

## Literature in Contexts



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Manchester University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Literature in Contexts, Peter Barry, Is it possible to return the literary text in all its particularity to the centre of literary study, without going back to the 'words-on-the page' myopia of the past? That is the primary question which Literature in contexts engages with. In the 1980s the study of literary theory eclipsed the study of the literary text, but today, we are told, we are 'post-theory'. Yet as it emerged from the shadow of theory, the literary text was eclipsed all over again by the study of context. Historicist contextualisation became the dominant orientation in literary studies, and this (not quite) New Historicism spread in turn through period after period, from the Early Modern, through Romanticism, and on to the Victorian era. 'Is English History?' people began to ask, as it became impossible to attend an academic conference without being subjected to a diet of history lessons. This book seeks to problematise the very notion of context, which has remained for the most part stubbornly un-theorised and un-examined, and it seeks out - in a series of contextualising experiments - contexts which are text-specific, author-specific or literary, rather than historical, putting forward a distinction between 'deep' and 'broad' contexts and arguing that we need to counter the prevalence of the latter if literary studies is to avoid becoming a minor branch of history.

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