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A Garden of Orismological Delights: A Review of the Fifth Edition of J.A. Cuddon's *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, revised by M.A.R. Habib (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

The publication of the fifth edition of Cuddon's *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by Wiley-Blackwell is a much awaited event, considering the popularity the dictionary has enjoyed. Apart from M.A.R. Habib, the editor who revised the edition, there are four associate editors: Matthew Birchwood, Vedrana Velickovic, Martin Dines and Shanyn Fiske, all of them academics associated with English or American universities. The release of the dictionary must have been a challenge. The fourth edition was published in 1998, which makes this one the first Cuddon dictionary in the twenty-first century.

The reader's attention is attracted to etymological explanations (though they are not always present), and a variety of subjects; some defined in a handy, succinct way, others described in miniature essays which often span a broad time context. Apart from respectable-looking derivations from Greek and Latin, there are words of French, German, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Japanese, Sanskrit or Old Norse origin, to mention the instances that immediately catch the eye.

However, the authors and editors of such gigantic projects always experience both blindness and insight. Cuddon was clearly aware of that, as specified in the preface to the third edition. Did his queries affect the current version? This is what he said: "I am familiar with Classical, European, Slavonic and Near Eastern literatures and have some knowledge of the literatures of North America and of Commonwealth nations. But my knowledge of Oriental literatures and those of Spanish America and South America is limited." While the statement points to the immense erudition

of the late author, my locatedness makes me frown on the juxtaposition of European and Slavonic, as if Slavonic literatures were not a part of Europe. I do not assume Cuddon only meant the Asian territory of Russia. Geographical nuances aside, Slavonic literatures are present in the fifth edition in a very selective way. Probably the involvement of the editor whose roots are in former Yugoslavia accounts for some references to the literature of that part of Europe. There are, of course, references to Russian literature. As for Poland, Henryk Sienkiewicz is mentioned in the entry on historical novel (though his novels can hardly be called an "imperialist" project, 333). Jerzy Grotowski appears in an entry on Theatre Laboratory, but the widely acclaimed Stanisław Lem goes unnoticed in the science fiction entry, and so does Jan Kochanowski in the entry on lament, even though his *Laments* (translated into English by Barańczak and Heaney) remain unique in Renaissance literature. South America continues to be a *terra incognita*, though *gaucho* literature has been given a separate entry, while South American writers are mentioned in the discussion of magic realism. Postimperial peripheries, i.e. New Zealand and Australia with the specificity of their fertile indigenous cultures and terms derived from them are not really acknowledged; the same would go for most of Africa. Discussing new additions, M. A. R. Habib mentions terms from "Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Indian" (vii). It is interesting to see that far from being insular, the field that the dictionary mines has been expanding throughout successive editions and will, hopefully, do so in the future.

It is certainly interesting to see the new developments, that is, the entries related to the material advertised on the blurb, namely "gender studies and queer theory, postcolonial theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, narrative theory, and cultural studies." Surprisingly, the term "gender" is not given a separate entry to explain how it has been operating, as compared to another key term in the feminist discourse, i.e. "sexual difference." While there are interesting entries on particular terms such as "abjection" and "chora," both relating to Kristeva's description of the semiotic, her *oeuvre*, like that of Irigaray and Cixous, is not given too much attention in the entry on feminist criticism. The entry refers to them as "French" feminists, thus erasing the origin of the three French-speaking theorists. The fact that Kristeva came from Bulgaria, Irigaray is from Belgium, while Cixous was born in a Jewish family in Algeria is not irrelevant. Perhaps more precision connected with the origin of people would not be altogether out of place. Also, while labelling them all as followers of poststructuralism, the author of the entry loses sight of the fact that they were all heavily influenced by psychoanalysis. However, if you carefully follow the cross-referencing system, Kristeva will be found in an entry on poststructuralism where her connection with psychoanalysis is stated. A rather unfortunate thing is the statement that they

are all preoccupied with "the theory and the role of gender in writing" (274), for gender and sex are clearly a distinction from the English-speaking world, as French has only one term where English has two. The author of the entry has focussed on the earlier stages of feminist criticism mostly, thus reducing the vigorous new developments in the field to the barest minimum. The very explanation of what feminist criticism is sounds peculiar at moments when we read that it offers the critique of "representations of men in literature" (273), whereas a possible target of criticism is clearly the representation of women in the literary works by men. Whether this was just a cavalier mistake or an off-hand dismissal is hard to see. The very word "representation" should have been defined as crucial for postcolonial and feminist studies. Yet, the impression is that feminism was not among the editors' favourite subjects. Even in a rather classic and not updated entry on utopia, Margaret Atwood appears briefly with her dystopia *Oryx and Crak* (*sic!*), despite the fact that feminist dystopia is clearly an interesting variant, and Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* is certainly a case in point.

Much more attention has been given to queer, lesbian and transgender studies. You will find Judith Butler in a useful entry on performativity. The excellent cross-referencing system, which Cuddon referred to as "plumbing" or "wiring," will lead you to many discoveries. If authors and editors "ventilate" their views, as Cuddon had it in his preface to the third edition, the sentence that filtered into an entry on historical novel can be seen as an example. "Mary Renault's novels set in Ancient Greece . . . demonstrate that homosexual relationships have in the past been considered honourable; her novels implicitly ask that present-day homosexuals be offered respect" (334). While most of the sentence does not necessarily further our knowledge of the historical novel, it certainly indulges in didacticism motivated by political correctness. The impression arises that the editors were much more careful dealing with gay studies than with feminism as the previous paragraph proves.

Postcolonialism and Orientalism are described in an exhaustive and detailed way in two entries, and there are other terms relating to them such as *Négritude* or *créolisation*. However, the author of the entry on multiculturalism turns a blind eye to the fact that this has been the official policy of Canada, a classic example of a state where multiculturalism became much more than a literary term, and despite the controversies surrounding it, its implementation has resulted in a rich history of positive and negative responses. A section on deconstruction merits attention; dissemination, trace and grammatology are defined in separate entries. A great deal of effort went into narratology and even into cyberculture. The reader can take issue with some approaches and agree with others, but the overall impression is that the dictionary offers a garden to delight in.