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# A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative

Edited by Jan Alber, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson

*A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative* offers a collection of foundational essays introducing the reader to the full scope of unnatural narrative theory: its meaning, its goals, its extent, its paradoxes. This volume brings together a distinguished group of international critics, scholars, and historians of literature that includes several of the world's leading narrative theorists. Together, they survey many basic areas of narrative studies from an unnatural perspective: story, time, space, voice, minds, narrative levels, realism, nonfiction, hyperfiction, and narrative poetry. Rarely have these fundamental concepts been subjected to such an original and thoroughgoing reconceptualization. Much of the book is directed toward an investigation of experimental and antirealist work. Each essay focuses on texts and episodes that narrative theory has tended to neglect, and each provides theoretical formulations that are commensurate with such exceptional works. *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative* articulates and delineates the newest and most radical movement in narrative studies. This anthology will be of great interest to students and scholars of narrative studies and of the history and theory of modern fiction.

**Jan Alber** is associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Freiburg, Germany. **Henrik Skov Nielsen** is professor in the Department of Aesthetics and Communication, Aarhus University, Denmark. **Brian Richardson** is professor in the Department of English at the University of Maryland.

July 2013 280 pp.

\$63.95 cloth 978-0-8142-1228-8

\$14.95 CD 978-0-8142-9330-0

Theory and Interpretation of Narrative

James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, and Robyn Warhol, Series Editors

"*A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative* touches on all of the relevant research fields and all of the important theoretical texts. There are many fascinating debates within the contributions, and some traditional narratological concepts are revisited with rewarding results. This volume promises to be an important and provocative contribution to narrative theory." —Alan Palmer, author of *Social Minds in the Novel*

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# Trading Tongues

## Merchants, Multilingualism, and Medieval Literature

Jonathan Hsy

*Trading Tongues* offers fresh approaches to the multilingualism of major early English authors like Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, Margery Kempe, and William Caxton, and lesser-known figures like French lyricist Charles d'Orléans. Juxtaposing literary works with contemporaneous Latin and French civic records, mixed-language merchant miscellanies, and bilingual phrasebooks, Jonathan Hsy illustrates how languages commingled in late medieval and early modern cities. Chaucer, a customs official for the Port of London, infused English poetry with French and Latin merchant jargon, and London merchants incorporated Latin and vernacular verse forms into trilingual account books.

Hsy examines how writers working in English, Latin, and French (and combinations thereof) theorized the rich contours of polyglot identity. In a range of genres—from multilingual lyrics, poems about urban life, and autobiographical narratives—writers found venues to consider their own linguistic capacities and to develop new modes of conceiving language contact and exchange. Interweaving close readings of medieval texts with insights from sociolinguistics and postcolonial theory, *Trading Tongues* not only illuminates how multilingual identities were expressed in the past; it generates new ways of thinking about cultural contact and language crossings in our own time.

**Jonathan Hsy** is assistant professor of English at The George Washington University.

July 2013 264 pp.

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Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture

Ethan Knapp, Series Editor

“Hsy’s development of the concept ‘translingual’—emphasizing the capacity for languages within the same space to interact, to influence, and to transform each other through networks of exchange—is visionary. *Trading Tongues* is poised to make a significant contribution both to linguistic studies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England and to the study of Middle English literature.” —Christopher Cannon, New York University

“*Trading Tongues* is accomplished, intelligent, and assiduous. Hsy provides some excellent and original close readings of multilingual texts; I particularly admire his chapter on London merchants, and his final discussion of a Charles d’Orléans ballade is superbly interesting. The research is strong, the style elegant and well-turned, and the quality of argument high.” —Ardis Butterfield, Yale University

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## Primitive Minds

### Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel

Anna Neill

For twenty-first-century veterans of the evolution culture wars, *Primitive Minds: Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel*, by Anna Neill, makes unlikely bedfellows of two Victorian “discoveries”: evolutionary theory and spiritualism. Victorian science did much to uncover the physical substratum of mystical or dreamy experience, tracing spiritual states to a lower, reflex, or more evolutionarily primitive stage of consciousness. Yet science’s pursuit of knowledge beyond sense-based evidence uncannily evoked powers associated with this primitive mind: the capacity to link events across space and time, to anticipate the future, to uncover elements of the forgotten past, and to see into the minds of others.

Neill does not ask how the Victorians explained away spiritual experience through physiological psychology, but instead explores how physical explanation interacted with dreamy content in Victorian accounts of the mind’s most exotic productions. This synthesis, she argues, was particularly acute in realist fiction, where, despite novelists’ willingness to trace the nervous origins of individual behavior and its social consequences, activity in hidden regions of the mind enabled levels of perception inaccessible to ordinary waking thought. The authors in her study include Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Thomas Hardy.



**Anna Neill** is associate professor at the University of Kansas.

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\$14.95 CD 978-0-8142-9327-0

“In *Primitive Minds*, Anna Neill explores how Victorian writers of realism engaged with the evolutionary scientific and spiritualist discourses of their day. Neill offers many insights into the fascinating question of how Victorian writers from diverse fields viewed the importance of ‘dreamy states’ of mind for either

unlocking or, in some cases, protecting the mind’s potential for intellectual, spiritual, or emotional growth.” —Louise Penner, associate professor of English, University of Massachusetts, Boston

“*Primitive Minds* reveals that the entire tradition of Victorian narrative fiction has been in dialogue with contemporary scientific developments in heretofore unsuspected ways. Anna Neill contributes a significant addition to our understanding of the novel as well as of the interplay between science and culture in the nineteenth century.”  
—Cannon Schmitt, professor of English, University of Toronto

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# The Court of Comedy

## Aristophanes, Rhetoric, and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens

Wilfred E. Major

*The Court of Comedy: Aristophanes, Rhetoric, and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens*, by Wilfred E. Major, analyzes how writers of comedy in Classical Greece satirized the emerging art of rhetoric and its role in political life. In the fifth century BCE, the development of rhetoric proceeded hand in hand with the growth of democracy both on Sicily and at Athens. In turn, comic playwrights in Athens, most notably Aristophanes, lampooned oratory as part of their commentary on the successes and failures of the young democracy.

This innovative study is the first book to survey all the surviving comedy from the fifth century BCE on these important topics. The evidence reveals that Greek comedy provides a revealing commentary on the incipient craft of rhetoric before its formal conventions were stabilized. Furthermore, Aristophanes' depiction of rhetoric and of Athenian democratic institutions indicates that he fundamentally supports the Athenian democracy and not, as is often argued, oligarchic opposition to it.

These conclusions confirm recent work that reinterprets the early development of rhetoric in Classical Greece and offer fresh perspectives on the debate over the role of comedy in early Greek democracy. Throughout, Major capitalizes on recent progress in the understanding of the performance dynamics of Classical Greek theater.

**Wilfred E. Major** is assistant professor of Classics at Louisiana State University.

August 2013 288 pp.  
\$57.95 cloth 978-0-8142-1224-0  
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“The crucial insight of this carefully written but also passionate and committed study is that the plays of Aristophanes are the most abundant source of public deliberative discourse from the last decades of the fifth century BCE. The introduction makes a felicitous juxtaposition of multiple texts to introduce the argument (already initiated by others, but not yet applied to comedy) that the rhetoric of subsequent centuries was not yet a codified, lifeless system in the fifth century, but rather a vital, diverse, and very much developing current topic of debate.” —Jeffrey Rusten, professor of classics, Cornell University

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# The Treacherous Imagination

## Intimacy, Ethics, and Autobiographical Fiction

Robert McGill

Many authors have been accused of betraying their loved ones by turning them into fictional characters. In *The Treacherous Imagination*, Robert McGill examines the ethics of writing such stories. He argues that while fiction has long appealed to readers with its narratives of private life, contemporary autobiographical fiction channels a widespread ambivalence about the value of telling all in a confessional age—an age in which fiction has an unprecedented power to leave people feeling libeled or exposed when they recognize themselves in it.

Observing that the interests of authors and their loved ones in such cases are often less divergent than they appear, McGill assesses strategies by which both parties might use fiction not to hurt each other but to revise and revitalize intimacy. Discussing authors such as Philip Roth, Alice Munro, A. S. Byatt, and Hanif Kureishi, McGill questions whether people should always require exclusivity of each other with regard to the stories they tell about private life. Instead, authors and their intimates might jointly embrace fiction's playful, transgressive qualities, even while reexamining the significance of that fiction's intimations.

In treating autobiographical fiction as both a willful public indiscretion and a mediator of intimate relations, *The Treacherous Imagination* provides a comprehensive account of the various potentials that fiction holds to harm and to help those who write it, those who read it, and those who see themselves in it.



**Robert McGill** is assistant professor of English at the University of Toronto.

August 2013 208 pp.  
\$54.95 cloth 978-0-8142-1231-8  
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“Robert McGill highlights and explores the consequences of the inclusion in fiction of characters and situations from the author’s life in such a way as to reveal or betray secrets that may be hurtful to close friends, family members, partners. This is a topic not much explored—or not systematically explored—in criticism to date. And McGill covers it comprehensively, intelligently, and even-handedly.” —G. Thomas Couser  
author of *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing*

“Robert McGill is very much in charge of this project, clear about its aims and expert in its execution. I see three primary strengths in this book: its contribution to the study of genre, to the use of paratext in literary interpretation, and more generally, to the understanding of literature and ethics. And McGill’s prose is clear, accessible, and absorbing.” —Paul John Eakin, author of *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative*

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## Lake Methodism

### Polite Literature and Popular Religion in England, 1780–1830

Jasper Cragwall

*Lake Methodism: Polite Literature and Popular Religion in England, 1780–1830*, reveals the traffic between Romanticism's rhetorics of privilege and the most socially toxic religious forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The "Lake Poets," of whom William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge are the most famous, are often seen as crafters of a poetics of spontaneous inspiration, transcendent imagination, and visionary prophecy, couched within lexicons of experimental simplicity and lyrical concision. But, as Jasper Cragwall argues, such postures and principles were in fact received as the vulgarities of popular Methodism, an insurgent religious movement whose autobiographies, songs, and sermons reached sales figures of which the Lakers could only dream.

With these religious histories, *Lake Methodism* unsettles canonical Romanticism, reading, for example, the grand declaration opening Wordsworth's spiritual autobiography—"to the open fields I told a prophecy"—not as poetic self-sanctification, but as awkward Methodism, responsible for the suppression of *The Prelude* for half a century. The book measures this fearful symmetry between Romantic and religious enthusiasms in figures iconic and unfamiliar: John Wesley, Robert Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, as well as the eponymous scientist of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and even Joanna Southcott, an illiterate servant turned latter-day Virgin Mary, who, at the age of sixty-five, mistook a fatal dropsy for the Second Coming of Christ (and so captivated a nation).

**Jasper Cragwall** is associate professor of English at Loyola University, Chicago.

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Literature, Religion, and Postsecular Studies

Lori Branch, Series Editor

"Confident, compelling, and lively, *Lake Methodism* will become the definitive study of Methodism and British Romanticism. Providing a nuanced account of religion in Romantic-era literature and life, Jasper Cragwall's scholarship is meticulous and thorough, ranging across diverse sources and engaging energetically with major works of criticism. Students and scholars of Romanticism will find this a thrilling and important book." —Daniel E. White, associate professor of English, University of Toronto

"*Lake Methodism* is a groundbreaking, extremely fertile study that is no less impressive in the breadth and depth of its historical investigations than it is dazzling in its measures of literary shaping and nuance. Jasper Cragwall opens a radically fresh perspective on the now canonical 'Lake Poets' (Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey) and the now canonical 'Romanticism' they shaped and influenced, by uncovering the vast, popular, and controversial culture of 'Lake Methodism.'" —Susan Wolfson, professor of English, Princeton University

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# National Consciousness and Literary Cosmopolitics

## Postcolonial Literature in a Global Moment

Weihsin Gui

*National Consciousness and Literary Cosmopolitics: Postcolonial Literature in a Global Moment* by Weihsin Gui argues that postcolonial literature written within a framework of globalization still takes nationalism seriously rather than dismissing it as obsolete. Authors and texts often regarded as cosmopolitan, diasporic, or migrant actually challenge globalization's tendency to treat nations as absolute and homogenous sociocultural entities.

While social scientific theories of globalization after 1945 represent nationalism as antithetical to transnational economic and cultural flows, *National Consciousness and Literary Cosmopolitics* contends that postcolonial literature represents nationalism as a form of cosmopolitical engagement with what lies beyond the nation's borders. Postcolonial literature never gave up on anticolonial nationalism but rather revised its meaning, extending the idea of the nation beyond an identity position into an interrogation of globalization and the neocolonial state through political consciousness and cultural critique.

The literary cosmopolitics evident in the works of Kazuo Ishiguro, Derek Walcott, Shirley Geok-lin Lim, Preeta Samarasan, and Twan Eng Tan distinguish between an instrumental national identity and a critical nationality that negates the subordination of nationalism by neocolonial regimes and global capitalism. Through their formal innovations, these writers represent nationalism not as a monolithic or essentialized identity or body of people but as a cosmopolitical constellation of political, social, and cultural forces.



**Weihsin Gui** is assistant professor of English, the University of California, Riverside.

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Transoceanic Studies  
Ileana Rodriguez, Series Editor

"Few books have as good a feel as this one does for literature's contribution to the ongoing challenge of figuring out what comes after globalization. By making connections among disparate theories and fields of literature, Weihsin Gui shows how the next generation of postcolonial critics will be renovating literary study, especially study dedicated to thinking about literature in social and political terms. The future of postcolonial scholarship, in short, is available now in this volume." —John Marx, associate professor of English, University of California, Davis

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# Victorian Sacrifice

## Ethics and Economics in Mid-Century Novels

Ilana M. Blumberg

In *Victorian Sacrifice: Ethics and Economics in Mid-Century Novels*, Ilana M. Blumberg offers a major reconsideration of the central Victorian ethic of self-sacrifice, suggesting that much of what we have taken to be the moral psychology of Victorian fiction may be understood in terms of the dramatic confrontation between Christian theology and the world of modern economic theory. As Victorian writers Charlotte Mary Yonge, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, and Mary Augusta Ward strove to forge a practicable ethics that would reconcile the influences of an evangelical Christianity and its emphasis on selfless charity with the forces of laissez-faire capitalism and its emphasis on individual profit, they moved away from the cherished ideal of painful, solitary self-sacrifice in service of another's good. Instead, Blumberg suggests, major novelists sought an ethical realism characterized by the belief that virtuous action could serve the collective benefit of the parties involved. At a mid-century moment of economic optimism, novelists transformed the ethical landscape by imagining what the sociologist Herbert Spencer would later call a "measured egoism," an ethically responsible self-concern which might foster communal solidarity and material abundance.

Bringing the recent literary turns to ethics and to economics into mutual conversation, Blumberg offers us a new lens on a matter as pressing today as it was 150 years ago: the search for an ethics adequate to the hopes and fears of a new economy.

**Ilana M. Blumberg** is associate professor of humanities at the James Madison College, Michigan State University.

September 2013 280 pp.

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Literature, Religion, and Postsecular Studies

Lori Branch, Series Editor

"What Ilana M. Blumberg examines, in her wholly original analysis, is a centrality of revalorizing and rewriting sacrifice in the work of mid-century realistic novelists whose interests, at least according to much recent criticism, have been supposed to lie with more immediately topical, social-political concerns. Her work belongs to the upsurge in criticism that takes seriously moral and ethical inquiry as a way into literature. Her strength is the ability to link ethical questions to structural questions, so that she shows how thoroughly interwoven points of narration are with points of ethics."

—Andrew Elfenbein, professor of English, University of Minnesota

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# Displacement and the Somatics of Postcolonial Culture

Douglas Robinson

*Displacement and the Somatics of Postcolonial Culture* is Douglas Robinson's study of postcolonial affect—specifically, of the breakdown of the normative (regulatory) circulation of affect in the refugee experience and the colonial encounter, the restructuring of that regulatory circulation in colonization, and the persistence of that restructuring in decolonization and intergenerational trauma. Robinson defines “somatics” as a cultural construction of “reality” and “identity” through the regulatory circulation of evaluative affect.

This book is divided into three essays covering the refugee experience, colonization and decolonization, and intergenerational trauma. Each essay contains a review of empirical studies of its main topic, a study of literary representations of that topic, and a study of postcolonial theoretical spins. The literary representations in the refugee essay are a novel and short story by the Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat; in the colonization essay a short film by Javier Fesser and a novella by Mahasweta Devi (translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak); and in the intergenerational trauma essay novels by James Welch and Toni Morrison and a short story by Percival Everett. The first essay's theoretical spins include Deleuze and Guattari on nomad thought and Iain Chambers on migrancy; the second's, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* and theories of postcolonial affect in Bhabha and Spivak; the third's, work on historical trauma by Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra.



**Douglas Robinson** is Dean of Arts and Chair Professor of English at Hong Kong Baptist University.

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“*Displacement and the Somatics of Postcolonial Culture* offers an important interventionist contribution to scholarship in the field of postcolonial studies. I am convinced by Douglas Robinson's arguments and by his application of somatic theory to cultural texts that this book plays a key role in moving scholarship beyond the stalemate that now exists in postcolonial theory.” —Molly Blyth, professor of English literature, Canadian studies, and indigenous studies, Trent University

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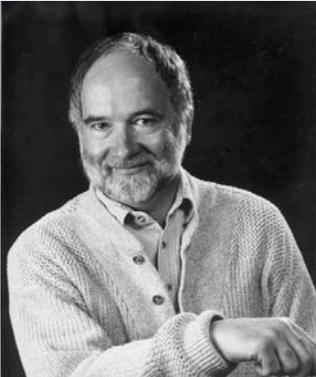
## Order in Disorder

### Intratextual Symmetry in Montaigne's "Essais"

Randolph Paul Runyon

Montaigne's *Essays* are treasured for their philosophical and moral insights and the fascinating portrait they give us of the man who wrote them, but another of their undoubted delights is that they tantalize the reader, offering beneath an apparent disorder some hints of a hidden plan. After all, though the essayist kept adding new pages, except when he added the third and final book he never added a new chapter, but worked within the structure already in place.

*Order in Disorder: Intratextual Symmetry in Montaigne's "Essais,"* by Randolph Paul Runyon, offers a new answer to the question of how ordered the *Essays* may be. Following up on Montaigne's likening them to a painter's "grotesques" surrounding a central image, and seeing in this an allusion to the ancient Roman decorative style, rediscovered in the Renaissance, of symmetrical motifs on either side of a central image, Runyon uncovers an extensive network of symmetrical verbal echoes linking every chapter with another. Often two chapters of greatly different length and apparent importance (one on thumbs, for instance, balanced against one on the limits of human understanding) will in this way be brought together—not without, Runyon finds, an intended irony. The *Essays* emerge as even more self-reflexive than we thought, an amazingly intratextual work.



**Randolph Paul Runyon** is professor of French, Department of French and Italian, at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

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"Extending work on Renaissance design and symmetry to Montaigne, Randolph Runyon's comprehensive monograph implicitly stands in productive opposition to readings of Montaigne that link the *Essais* with disorder or with post-structuralist notions of deferral and movement." —Todd W. Reeser, professor, French

and Italian languages and literature, University of Pittsburgh

"There is no doubt that *Order in Disorder* makes an important contribution to the field both in terms of the author's discoveries of hidden echoes between paired chapters and in terms of Randolph Runyon's insights on the concealed structure in the *Essais*." —Deborah N. Losse, professor emerita of the School of International Letters and Cultures, Arizona State University

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# The Work of Poverty

## Samuel Beckett's Vagabonds and the Theater of Crisis

Lance Duerfahrd

How did Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* come to be performed in such places as San Quentin Prison, Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement, Sarajevo under military siege, New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward after Hurricane Katrina, and Zuccotti Park during the Occupy Wall Street protests? *The Work of Poverty: Samuel Beckett's Vagabonds and the Theater of Crisis* studies the appeal of *Godot* to audiences in settings of historical crisis and suffering. Lance Duerfahrd argues that these circumstances transform the performance and the reception of the play, thereby illuminating a cathartic and political dimension of Beckett's work that goes unseen in traditional performance contexts.

The resonance of one of the most canonical plays of the twentieth century within landscapes of disaster fulfills the aesthetic of "ultimate penury" that Beckett hones in his work. Here the subtractive and reductive dynamic of the Nobel Prize-winning author's craft comes into clearer view, echoing with the despondent condition beyond the stage. In developing an aesthetic of penury, *The Work of Poverty* brings together the dispossessed characters in *Godot*; the derelict narrators of Beckett's *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and the *Unnamable*; and the formal experimentation in poverty witnessed in his *Endgame* and *Worstward Ho*. Beckett forged increasingly destitute forms of theater and prose on the periphery of writing. Duerfahrd illustrates how this work speaks to our age by emphasizing characters on the periphery of society.



**Lance Duerfahrd** is assistant professor of English at Purdue University.

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"*The Work of Poverty* is an impassioned mediation on the theater in times of crisis, penury, and precariousness. Lance Duerfahrd accounts for the enduring appeal of a play like *Waiting for Godot* and, what is more, makes the reader experience the excitement felt by underprivileged audiences and actors in situations of danger or terror." —Jean-Michel Rabaté, Vartan Gregorian Professor in the Humanities and professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania

"Lance Duerfahrd investigates Beckett's continuing relevance to our world and the conditions under which *Godot* speaks not just as intellectual enigma to scholars of literature but empathetically and urgently to the survivors of life in prison, civil war, and floods. *The Work of Poverty* is energized by an eye toward this relevance, not only for these audiences in what Duerfahrd terms 'landscapes of crisis,' but for the author and his reader." —Eyal Peretz, associate professor of Comparative Literature, Indiana University, Bloomington

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# Antidote

Corey Van Landingham

In Corey Van Landingham's *Antidote*, love equates with disease, valediction is a contact sport, the moon is a lunatic, and someone is always watching. Here the uncanny coexists with the personal, so that each poem undergoes making and unmaking, is birthed and bound in an acute strangeness. Elegy is made new by a speaker both heartbreaking and transgressive. Van Landingham reveals the instability of self and perception in states of grief; she is not afraid to tip the world upside down and shake it out, gather the lint and change from its pockets and say, "I can make something with this."



**Corey Van Landingham** is a Wallace Stegner Poetry Fellow at Stanford University. She grew up in Oregon and holds degrees from Lewis & Clark College and Purdue University, where she was a Poetry Editor for *Sycamore Review*. She is the recipient of an AWP Intro Journals Award and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Her poems have appeared in *Best New Poets 2012*, *Indiana Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Southern Review*, and elsewhere.

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The Ohio State University Press/*The Journal Award in Poetry*

"Corey Van Landingham begins *Antidote* in thoughtful, measured denial—*not, can't, nor, never mind*, a place of soul and heart where you only 'think crossing over a body of water equals acquiring the other side.' Nevertheless, so much goes on to live in this fine book: litany, rage, grief, love, certain moments of startling ventriloquism then back to the real self restless, *said to meant*, hunting maps to hymnals, hawks and gulls and fevers, even 'the dirt's push & pulse' all overriding that first impossible *no*. 'People die when I'm not looking,' this poet tells us. Good thing she looks." —Marianne Boruch

"Van Landingham reinvents and refigures surrealism, which has always been one of the many fashions worn on the flamboyant runway of American poetry. I think of Dickinson's white dress and 'White Heat' in the presence of these poems, so formally various, too street smart to promenade the avenues without irony, but unabashedly emotive, no makeup. The book is haunted. The poet converses with her dead father and with former lovers, and discovers there is no antidote against any of it. In the penultimate poem, Van Landingham says, 'wild is a process / that has to be learned.' I don't know where she has learned such wildness, but she has learned it well." —Donald Platt

"Already I feel changed by *Antidote*—this heady, haunting new collection with its strange and seductive proposals. These poems hold us close and throw us far, plunging and soaring without turning away from the disasters at their hearts. This is the real thing: unflinching, urgent, luminous work. I will turn to it again and again." —Mary Szybist

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# Wilkie Collins and Copyright

## Artistic Ownership in the Age of the Borderless Word

Sundeep Bisla

In the works and letters of his later years, Wilkie Collins continually expressed his displeasure over copyright violations. *Wilkie Collins and Copyright: Artistic Ownership in the Age of the Borderless Word* by Sundeep Bisla asks whether that discontent might not also have affected the composition of Collins's major early works of the 1850s and 60s. Bisla's investigation into this question, surprisingly, does not find an uncomplicated author uncomplicatedly launched on a defense of what he believes to be rightfully his. Instead, Bisla finds an author locked in fierce negotiation with the theoretical underpinnings of his medium, the written word, underpinnings best delineated by the twentieth-century deconstructionist Jacques Derrida. Collins's discomfort with copyright violation comes to be in tension with his budding understanding of the paradoxical nature of the "iterability" of the word, a nature presenting itself as a conflict between the settling and breaking manifestations of linguistic repetition. In his efforts at resolving this paradox, Collins adopts a mechanism of recursive self-reflexivity through which each story reflects upon itself to a more fundamental extent than had its predecessor. This self-reflexive exploration has significant consequences for the author's own iterability-menaced subjectivity, a striking example of which can be seen in the fact that the name being sought in Collins's last masterpiece, *The Moonstone*, will end up being "MY OWN NAME" —in other words, "WILKIE COLLINS."



**Sundeep Bisla** is assistant professor of English at York College/CUNY.

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"*Wilkie Collins and Copyright* is an elegant, intelligent, and impressive work. It is certain to be considered an important, perhaps even classic, Collins study. Sundeep Bisla is an impeccable researcher and beautiful writer. He provides a fresh interpretation of Collins as a novelist whose highly self-conscious efforts to manipulate language are set against the background of the particular material conditions for Victorian authorship, especially those governing copyright." —Lauren M.E. Goodlad, author of *The Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic: Realism, Sovereignty and Transnational Experience*.

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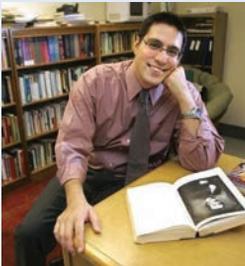
# Moral Enterprise

## Literature and Education in Antebellum America

Derek Pacheco

*Moral Enterprise: Literature and Education in Antebellum America*, by Derek Pacheco, investigates an important moment in the history of professional authorship. Pacheco uses New England “literary reformers” Horace Mann, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elizabeth Peabody, and Margaret Fuller to argue that writers came to see in educational reform, and the publication venues emerging in connection with it, a means to encourage popular authorship while validating literary work as a profession. Although today’s schools are staffed by systematically trained and institutionally sanctioned teachers, in the unregulated, decentralized world of antebellum America, literary men and women sought the financial stability of teaching while claiming it as moral grounds for the pursuit of greater literary fame.

Examining the ethically redemptive and potentially lucrative definition of antebellum author as educator, this book traces the way these literary reformers aimed not merely at social reform *through* literature but also at the reform *of* literature itself by employing a wide array of practices—authoring, editing, publishing, and distributing printed texts—brought together under the aegis of modern, democratic education. *Moral Enterprise* identifies such endeavors by their dual valence as bold, reformist undertakings *and* economic ventures, exploring literary texts as educational commodities that might act as entry points into, and ways to tame, what Mann characterized as the “Alexandrian library” of American print culture.



**Derek Pacheco** is assistant professor of English and American studies at Purdue University.

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\$14.95 CD 978-0-8142-9340-9

“Derek Pacheco’s scholarship is meticulous, and his writing is clear, concise, and jargon-free. *Moral Enterprise* fills a previously empty niche and invites further scholarship on the connections between pedagogy and Transcendentalism.”  
—Angela Sorby, associate professor of English, Marquette University

“In *Moral Enterprise*, Derek Pacheco examines the development of literary culture in the antebellum United States from the vantage point of educational reform. Juxtaposing prominent authors in the literary canon—for example, Fuller and Hawthorne—with other, nonliterary figures, this book offers a series of case studies that, refreshingly, make the book more than the sum of its parts.” —Thomas Augst, associate professor of English, New York University

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# Fama and Fiction in Vergil's *Aeneid*

Antonia Syson

What does it mean to “know” what a work of fiction tells us? In Vergil's *Aeneid*, the promise and uncertainty of *fama* convey this challenge. Expansive and flexible, the Latin word *fama* can mean “fame,” long-lasting “tradition,” and useful “news,” but also ephemeral “rumor” and disruptive “scandal.” *Fama* is personified as a horrifying winged goddess who reports the truth while keeping an equally tight grip on what's distorted or made up. *Fama* reflects the ways talk—or epic song—may merge past and present, human and divine, things remembered and things imagined.

Most importantly, *fama* marks the epic's power to bring its story world into our own. The cognitive dynamics of metaphor share in this power, blending the *Aeneid*'s poetic authority with the imagined force of the gods. Characters and readers are encouraged—even impelled—to seek divine order amidst unsettling words and visions by linking new experiences with existing knowledge. Transformative moments of recognition set the perceptual stage both for the gods' commands and for the epic's persuasive efficacy, for *pietas* (remembrance of ritual and social obligations) and *furor* (madness).

Antonia Syson's sensitive close readings offer fresh insights into questions of fictive knowledge and collective memory in the *Aeneid*. These perspectives invite readers to reconsider some of the epistemological premises underlying inquiry into ancient cultures. Drawing comparisons with the nineteenth-century English novel, Syson highlights continuities between two narrative genres whose cultural contributions and rhetorical claims have often seemed sharply opposed.

Antonia Syson is assistant professor of Classics, School of Languages & Cultures, at Purdue University.

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“This is a wonderful book from which I have learned a great deal. It will be influential not only for future work on the *Aeneid*, but also for scholarship on the Latin epic tradition overall. The author handles complicated theoretical material with ease and sophistication.” —Martha Malamud, professor of classics, SUNY Buffalo

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# Economic Women

## Essays on Desire and Dispossession in Nineteenth-Century British Culture

Edited by Lana L. Dalley and Jill Rappoport

*Economic Women: Essays on Desire and Dispossession in Nineteenth-Century British Culture*, edited by Lana L. Dalley and Jill Rappoport, showcases the wide-ranging economic activities and relationships of real and fictional women in nineteenth-century British culture. This volume's essays chronicle the triumphs and setbacks of women who developed, described, contested, and exploited new approaches to economic thought and action. In their various roles as domestic employees, activists fighting for free trade, theorists developing statistical models, and individuals considering the cost of marriage and its dissolution, the women discussed here were givers and takers, producers and consumers.

Bringing together leading and emerging voices in the field, this collection builds on the wealth of interdisciplinary economic criticism published in the last twenty years, but it also challenges traditional understandings of economic subjectivity by emphasizing both private and public records and refusing to identify a single female corollary to Economic Man. The scholars presented here recover game-changing stories of women's economic engagement from diaries, letters, ledgers, fiction, periodicals, and travel writing to reveal a nuanced portrait of Economic Women. Offering new readings of works by George Eliot, Bram Stoker, Willkie Collins, Charlotte Riddell, and Ellen Wood, and addressing political economy, consumerism, and business developments alongside the family finances and ethics of exchange, *Economic Women* tells a story of ambivalence as well as achievement, failure as well as forward motion.

**Lana L. Dalley** is associate professor in the Department of English, Comparative Literature and Linguistics, at California State University, Fullerton. **Jill Rappoport** is associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Kentucky.

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"The editors' ability to draw together such a wide and strong range of original scholarship is quite impressive. While the argument of the book is rather broad, it is so of necessity, and the essays together both support the argument and demonstrate the necessity of the editors' broad claims about the role of women and economics in nineteenth-century Britain." —Claudia Klaver, associate professor of English, Syracuse University

"This collection highlights some of the most interesting current work in the dynamic field of economic criticism, functioning both as an introduction and as an intervention in that field by stressing the economic work of women. It offers a fresh, crucial, and very welcome perspective." —Talia Schaffer, professor of English, Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

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## Real Mysteries

### Narrative and the Unknowable

H. Porter Abbott

The influential and widely respected narrative theorist, H. Porter Abbott, breaks new ground in *Real Mysteries: Narrative and the Unknowable*. In it, he revisits the ancient theme of what we cannot know about ourselves and others. But in a sharp departure, he shifts the focus from the representation of this theme to the ways narrative can be manipulated to immerse “the willing reader” in the actual experience of unknowing.

As he shows, this difficult and risky art, which was practiced so inventively by Samuel Beckett, was also practiced by other modern writers. Abbott demonstrates their surprising diversity in texts by Beckett, Gabriel García Márquez, Herman Melville, Toni Morrison, Alice Munro, J. M. Coetzee, Tim O’Brien, Kathryn Harrison, and Jeanette Winterson, together with supporting roles by J. G. Ballard, Gertrude Stein, Michael Haneke, and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

The demands of this art bear directly on key issues of narrative inquiry, including the nature and limits of reader-resistant texts, the function of permanent narrative gaps, the relation between experiencing a text and its interpretation, the fraught issue of aligning grammatical and narrative syntax, the mixed blessing of our mind-reading capability, and the ethics of reading. Despite its challenges, this book has also been written with an eye to the general reader. In accessible language, Abbott shows how narrative fiction may create spaces in which our ignorance, when it is by its nature absolute, can be not only acknowledged but felt, and why this is important.



**H. Porter Abbott** is professor emeritus of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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# The Return of the Omniscient Narrator

## Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century Fiction

Paul Dawson

*The Return of the Omniscient Narrator: Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century Fiction* by Paul Dawson argues that the omniscient narrator, long considered a relic of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel, has reemerged as an important feature of contemporary British and American literary fiction. It further argues that the development of contemporary omniscience can be situated in relation to ongoing anxieties about the novel's decline of cultural authority in the age of digital media. In this context the book identifies and classifies new modes of omniscient narration that are neither nostalgic revivals nor parodic critiques of classic omniscience, but the result of experimentations with narrative voice in the wake of postmodern fiction.

To address this phenomenon, the book reformulates existing definitions of literary omniscience, shifting attention away from questions of narratorial knowledge and toward omniscient narration as a rhetorical performance of narrative authority that invokes and projects a historically specific figure of authorship. Through a study of fiction by authors such as Zadie Smith, Jonathan Franzen, Richard Powers, Martin Amis, Rick Moody, Edward P. Jones, and Nicola Barker, the book analyzes how the conventional narrative authority of omniscient narrators is parlayed into claims for the cultural authority of authors and of the novel itself.

In the course of its investigation, *The Return of the Omniscient Narrator* engages with major movements in narrative theory—rhetorical, cognitive, and feminist—to challenge and reconsider many key narratological categories, including Free Indirect Discourse, the relation between voice and focalization, and the narrative communication model. This challenge is framed by an argument for a discursive approach to narrative fiction that addresses the neglect of authorship in narrative theory.

**Paul Dawson** is senior lecturer in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales, Australia.

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Rachael Barbash is a freelance photographer based in Columbus, Ohio. Rachael graduated from Columbus State's digital photography program in March 2012 and is currently pursuing her BFA in photography at The Ohio State University. She specializes in live-music, low light situations, and documentary photography.

Rachael has shown photos in Columbus galleries and has been published in Columbus as well as nationally including *The Columbus Dispatch*, *Columbus Alive*, *The Other Paper*, *614 Magazine*, *Dayton City Paper*, *Columbus Monthly*, *Alternative Press Magazine*, and *Pitchfork*.



The photos are of Flotation Walls, a Columbus, Ohio band.

