

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910809527903321
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Titolo	The birth of new criticism : conflict and conciliation in the early work of William Empson, I.A. Richards, Laura Riding and Robert Graves // Donald Childs
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Montreal [Canada] : , : McGill-Queen's University Press, , [2013] ©2013
ISBN	0-7735-8924-4 0-7735-8923-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (viii, 399 pages)
Collana	Canadian Publishers Collection
Disciplina	410
Soggetti	New Criticism - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	""Cover""; ""Copyright""; ""Contents""; ""Acknowledgments""; ""Introduction""; ""1 - An Old Anxiety about Influence""; ""2 - A Question of Conflict""; ""3 - Mediating The Poetic Mind: a€œas many meanings as possiblea€?""; ""4 - The Limits of Poetic Consciousness""; ""5 - Models of Practically Ambiguous Criticism""; ""6 - Defence of Poetic Analysis""; ""7 - The Ambiguous Grammar of Romantic Psychology""; ""8 - Associations""; ""9 - Taxonomies of Types""; ""10 - Remembering Graves in Revision""; ""11 - Richards and the Graves(t) Danger""; ""12 - How Graves Shapes Richardsa€?s Principles"" ""13 - Conflict Theory in Science and Poetry""""14 - Riding Corrects Richards (and Graves)""; ""15 - Asserting the Poema€?s Autonomy contra Richards""; ""16 - From Slow Reading to Close Reading: Escaping the Stock Response""; ""17 - Taking New Stock of Stock Responses""; ""18 - Poetry, Interpretation, and Education""; ""19 - Anthology Culture, Self-Reliance, and Self-Development""; ""20 - Slow Wit, Slow Close Reading, and Paraphrase""; ""Notes""; ""Index""
Sommario/riassunto	Amid competing claims about who first developed the theories and practices that became known as New Criticism - the critical method that rose alongside Modernism - literary historians have generally given the lion's share of credit to William Empson and I.A. Richards. In The Birth of New Criticism Donald Childs challenges this consensus and

provides a new and authoritative narrative of the movement's origins. At the centre stand Robert Graves and Laura Riding, two poet-critics who have been written out of the history of New Criticism. Childs brings to light the long-forgotten early criticism of Graves to detail the ways in which his interpretive methods and ideas evolved into the practice of "close reading," demonstrating that Graves played such a fundamental part in forming both Empson's and Richards's critical thinking that the story of twentieth-century literary criticism must be re-evaluated and re-told. Childs also examines the important influence that Riding's work had on Graves, Empson, and Richards, establishing the importance of this long-neglected thinker and critic. A provocative and cogently argued work, *The Birth of New Criticism* is both an important intellectual history of the movement and a sharply observed account of the cultural politics of its beginnings and legacy.
