing the anthology's contents and design, and each was responsible for refining selections, drafting headnotes, compiling bibliographies, and editing one another's work. In preparing the volume the editors have incurred obligations to many colleagues, whom we thank separately in the Acknowledgments. With their help, we believe we have made this a readable and teachable anthology replete with significant texts for our contemporaries, meaningful in the context of the history of theory, and able to enlighten and challenge today's students.





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All of these colleagues have helped make this anthology possible, and with much gratitude we thank them for their valuable time and effort. We single out Richard Dienst, David Gorman, Martin Irvine, John Kirby, and Donald Marshall for substantial contributions to this text.

M. Keith Booker (University of Arkansas at Fayetteville) has written a highly useful instructor's manual, *Teaching with "The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism": A Guide for Instructors*, which we strongly recommend to teachers. His contribution extended beyond the manual to text selections, headnotes, and bibliographical items.

The general editor thanks the editors, who have been passionately engaged in every facet of this work. It has been a wonderful collaboration.

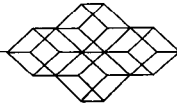
The editors in turn would like to thank Vincent Leitch for his inspiration, guidance, and tireless work on this project from beginning to end.

At W. W. Norton, our editor, Peter Simon, guided this anthology with great professional care. Our exceptional copyeditor, Alice Falk, made significant contributions throughout this project, and Marian Johnson and Isobel Evans, managing editor and assistant editor, respectively, kept the complex publishing process moving smoothly. We thank them all.

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