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Preface to *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* 25 (2017)

NEIL BADMINGTON and EMMA MASON

*The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* (YWCCT) is a companion to *The Year's Work in English Studies* (YWES), and, like that journal, it provides a narrative bibliography of books and articles published in the field. The origins of YWCCT lie in the introduction of a separate chapter devoted to literary theory in volume 62 of YWES in 1981. The growth of critical and cultural theory led to the appearance of YWCCT as a distinct entity thirteen years later.

David Tucker's five-year editorial term came to an end last year, so volume 25 of YWCCT is the first to be co-edited by Professor Emma Mason (University of Warwick); to provide a sense of continuity, Neil Badmington continues as the other co-editor until 2018.

The following sections address work published in 2016 – with some brief overlap into adjacent years where relevant – under the following headings: Affect Theory; Animal Studies; Black Critical and Cultural Theory; Digital Humanities; Disability Studies; Ecocriticism; Economic Criticism; Feminisms; Film Theory; Media; Modern European Philosophy; Performance, Theatre, and Drama; Poetics; Popular Culture; Postcolonial Theory; Psychoanalysis; Queer Theory; Religion and Representation; Science and Medicine; Theory on Theory; and Visual Culture. As the chapters show, debate within and across these groupings is lively and attests to a vibrant interdisciplinarity and ever-shifting foci. The editors continue to work to find ways of mapping the changing landscape of critical and cultural theory by incorporating new topics while not overlooking developments within more established debates.

Recent years have seen the introduction of chapters on Disability Studies, Animal studies, and Digital Humanities to the pages of this journal. As part of our commitment to responding to ongoing theoretical

developments, we are delighted to introduce this year a new section on Affect Theory. A field that has evolved over the last twenty-five years, the study of affect, or the 'affective turn', comprises a renewed interest in phenomenology, a greater scrutiny of the relationship between emotion and thought, especially in relation to the field of neuroscience, and attention to the felt experience of shared or social emotions, the mobile and immobile body, and an ever-changing environment. As this year's Affect Theory chapter makes clear, critics are no longer as concerned with individual states and egos, but are rather increasingly curious about the politics and ethics of affect, not least in relation to online and digital representations of emotion, from pain, torture and trauma to the euphoria of collective identities.

YWCCT is valuable to a range of readers. The journal is aimed at scholars who wish to be informed of current debates and major publications on a given subject, whether they are seeking orientation in an area to which they are new or keeping up with developments in their own field. No collection of this kind can claim to be complete in its incorporation of publications, so, as with previous volumes, chapters do not seek to be fully comprehensive, but look instead to trace and expand upon currents in critical and cultural theory, and to engage in some of their areas' key debates. In this way, YWCCT functions not only as a bibliographical tool and overview, but also as a forum for lively interventions. The choice of texts for review is made entirely by the authors of the chapters, not the editors of the journal, and we should like to point out that Neil Badmington was not involved in any way with the editing of this year's 'Theory on Theory' chapter, which reviews a publication by him.

Opinions articulated are those of the respective authors. The editors, the English Association and Oxford University Press would like to thank the contributors for their hard work and continued commitments to their respective fields. We should also like to thank Helen Lucas for all of her help and support over the years, and we wish her a long and happy retirement as she steps down from her role as Chief Executive of the English Association.

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