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Abstract

This book discusses major contemporary trends in literary theory and criticism, casting light upon their different modes of reading, interpreting or evaluating literary, cultural and social phenomena, and emphasizing how such trends changed (and continue to alter) the ways we contemplate on literature, culture and humanity. The author's intention is not to deal with the entirety of the theoretical schools of literature that made their appearance from the beginning of the twentieth century till now, or venture into an exhaustive historical and philological analysis of how those theories evolved, how they developed their methodologies, or under what circumstances they flourished. Rather, this study delves into a comparative and critical discussion of important literary

theories as a cross-fertilization of ideas and concepts. Such a cross-fertilization will not only provide the tools for rethinking the value of literary studies but also broach the question of theory's (rather than merely literary theory's) relevance to the present moment in politics, culture and society, mostly in terms of the treatment of identity, gender, race, language, and the representations of truth at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. In other words, this project demonstrates how contemporary literary theory has germinated into other territories that are not particular to literature, thereby encompassing broad intellectual and critical fields such as cultural studies, feminism, postcolonialism or critical race studies.

