

William Empson And The Philosophy Of Literary Criticism 1st Edition

Taking Wittgenstein's "Don't think, but look" as his motto, Richard Strier argues against the application of a priori schemes to Renaissance (and all) texts. He argues for the possibility and desirability of rigorously attentive but "pre-theoretical" reading. His approach privileges particularity and attempts to respect the "resistant structures" of texts. He opposes theories, critical and historical, that dictate in advance what texts must—or cannot—say or do. The first part of the book, "Against Schemes," demonstrates, in discussions of Rosemond Tuve, Stephen Greenblatt, and Stanley Fish among others, how both historicist and purely theoretical approaches can equally produce distortion of particulars. The second part, "Against Received Ideas," shows how a variety of texts (by Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and others) have been seen through the lenses of fixed, mainly conservative ideas in ways that have obscured their actual, surprising, and sometimes surprisingly radical content.

Presents a coherent and accessible historical account of the major phases of British and American Twentieth-century criticism, from 'decadent' aestheticism to feminist, deconstructionist and post-colonial theories. Special attention is given to new perspectives on Shakespearean criticism, theories of the novel and models of the literary canon. The book will help to define and account for the major developments in literary criticism during this century exploring the full diversity of critical work from major critics such as T S Eliot and F R Leavis to minor but fascinating figures and critical schools. Unlike most guides to modern literary theory, its focus is firmly on developments within the English speaking world.

From folk ballads to film scripts, this new five-volume encyclopedia covers the entire history of British literature from the seventh century to the present, focusing on the writers and the major texts of what are now the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. In five hundred substantial essays written by major scholars, the Encyclopedia of British Literature includes biographies of nearly four hundred individual authors and a hundred topical essays with detailed analyses of particular themes, movements, genres, and institutions whose impact upon the writing or the reading of literature was significant. An ideal companion to The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature, this set will prove invaluable for students, scholars, and general readers. For more information, including a complete table of contents and list of contributors, please visit www.oup.com/us/ebl

William Empson (1906-1984) was the foremost English literary critic of the twentieth century. His public life and travels took him through many of the major events of the modern world. This compelling account is the second of two volumes exploring his remarkable life and work.

Essays and Reviews

Among the Mandarins

Literary Theories of Uncertainty

Attuning Poetry and Philosophy

Nothing to be Frightened Of

Against the Christians

This book is concerned chiefly with issues in epistemology, philosophical semantics and philosophy of science. It defends a causal-realist approach to theories and explanations in the natural sciences and a truth-based propositional semantics for natural language derived from various sources, among them unusually in this context the work of William Empson. It argues against various forms of anti-realist doctrine with regard to both the truth-claims of science and the construal of intentions, meanings and beliefs in the process of linguistic understanding. His book will be welcomed for its vigorous arguments and notable clarity of style. It will be of particular interest to teachers and students in philosophy, critical theory, science studies and the history of ideas.

William Empson (1906-1984) was one of the twentieth century's most distinctive critical voices, and left a profound mark upon Anglo-American literary culture. This book is the first full study of Empson's literary criticism in its various aspects, taking account of recent developments in critical theory and of Empson's complex and at times deeply antagonistic attitude towards those developments. In their diversity of viewpoint and critical approach the nine essays reflect this sturdy resistance to fashionable trends of 'Eng. Lit.' opinion. Topics include the relations between Empson and Derrida's approaches to the issue of textual 'undecidability', and Empson's prominent (if unwilling) role in the shaping of English as an academic discourse. Christopher Norris's extended introduction charts the ground and offers a major reevaluation of Empson's place in the theoretical tradition. As the first study to examine the concept of uncertainty of meaning as it relates to modern and contemporary literature and literary theory, *Literary Theories of Uncertainty* demonstrates how this notion functions as a literary feature, narrative device and theoretical concept in 20th and 21st century texts. Calling upon theories of interpretation and challenging the distinction between literature and theory, this exploration is broken down into three sections: Poststructuralist legacies of uncertainty; life-writing and uncertainty; and contemporary literary uncertainties. The volume takes into account related terms such as undecidability, indeterminacy, ambiguity, unreadability, and obscurity, and the topics examined include: undecidability and the motif of suspension in deconstruction; Derrida and Bataille; poetry as a mode of critical discourse and point of convergence between logico-mathematical ideas of undecidability and literary forms of uncertainty; uncertainty in relation to speech and the impact of Robert Antelme on Mascolo and Blanchot; Proust and temporal uncertainty; uncertainty in relation to death, trauma and autobiography; moral uncertainty in the Scandinavian welfare

state and Nordic Noir; the aesthetically disruptive and anti-authorian effect of uncertainty in the works of German-Turkish writer Emine Sevgi Ozdamar; uncertainty in the form of 'the double' and in relation to meta-fiction; and many more. *Literary Theories of Uncertainty* collates original and diverse discussions by some of the most prominent, inquiring minds in literary, cultural and critical theory today to map out the contours of the field of 'theory of uncertainty'.

In recent years philosophers have produced important books on nearly all the major arts: the novel and painting, music and theatre, dance and architecture, conceptual art and even gardening. Poetry is the sole exception. This is an astonishing omission, one this collection of original essays will correct. If contemporary philosophy still regards metaphors such as 'Juliet is the sun' as a serious problem, one has an acute sense of how prepared it is to make philosophical and aesthetic sense of poems such as W. B. Yeats's 'The Second Coming', Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy', or Paul Celan's 'Todesfuge'. *The Philosophy of Poetry* brings together philosophers of art, language, and mind to expose and address the array of problems poetry raises for philosophy. In doing so it lays the foundation for a proper philosophy of poetry, setting out the various puzzles and paradoxes that future work in the field will have to address. Given its breadth of approach, the volume is relevant not only to aesthetics but to all areas of philosophy concerned with meaning, truth, and the communicative and expressive powers of language more generally. Poetry is the last unexplored frontier in contemporary analytic aesthetics, and this volume offers a powerful demonstration of how central poetry should be to philosophy.

Four Dialogic Studies—Wordsworth, Browning, Hopkins and Hardy

Wittgenstein on Aesthetic Understanding

The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age

The Rift in the Lute

William Empson

On Literary Theory and Philosophy

The principle aim of this book is to explore the relationship between contemporary literary theory and analytic philosophy. The volume addresses this issue in two ways: first, through four exchanges between, on the one hand, proponents of avant-garde literary theory and, on the other, proponents of analytic philosophy (or of related literary critical positions); and second, through three cross-disciplinary essays on the relationship in question. Central topics in the volume include Self, Ethics, Interpretation, Language and characterisations of 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy.

This book investigates the significance of Wittgenstein's philosophy for aesthetic understanding. Focusing on the aesthetic elements of Wittgenstein's philosophical work, the authors explore connections to contemporary currents in aesthetic thinking and the illuminating power of Wittgenstein's philosophy when considered in connection with the interpretation of specific works of literature, music, and the arts. Taken together, the chapters presented here show what aesthetic understanding consists of and the ways we achieve it, how it might be articulated, and why it is important. At a time of strong renewal of interest in Wittgenstein's contributions to the philosophy of mind and language, this book offers insight into the connections between philosophical-psychological and linguistic issues and the understanding of the arts.

William Empson's *Essays on Shakespeare* extended his reputation as a commentator on Renaissance themes with a unique and urgent voice. In this two-volume follow-up, we again witness the critic addressing questions, unravelling paradoxes, and probing into areas which eluded other writers. This first volume (edited with a substantial introduction by leading Empson scholar John Haffenden) gathers Empson's passionate, controversial essays on John Donne, examining the ideological and ethical conflicts that inspired the poet and his work. The collection includes hitherto unpublished pieces about some of the most influential Renaissance writers and scientists (Empson believed that Donne was profoundly inspired by new scientific discoveries and that he held advanced views on Church and State). Lucid, closely-argued, and provocative, the book affords a rich analysis of Donne in his time: a poet torn between a defunct cosmology and a new world order. This is vintage Empson - the critic as genius. A second volume will be published in 1994.

This study explores the important of, and the relationship between, the work of the innovative poet and literary theorist Veronica Forrest-Thomson (1947-75), and that of the contemporary North American Language poets.

Great Shakespeareans

5-Volume Set

A History of Ambiguity

On Empson

Empson, Wilson Knight, Barber, Kott

Prospects for "Post-Analytic" Philosophy

A comprehensive critical analysis of the most important Shakespearean critics, editors, actors and directors. This volume focuses on Shakespeare's reception by the major modern critics.

Great Shakespeareans presents a systematic account of those figures who have had the greatest influence on the interpretation, understanding and cultural reception of Shakespeare, both nationally and internationally. This major project offers an unprecedented scholarly analysis of the

contribution made by the most important Shakespearean critics, editors, actors and directors as well as novelists, poets, composers, and thinkers from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. An essential resource for students and scholars in Shakespeare studies.

In his enjoyable readings of ambiguity, puns and paradox, Empson draws on a variety of authors from Geoffrey Chaucer to T.S. Eliot, illuminating the strategies of individual writers and creating a general theory of poetic practice - wide-ranging, witty and still controversial today.

This path-breaking book explores different ways in which writing about poetry can deepen and extend our critical engagement by deploying creatively the manifold resources of poetic language and form. Through a series of verse-essays, reflective monologues, and inventive variations on topics in literary theory *The Winnowing Fan* makes a strong case for revising received ideas about the scope and limits of criticism. Norris's poems traverse the full range of European poetic history from Homer's *Odyssey*, through the work of French symbolists such as Mallarmé, to modern writers such as Yeats, Benjamin, Heaney, Larkin, and Barthes. There are also verse-essays and shorter pieces on philosophers from Hume and Leibniz to Heidegger, Althusser, Derrida, de Man, Rorty, Deleuze, Badiou, and Agamben. In each case Norris seeks to free criticism from conventional academic forms and return it to an active mutual engagement with the practice of literature itself.

William Empson, Volume II

Seven Modes of Uncertainty

The Re-enchantment of the World in the Age of Scientific Reasoning

The Winnowing Fan

The Myth of Theory

Taking its point of initiation from the long-standing dialogue between poetry and philosophy concerning their respective claims to contrasting orders of insight, this book tackles issues relating to the differing conditions of knowledge and insights relating to language and thought imparted by 'modern' poets and philosophers, from Kant and Wordsworth to Adorno and Hardy. The book draws on recent debates in literary theory and philosophy in order to outline a new 'dialogic' approach for conducting comparative criticism and literary history. The poets and the philosophers appear under configurations of reading that produce considerations that are unexpected, yet strangely fitting.

This comprehensive guide to literary theory and criticism includes 39 specially commissioned chapters by an international team of academics. It includes key philosophical and aesthetic origins of literary theory, the foundational movements and thinkers in the first half of the 20th century and more.

William Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism A&C Black

All readers of literary history and criticism will benefit from this edition of letters by William Empson, one of the foremost writers and critics of the twentieth century. This correspondence shows him working out his ideas for all of his major books as well as complementary studies in writers including Shakespeare, Marlowe, Donne, Marvell, Coleridge, and Joyce. The edition also gives the fullest possible picture of his robust interactions with many other prominent writers, including the likes of F. R. Leavis, Helen Gardner, Frank Kermode, Christopher Norris, and I. A. Richards.

A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture

With Poetry and Philosophy

The Language, Discourse, Society Reader

Resources of Realism

Seven Types of Ambiguity

Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of Nature

Literature is uncertain. Literature is good for us. These two ideas are often taken for granted. But what is the relationship between literature's capacity to perplex and its ethical value? *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* contends that literary uncertainty is crucial to ethics because it pushes us beyond the limits of our experience.

This book offers a broad-based critical survey of recent anti-realist arguments in the philosophy of science, cultural theory, hermeneutics, the sociology of knowledge and the interpretation of quantum-mechanics.

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This volume gathers some of William Empson's most passionate and controversial essays and includes previously inaccessible pieces on influential Renaissance writers and scientists. Introduced by leading Empson scholar John Haffenden, this is a book for anyone interested in the Renaissance, the history of science, and the history of literary criticism.

Selected Letters of William Empson

William Empson: Essays on Renaissance Literature: Volume 1, Donne and the New Philosophy

Wilhelm Dilthey

The Structure of Complex Words

Particularity, Radicalism, and Renaissance Texts

Verse-Essays in Creative Criticism

What is it for poetry to be serious and to be taken seriously? What is it to be open to poetry, exposed to its force, attuned to what it says and alive to what it does? These are important questions that call equally on poetry and philosophy. But poetry and philosophy, notoriously, have an ancient quarrel. Maximilian de Gaynesford sets out to understand and convert their mutual antipathy into something mutually enhancing, so that we can begin to answer these and other questions. The key to attuning poetry and philosophy lies in the fact that poetic utterances are best appreciated as doing things. For it is as doing things that the speech act approach in analytic philosophy of language tries to understand all utterances. Taking such an approach, this book offers ways to enhance our appreciation of poetry and to develop our understanding of philosophy. It explores work by a range of poets from Chaucer to Geoffrey Hill and J. H. Prynne, and culminates in an extended study of Shakespeare's Sonnets. What work does poetry set itself, and how does this determine the way it is to be judged? What do poets commit themselves to, and what they may be held responsible for? What role does a poet have, or their audience, or their context, in determining the meaning of a poem, what work it is able to achieve? These are the questions that an attuned approach is able to ask and answer.

William Empson: Prophet Against Sacrifice provides the most coherent account of Empson's diverse career to date. While exploring the richness of Empson's comic genius, Paul H. Fry serves to discredit the appropriation of his name in recent polemic by the conflicting parties of deconstruction and politicized cultural criticism. He argues that Empson is a larger, more important figure than the orthodox in either camp can acknowledge, deserving to be considered alongside such versatile critics as Walter Benjamin, Kenneth Burke and Roland Barthes.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the contribution made by Dame Frances Yates to the serious study of esotericism and the occult sciences. To her work can be attributed the contemporary understanding of the occult origins of much of Western scientific thinking, indeed of Western civilization itself. The Occult Philosophy of the Elizabethan Age was her last book, and in it she condensed many aspects of her wide learning to present a clear, penetrating, and, above all, accessible survey of the occult movements of the Renaissance, highlighting the work of John Dee, Giordano Bruno, and other key esoteric figures. The book is invaluable in illuminating the relationship between occultism and Renaissance thought, which in turn had a profound impact on the rise of science in the seventeenth century. Stunningly written and highly engaging, Yates' masterpiece is a must-read for anyone interested in the occult tradition.

Ever since it was first published in 1930, William Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity has been perceived as a milestone in literary criticism—far from being an impediment to communication, ambiguity now seemed an index of poetic richness and expressive power. Little, however, has been written on the broader trajectory of Western thought about ambiguity before Empson; as a result, the nature of his innovation has been poorly understood. A History of Ambiguity remedies this omission. Starting with classical grammar and rhetoric, and moving on to moral theology, law, biblical exegesis, German philosophy, and literary criticism, Anthony Ossa-Richardson explores the many ways in which readers and theorists posited, denied, conceptualised, and argued over the existence of multiple meanings in texts between antiquity and the twentieth century. This process took on a variety of interconnected forms, from the Renaissance delight in the 'elegance' of ambiguities in Horace, through the extraordinary Catholic claim that Scripture could contain multiple literal—and not just allegorical—senses, to the theory of dramatic irony developed in the nineteenth century, a theory intertwined with discoveries of the double meanings in Greek tragedy. Such narratives are not merely of antiquarian interest: rather, they provide an insight into the foundations of modern criticism, revealing deep resonances between acts of interpretation in disparate eras and contexts. A History of Ambiguity lays bare the long tradition of efforts to liberate language, and even a poet's intention, from the strictures of a single meaning.

Literature and Philosophy

New Idols of the Cave

An Oxford Guide

William Empson, Volume I

Some Versions of Empson

On the Limits of Anti-realism

Following the publication of Seven Types of Ambiguity in 1930 William Empson was quickly recognised as a critic of great originality and unique creative gifts and he has inspired a whole new method and style of approach in literary criticism. But this is the first full-length study of his work and it is an important part of Dr Norris's purpose to account for the gulf that has emerged between Empson's viewpoint and the development of his ideas by others, especially the American New Critics, and for the consequent failure of Empson's later books to generate the informed discussion they demand and deserve. Here particular attention is given to his critical summa, The Structure of Complex Words. To understand Empson's work as a consistent whole, Dr Norris argues, one must relate it to his philosophy of humanistic rationalism. This is to give a new perspective not only to his practical criticism but also to his differences with Eliot and Leavis and to his anti-Christian polemic.

William Empson was one of the most important poet-critics of the twentieth century, and continues to influence and inspire writers from many divergent critical traditions. Following on recent scholarly developments, this timely collection of essays provides a fully-rounded examination of Empson's life, work, inheritance, and influence. This is the first volume of critical essays on Empson to be published in over a decade, and the first to consider the full range of his work, studying his poetry alongside his criticism in order to reassess the scale of his achievement. It also includes the first publication of a substantial interview with Empson in 1970, in which he looks back over his career and discusses the composition and reception of his work. The collection examines Empson's oeuvre from a variety of angles - aesthetic, philosophical, psychological, linguistic, scientific, socio-political, religious, and sexual - and features essays from an outstanding line-up of emerging and established scholars. Some Versions of Empson demonstrates the poet-critic's continuing importance for literary and cultural criticism, and sets the agenda for studies of his work in the twenty-first century.

Now thoroughly updated and revised, this new edition of the highly acclaimed dictionary provides an authoritative and accessible guide to modern ideas in the broad interdisciplinary fields of cultural and critical theory Updated to feature over 40 new entries including pieces on Alain Badiou, Ecocriticism, Comparative Racialization , Ordinary Language Philosophy and Criticism, and Graphic Narrative Includes reflective, broad-ranging articles from leading theorists including Julia Kristeva, Stanley Cavell, and Simon Critchley Features a fully updated bibliography Wide-ranging content makes this an invaluable dictionary for students of a diverse range of disciplines

For the last twenty-five years, Language, Discourse, Society has been the most intellectually challenging series in English. Its titles range across the disciplines from linguistics to biology, from literary criticism to law, combining vigorous scholarship and theoretical analysis at the service of a broad political engagement. This anniversary reader brings together a fascinating group of thinkers from both sides of the Atlantic with an introductory overview from the editors which considers the development of theory and scholarship over the past two decades.

Great Shakespeareans Set III

William Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism

The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature

Criticism and Literary Theory 1890 to the Present

A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory

The Philosophy of Poetry

John Haffenden's acclaimed biography of William Empson (1906-1984), the foremost English literary critic of the twentieth century, is now available in paperback. An authoritative and compelling account and the first of two volumes exploring his remarkable life and work.

Examines seven types of ambiguity, providing examples of it in the writings of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and T.S. Eliot.

"I don't believe in God, but I miss him." So begins Julian Barnes's brilliant new book that is, among many things, a family memoir, an exchange with his brother (a philosopher), a meditation on mortality and the fear of death, a celebration of art, an argument with and about God, and a homage to the writer Jules Renard. Barnes also draws poignant portraits of the last days of his parents, recalled with great detail, affection and exasperation. Other examples he takes up include writers, "most of them dead and quite a few of them French," as well as some composers, for good measure. The grace with which Barnes weaves together all of these threads makes the experience of reading the book nothing less than exhilarating. Although he cautions us that "this is not my autobiography," the book nonetheless reveals much about Barnes the man and the novelist: how he thinks and how he writes and how he lives. At once deadly serious and dazzlingly playful, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* is a wise, funny and constantly surprising tour of the human condition.

What is critical theory, and can it claim to exist as a free-standing entity independent of the object of enquiry? Is the much discussed gulf between Anglo-Saxon empiricism and Continental poststructuralism more apparent than real? In *The Myth of Theory* Richter explores the nature of thinking about literature, and the assumed polarities between the abstract reasonings of philosophy and the concrete exploratory maneuvers of critical practice. He goes on to examine the role of theory in critical observation, through extended case studies of the work of critics including Barthes, Bloom, Poulet, Eliot, Empson, Kristeva and Derrida.

Veronica Forrest-Thomson and *Language Poetry*

Literary Theory and Criticism

Resistant Structures

The Critical Achievement

Prophet Against Sacrifice

From one of today's most distinguished critics, a beautifully written exploration of one of the twentieth century's most important literary critics Are literary critics writers? As Michael Wood says, "Not all critics are writers—perhaps most of them are not—and some of them are better when they don't try to be." The British critic and poet William Empson (1906–84), one of the most important and influential critics of the twentieth century, was an exception—a critic who was not only a writer but also a great one. In this brief book, Wood, himself one of the most gifted writers among contemporary critics, explores

*Empson as a writer, a distinguished poet whose criticism is a brilliant literary performance—and proof that the act of reading can be an unforgettable adventure. Drawing out the singularity and strength of Empson's writing, including its unfailing wit, Wood traces the connections between Empson's poetry and criticism from his first and best-known critical works, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and *Some Versions of Pastoral*, to later books such as *Milton's God* and *The Structure of Complex Words*. Wood shows why this pioneer of close reading was both more and less than the inventor of New Criticism—more because he was the greatest English critic since Coleridge, and didn't belong to any school; and less because he had severe differences with many contemporary critics, especially those who dismissed the importance of an author's intentions. Beautifully written and rich with insight, *On Empson* is an elegant introduction to a unique writer for whom literature was a nonstop form of living.*