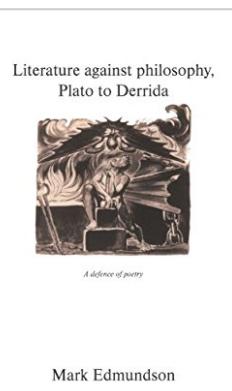


Literature against Philosophy, Plato to Derrida: A Defence of Poetry

By Mark Edmundson



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This timely book focuses on theory's relations to literary art. It argues that the institutionalization of literary theory, particularly in American universities, has led to an intellectual sterility in which the actual power and scope of literature are overlooked. The book demands to be read by all teachers of literature and theory, and by anyone concerned with the future of literary studies.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In a series of brilliantly argued reflections on critical terms like presence and blindness and insight, the author demonstrates the various ways that poetry, here a synecdoche for any creative cultural experience, defends itself against the life-draining powers of critical theory....Edmundson's elegant essay sounds a clarion call for a conversation between theory and poetry in which the voice of poetry both challenges theory and sustains itself. Masterful cultural criticism in the tradition of Leavis and Trilling." *Choice*

"By focusing on the condescension with which philosophy has, since Plato, treated poetry, Edmundson has given us a remarkably successful and genuinely original treatment of the relation between contemporary European philosophy and American literary criticism." *Richard Rorty*

"...to many, a voice as sweet and civil as his is enough to make the molars ache. Not that Edmundson always makes believing look easy, but he dances rather gracefully with the 'descendental' as he sings a late-millennial tribute to 'the poems we love.' His analysis of sophisticated doubters is impressive for its respectful tone. Edmundson models how a traditional literary intellectual uses, rather than bests, not only what important philosophers promise, but also what literature delivers." *Philosophy and Literature*

"Literature Against Philsophy may well be our most brilliant synthetic account of the "function of criticism at the present time," an achievement all the more impressive because it entails providing an equally brilliant critique of contemporary "theory". It would be hard to overpraise Edmundson's deeply intelligent and penetrating analysis: not only does he offer an extraordinary glossing of the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy..." *Charles Eric Reeves, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

About the Author

Mark Edmundson is a professor at the University of Virginia and the prizewinning author of numerous works of cultural criticism, including *Why Read?*; *Literature Against Philosophy, Plato to Derrida*; and *Teacher*. He lives in Batesville, Virginia.

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