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The Mirror of Justice

Theodore Ziolkowski

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The Mirror of Justice Theodore Ziolkowski

This book studies major works of literature from classical antiquity to the present that reflect crises in the evolution of Western law: the move from a prelegal to a legal society in *The Eumenides*, the Christianization of Germanic law in *Njal's Saga*, the disenchantment with medieval customary law in *Reynard the Fox*, the reception of Roman law in a variety of Renaissance texts, the conflict between law and equity in *Antigone* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the eighteenth-century codification controversy in the works of Kleist, the modern debate between "pure" and "free" law in Kafka's *The Trial* and other fin-de-siècle works, and the effects of totalitarianism, the theory of universal guilt, and anarchism in the twentieth century.

Using principles from the anthropological theory of legal evolution, the book locates the works in their legal contexts and traces through them the gradual dissociation over the centuries of law and morality. It thereby associates and illuminates these masterpieces from an original point of view and contributes a new dimension to the study of literature and law.

In contrast to prevailing adherents of Law-and-Literature, this book professes Literature-and-Law, in which the emphasis is historical rather than theoretical, substantive rather than rhetorical, and literary rather than legal. Instead of adducing the literary work to illustrate debates about modern law, this book consults the history of law as an essential aid to the understanding of the literary text and its conflicts.

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