

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms

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From Jacques Derrida's *différance* to Henry James's *ficelle*, the vocabulary of literary theory and criticism can seem difficult if not opaque. Yet a grasp of these terms can often enhance our enjoyment and understanding of literature. To help clarify the reader's bafflement, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* provides succinct and often witty explanations of over one thousand terms, covering everything from the ancient *dithyramb* to the contemporary *dub poetry*, from the popular *bodice-ripper* to the aristocratic *masque*, and from the *social realism* of Stalin's era to the *magic realism* of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie.

Baldick provides the clearest coverage available of the newly coined terms of important contemporary theories--such as post-structuralism, deconstruction, semiotics, reader-response criticism--offering lucid, up-to-date definitions of terms such as *logocentrism, metacriticism, gynocriticism, narratology*, and *foregrounding*. Of course, he also includes extensive coverage of traditional drama, versification, rhetoric, and literary history, of literary schools from Alexandrianism to Transcendentalism, and of terms from languages other than English, such as *samizdat, Grand Guignol*, and *negritude*. Throughout, the author's emphasis is on helping readers use these terms more confidently, whether in writing (he includes plural and adjectival forms, and other relevant derivations) or in speaking (easy-to-use pronunciation guides clarify more than 200 potentially troublesome terms). In addition, the dictionary is thoroughly cross-referenced. A model reference book, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* will prove invaluable for both general readers and literature students at all levels.

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