



The Singularity of Literature

By Derek Attridge

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Winner of the ESSE (European Society for the Study of English) Book Award for Literature 2006

Literature and the literary have proved singularly resistant to definition. Derek Attridge argues that such resistance represents not a dead end, but a crucial starting point from which to explore anew the power and practices of Western art.

In this lively, original volume, the author:

- considers the implications of regarding the literary work as an innovative cultural event, both in its time and for later generations;
- provides a rich new vocabulary for discussions of literature, rethinking such terms as *invention*, *singularity*, *otherness*, *alterity*, *performance and form*;
- returns literature to the realm of ethics, and argues the ethical importance of the literary institution to a culture;
- demonstrates how a new understanding of the literary might be put to work in a 'responsible,' creative mode of reading.
- *The Singularity of Literature* is not only a major contribution to the theory of literature, but also a celebration of the extraordinary pleasure of the literary, for reader, writer, student or critic.

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The Singularity of Literature By Derek Attridge Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #774032 in Books
- Published on: 2004-05-21
- Released on: 2004-04-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.80" h x .44" w x 5.08" l, .49 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 192 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

'The clarity and imagination with which the argument is presented make this book capable of reinvigorating the debate about literary form in English study at many levels.' - *Oxford Literary Review*

'Attridge builds a powerful account of literature and an original account of the relation of literature to ethics. Written accessibly and without jargon, this book will excite old and new readers alike.' - *Simon Critchley, New School University, New York, and the University of Essex*

'[A] singular achievement in pushing the challenge of literature to the top of the agenda and opening the objectives of the discipline to debate.' - *Kiernan Ryan, Literature and Poetry*

'[This is] a very intelligent book, highly accessible.' – ZAA

About the Author

Derek Attridge is Professor of English at the University of York and author of acclaimed works on poetry, fiction and literary theory.

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