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Theory and an Alternative Account

Richard Freadman and Seumas Miller

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*Re-thinking theory* offers a bold approach to literary studies, itself explicitly theoretical and yet making a searching critique of some of the modes, concepts and movements which comprise modern literary theory. Discussing key concepts such as ideology, signification and discourse, and analysing schools including that of F. R. Leavis, Althusserian Marxism, Derridean and Foucauldian poststructuralism and New Historicism, the authors argue that there are major deficiencies in the conceptual foundations and the literary and political implications of contemporary literary theory. These deficiencies are ascribed principally to three aspects of modern theoretical schools: the commitment to a non-referential view of language, the rejection of substantive accounts of the individual and a repudiation of moral and aesthetic evaluation. The 'alternative account' offered by Professors Freadman and Miller incorporates the values renounced by contemporary literary theory and places a central emphasis on ethical discourse.

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# RE-THINKING THEORY

*A critique of contemporary literary theory and an  
alternative account*

RICHARD FREADMAN

*Professor of English,  
La Trobe University*

SEUMAS MILLER

*Associate Professor of Philosophy,  
Rhodes University, and  
Senior Research Fellow,  
Centre for Philosophy and  
Public Issues,  
Melbourne University*



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*For*  
*Fleur and Paul Freadman*  
*and*  
*Kathleen and Crawford Miller*

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