

The Columbia Literary History Of The United States By Emory Elliott

A Short Literary History of the United States offers an introduction to American Literature for students who want to acquaint themselves with the most important periods, authors, and works of American literary history. Comprehensive yet concise, it provides an essential overview of the different currents in American literature in an accessible, engaging style. This book features: the pre-colonial era to the present, including new media formats the evolution of literary traditions, themes, and aesthetics readings of individual texts, contextualized within American cultural history literary theory in the United States a core reading list in American Literature an extended glossary and study aid. This book is ideal as a companion to courses in American Literature and American Studies, or as a study aid for exams.

Literary history, the dominant form of literary scholarship throughout the nineteenth century, is currently recapturing the imaginations of a new generation of scholars eager to focus on the context of literature after a half-century or more of "close" readings of isolated texts. This book represents current thinking on some of the theoretical issues and dilemmas in the conception and writing of literary history, expressed by a group of scholars from North America, Europe, and Australia. They consider afresh a broad range of topics: the role of literary history in "new" societies, the problem of finding a starting point for literary history, the problem of literary classification, problems of ideology, of institutional mediation, periodization, and the attack on literary history.

THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER At the age of forty-eight, writer and film critic David Denby returned to Columbia University and re-enrolled in two core courses in Western civilization to confront the literary and philosophical masterpieces -- the "great books" -- that are now at the heart of the culture wars. In *Great Books*, he leads us on a glorious tour, a rediscovery and celebration of such authors as Homer and Boccaccio, Locke and Nietzsche. Conrad and Woolf. The resulting personal odyssey is an engaging blend of self-discovery, cultural commentary, reporting, criticism, and autobiography -- an inspiration for anyone in love with the written word.

More than 450 succinct entries from A to Z help readers make sense of the interdisciplinary knowledge of cultural criticism that includes film, psychoanalytic, deconstructive, poststructuralist, and postmodernist theory as well as philosophy, media studies, linguistics.

Recasting French literary history in terms of the cultures and peoples that interacted within and outside of France's national boundaries, this volume offers a new way of looking at the history of a national literature, along with a truly global and contemporary understanding of language, literature, and culture. The relationship between France's national territory and other regions of the world where French is spoken and written (most of them former colonies) has long been central to discussions of "Francophonie." Boldly expanding such discussions to the whole range of French literature, the essays in this volume explore spaces, mobilities, and multiplicities from the Middle Ages to today. They rethink literary history not in terms of national boundaries, as traditional literary histories have done, but in terms of a global paradigm that emphasizes border crossings and encounters with "others." Contributors offer new ways of reading canonical texts and considering other texts that are not part of the traditional canon. By emphasizing diverse conceptions of language, text, space, and nation, these essays establish a model approach that remains sensitive to the specificities of time and place and to the theoretical concerns informing the study of national literatures in the twenty-first century.

Incorporating a broad range of contemporary scholarship, *A History of Victorian Literature* presents an overview of the literature produced in Great Britain between 1830 and 1900, with fresh consideration of both major figures and some of the era's less familiar authors. Part of the Blackwell Histories of Literature series, the book describes the development of the Victorian literary movement and places it within its cultural, social and political context. A wide-ranging narrative overview of literature in Great Britain between 1830 and 1900, capturing the extraordinary variety of literary output produced during this era Analyzes the development of all literary forms during this period - the novel, poetry, drama, autobiography and critical prose - in conjunction with major developments in social and intellectual history Considers the ways in which writers engaged with new forms of social responsibility in their work, as Britain transformed into the world's first industrial economy Offers a fresh perspective on the work of both major figures and some of the era's less familiar authors Winner of a Choice Outstanding Academic Title award, 2009

In *Culture, Genre, and Literary Vocation*, Michael Davitt Bell charts the important and often overlooked connection between literary culture and authors' careers. Bell's influential essays on nineteenth-century American writers—originally written for such landmark projects as *The Columbia Literary History of the United States* and *The Cambridge History of American Literature*—are gathered here with a major new essay on Richard Wright. Throughout, Bell revisits issues of genre with an eye toward the unexpected details of authors' lives, and invites us to reconsider the hidden functions that terms such as "romanticism" and "realism" served for authors and their critics. Whether tracing the demands of the market or the expectations of readers, Bell examines the intimate relationship between literary production and culture; each essay closely links the milieu in which American writers worked with the trajectory of their storied careers.

A manifesto for a text-free literary scholarship.

With its fresh translations by newer voices in the field, its broad scope, and its flowing style, this anthology places the immense riches of Chinese literature within easy reach. Ranging from the beginnings to 1919, this abridged version of *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* retains all the characteristics of the original. In putting together these selections Victor H. Mair interprets "literature" very broadly to include not just literary fiction, poetry, and drama, but folk and popular literature, lyrics and arias,

elegies and rhapsodies, biographies, autobiographies and memoirs, letters, criticism and theory, and travelogues and jokes.

Traces the dynamic expression of the American experience and how the nation's sense of identity offers alternate perspectives into history, in an anthology that also explores modern cultural creations in a range of disciplines.

Do the portrayals of objects in literary texts represent historical evidence about the material culture of the past? Or are things in books more than things in the world? Sophie Volpp considers fictional objects of the late Ming and Qing that defy being read as illustrative of historical things. Instead, she argues, fictional objects are often signs of fictionality themselves, calling attention to the nature of the relationship between literature and materiality. Volpp examines a series of objects—a robe, a box and a shell, a telescope, a plate-glass mirror, and a painting—drawn from the canonical works frequently mined for information about late imperial material culture, including the novels *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and *The Story of the Stone* as well as the short fiction of Feng Menglong, Ling Mengchu, and Li Yu. She argues that although fictional objects invite readers to think of them as illustrative, in fact, inconsistent and discontinuous representation disconnects the literary object from potential historical analogues. The historical resonances of literary objects illuminate the rhetorical strategies of individual works of fiction and, more broadly, conceptions of fictionality in the Ming and Qing. Rather than offering a transparent lens on the past, fictional objects train the reader to be aware of the fallibility of perception. A deeply insightful analysis of late Ming and Qing texts and reading practices, *The Substance of Fiction* has important implications for Chinese literary studies, history, and art history, as well as the material turn in the humanities.

The Columbia Literary History of the United States Columbia University Press

Li Zhi's iconoclastic interpretations of history, religion, literature, and social relations have fascinated Chinese intellectuals for centuries. His approach synthesized Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist ethics and incorporated the Neo-Confucian idealism of such thinkers as Wang Yangming (1472–1529). The result was a series of heretical writings that caught fire among Li Zhi's contemporaries, despite an imperial ban on their publication, and intrigued Chinese audiences long after his death. Translated for the first time into English, Li Zhi's bold challenge to established doctrines will captivate anyone curious about the origins of such subtly transgressive works as the sixteenth-century play *The Peony Pavilion* or the eighteenth-century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*. In *A Book to Burn and a Book to Keep (Hidden)*, Li Zhi confronts accepted ideas about gender, questions the true identity of history's heroes and villains, and offers his own readings of Confucius, Laozi, and the Buddha. Fond of vivid sentiment and sharp expression, Li Zhi made no distinction between high and low literary genres in his literary analysis. He refused to support sanctioned ideas about morality and wrote stinging social critiques. Li Zhi praised scholars who risked everything to expose extortion and misrule. In this sophisticated translation, English-speaking readers encounter the best of this heterodox intellectual's vital contribution to Chinese thought and culture.

"An expansive yet concise literary history that traces the organization of literary information in China at the levels of the word, the document, and the collection, introducing readers to how these organizing forms operate across time. The volume will provide critical introductions to cultural forms and technologies of information management, such as graphemes and sentences, lexicons and encyclopedias, anthologies and newspapers, and libraries and databases. The individual contributions will offer up-to-date introductions for scholars and students (both undergraduate and graduate) seeking to understand how Chinese graphs or characters are encoded at a linguistic level and through digital technology; how anthologies were organized and what writings were included; how newspapers and journals distributed literary writings in time and space; how libraries, archives, and museums developed from imperial repositories to public, academic, and state-run institutions; and how bibliographic writings provided the foundations for digital thematic research collections"--

Samuel Beckett as a guru for business executives? James Joyce as a guide to living a good life? The notion of notoriously experimental authors sharing a shelf with self-help books might seem far-fetched, yet a hidden history of rivalry, influence, and imitation links these two worlds. In *The Self-Help Compulsion*, Beth Blum reveals the profound entanglement of modern literature and commercial advice from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Blum explores popular reading practices in which people turn to literature in search of practical advice alongside modern writers' rebukes of such instrumental purposes. As literary authors positioned themselves in opposition to people like Samuel Smiles and Dale Carnegie, readers turned to self-help for the promises of mobility, agency, and practical use that serious literature was reluctant to supply. Blum unearths a series of unlikely cases of the love-hate relationship between serious fiction and commercial advice, from Gustave Flaubert's mockery of early DIY culture to Dear Abby's cutting diagnoses of Nathanael West and from Virginia Woolf's ambivalent polemics against self-improvement to the ways that contemporary global authors such as Mohsin Hamid and Tash Aw explicitly draw on the self-help genre. She also traces the self-help industry's tendency to popularize, quote, and adapt literary wisdom and considers what it might have to teach today's university. Offering a new history of self-help's origins, appeal, and cultural and literary import around the world, this book reveals that self-help's most valuable secrets are not about getting rich or winning friends but about how and why people read.

Comprehensive yet portable, this account of the development of Chinese literature from the very beginning up to the present brings the riches of this august literary tradition into focus for the general reader. Organized chronologically with thematic chapters interspersed, the fifty-five original chapters by leading specialists cover all genres and periods of poetry, prose, fiction, and drama, with a special focus on such subjects as popular culture, the impact of religion upon literature, the role of women, and relationships with non-Sinitic languages and peoples.

"The essays provide new research into women's literary history from the late seventeenth century to the Modernist period covering topics such as women's science and anti-slavery writing, midwifery, women and the novel, and lesbian literary history. Essays discuss the writing of Jane Sharp, Jane Barker, Anne Finch, Aphra Behn, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Jacob, Phebe Lankester, Pauline Johnson, May Sinclair, Amy Levy, Edith Ellis, and Amy Wilson Carmichael."--BOOK JACKET.

Hoyt Long offers both a reinterpretation of modern Japanese literature through computational methods and an introduction to the history, theory, and practice of looking at literature through numbers. He weaves explanations of these methods and their application together with reflection on the kinds of reasoning such methodologies facilitate.

The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature provides, for the first time, a history of Japanese literature with comprehensive coverage of the premodern and modern eras in a single volume. The book is arranged topically in a series of short, accessible chapters for easy access and reference, giving insight into both canonical texts and many lesser known, popular genres, from centuries-old folk literature to the detective fiction of modern times. The various period introductions provide an overview of recurrent issues that span many decades, if not centuries. The book also places Japanese literature in a wider East Asian tradition of Sinitic writing and provides comprehensive coverage of women's literature as well as new popular literary forms, including manga (comic books). An extensive bibliography of works in English enables readers to continue to explore this rich tradition through translations and secondary reading.

Hip Figures dramatically alters our understanding of the postwar American novel by showing how it mobilized fantasies of black style on behalf of the Democratic Party. Fascinated by jazz, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll, novelists such as Norman Mailer, Ralph Ellison, John Updike, and Joan Didion turned to hip culture to negotiate the voter realignments then reshaping national politics. Figuratively transporting white professionals and managers into the skins of African Americans, these novelists and many others insisted on their own importance to the ambitions of a party dependent on coalition-building but not fully committed to integration. Arbiters of hip for readers who weren't, they effectively branded and marketed the liberalism of their moment—and ours.

Recasting the history of African American literature, *Shadow Archives* brings to life a slew of newly discovered texts—including Claude McKay's *Amiable with Big Teeth*—to tell the stories of black special collections and their struggle for institutional recognition. Jean-Christophe Cloutier offers revelatory readings of major African American writers, including McKay, Richard Wright, Ann Petry, and Ralph Ellison, and provides a nuanced view of how archival methodology, access, and the power dynamics of acquisitions shape literary history. *Shadow Archives* argues that the notion of the archive is crucial to our understanding of postwar African American literary history. Cloutier combines his own experiences as a researcher and archivist with a theoretically rich account of the archive to offer a pioneering study of the importance of African American authors' archival practices and how these shaped their writing. Given the lack of institutions dedicated to the black experience, the novel became an alternative site of historical preservation, a means to ensure both individual legacy and group survival. Such archivism manifests in the work of these authors through evolving lifecycles where documents undergo repurposing, revision, insertion, falsification, transformation, and fictionalization, sometimes across decades. An innovative interdisciplinary consideration of literary papers, *Shadow Archives* proposes new ways for literary scholars to engage with the archive.

The Strangers Book explores how various nineteenth-century African American writers radically reframed the terms of humanism by redefining what it meant to be a stranger. Rejecting the idea that humans have easy access to a common reserve of experiences and emotions, they countered the notion that a person can use a supposed knowledge of human nature to claim full understanding of any other person's life. Instead they posited that being a stranger, unknown and unknowable, was an essential part of the human condition. Affirming the unknown and unknowable differences between people, as individuals and in groups, laid the groundwork for an ethical and democratic society in which all persons could find a place. If everyone is a stranger, then no individual or class can lay claim to the characteristics that define who gets to be a human in political and public arenas. Lloyd Pratt focuses on nineteenth-century African American writing and publishing venues and practices such as the Colored National Convention movement and literary societies in Nantucket and New Orleans. Examining the writing of Frederick Douglass in tandem with that of the francophone free men of color who published the first anthology of African American poetry in 1845, he contends these authors were never interested in petitioning whites for sympathy or for recognition of their humanity. Instead, they presented a moral imperative to develop practices of stranger humanism in order to forge personal and political connections based on mutually acknowledged and always evolving differences.

This sourcebook contains more than 160 documents and writings that reflect the development of Taiwanese literature from the early modern period to the twenty-first century. Selections include seminal essays in literary debates, polemics, and other landmark events; interviews, diaries, and letters by major authors; critical and retrospective essays by influential writers, editors, and scholars; transcripts of historical speeches and conferences; literary-society manifestos and inaugural journal prefaces; and governmental policy pronouncements that have significantly influenced Taiwanese literature. These texts illuminate Asia's experience with modernization, colonialism, and postcolonialism; the character of Taiwan's Cold War and post-Cold War cultural production; gender and environmental issues; indigenous movements; and the changes and challenges of the digital revolution. Taiwan's complex history with Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese colonization; strategic geopolitical position vis-à-vis China, Japan, and the United States; and status as a hub for the East-bound circulation of technological and popular-culture trends make the nation an excellent case study for a richer understanding of East Asian and modern global relations.

A comprehensive reference to Asian American history reveals the key events and personalities while also exploring the historical debates that rage around their interpretation.

Types and stereotypes is the fourth and last volume of a path-breaking multinational literary history that incorporates innovative features relevant to the writing of literary history in general. Instead of offering a traditional chronological narrative of the period 1800-1989, the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* approaches the region's literatures from five complementary angles, focusing on literature's participation in and reaction to key political events, literary periods and genres, the literatures of cities and sub-regions, literary institutions, and figures of representation. The main objective of the project is to challenge the self-enclosure of national literatures in traditional literary histories, to contextualize them in a regional perspective, and to recover individual works, writers, and minority literatures that national histories have marginalized or ignored. *Types and stereotypes* brings together articles that rethink the figures of National Poets, figurations of the Family, Women, Outlaws, and Others, as well as figures of Trauma and Mediation. As in the previous three volumes, the historical and imaginary figures discussed here constantly change and readjust to new political and social conditions. An Epilogue complements the basic history, focusing on the contradictory transformations of East-Central European literary cultures after 1989. This volume will be of interest to the region's literary historians, to students

and teachers of comparative literature, to cultural historians, and to the general public interested in exploring the literatures of a rich and resourceful cultural region.

In the three decades since New York City's Stonewall rebellion, gay literature has exploded as a distinctive form of cultural expression. In a variety of styles and genres, gay men have increasingly begun to articulate their sexual identities. At the same time, gay writers and scholars have begun in earnest the search for a literary history long denied by the refusal to recognize homosexual love as an integral part of Western literature. Yet to date, no single volume has brought together the full range of poetry, fiction, essays, and autobiography that portray love between men. From the Epic of Gilgamesh to the poems of Allen Ginsberg and gay literature of the 1980s and '90s, *The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature* draws together hundreds of texts from Western literary history that describe experiences of love, friendship, intimacy, desire, and sex among men. While other anthologies have focused primarily on poetry, drama, or fiction, this volume is the first to include a full range of genres. Spanning more than two millennia, from ancient Mesopotamia to the late twentieth century, this anthology brings together the best-known texts of gay male writing such as the poetry of Martial and Walt Whitman, and excerpts from E. M. Forster's *Maurice*, as well as from lesser known works such as nineteenth-century English homoerotic poetry and selections from two early American novels of homosexual love -- *Joseph and His Friend* and *Imre*. In *The Columbia Anthology* readers become acquainted with the early bonds of male companionship found in Homer's writings on Zeus and Ganymede, and with the homoerotic poetry of Catullus and Juvenal. From Shakespeare's *Sonnets* to the philosophy of de Sade, to the political writings of Edmund White, this masterful anthology traces a multifaceted tradition. Arranged chronologically, sections are supplemented by illuminating introductory essays; many individual pieces include background commentary on the writer and the work. As a landmark to the enduring spirit of gay writers, this collection is an essential addition to the library of anyone searching for the historical foundations of gay identities. With its excellent annotations and suggestions for further reading, *The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature* will also serve as an invaluable resource to students and scholars in need of a guide to a massive body of literature that has long been hidden, ignored, or misrepresented.

WINNER OF THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD How does a literary historian end up thinking in terms of z-scores, principal component analysis, and clustering coefficients? The essays in *Distant Reading* led to a new and often contested paradigm of literary analysis. In presenting them here Franco Moretti reconstructs his intellectual trajectory, the theoretical influences over his work, and explores the polemics that have often developed around his positions. From the evolutionary model of "Modern European Literature," through the geo-cultural insights of "Conjectures of World Literature" and "Planet Hollywood," to the quantitative findings of "Style, inc." and the abstract patterns of "Network Theory, Plot Analysis," the book follows two decades of conceptual development, organizing them around the metaphor of "distant reading," that has come to define—well beyond the wildest expectations of its author—a growing field of unorthodox literary studies.

In our globalised world, literature is less and less confined to national spaces. Europe-centred frameworks for literary studies have become insufficient; academics are increasingly called upon to address matters of cultural difference. In this unique volume, leading scholars discuss the critical and methodical challenges that these developments pose to the writing of literary history. What is the object of literary history? What is the meaning of the term "world literature"? How do we compare different cultural systems of genres? How do we account theoretically for literary transculturation? What are the implications of postcolonial studies for the discipline of comparative literature? Ranging in focus from the Persian epic of *Majnun Layla* and Zulu praise poetry to South Korean novels and Brazilian antropofagismo, the essays offer a concise overview of these and related questions. Their aim is not to reach a consensus on these matters. They show instead what is at stake in the emergent field of global comparatism.

For the first time in four decades, there exists an authoritative and up-to-date survey of the literature of the United States, from prehistoric cave narratives to the radical movements of the sixties and the experimentation of the eighties. This comprehensive volume—one of the century's most important books in American studies—extensively treats Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, Hemingway, and other long-cherished writers, while also giving considerable attention to recently discovered writers such as Kate Chopin and to literary movements and forms of writing not studied amply in the past. Informed by the most current critical and theoretical ideas, it sets forth a generation's interpretation of the rise of American civilization and culture. *The Columbia Literary History of the United States* contains essays by today's foremost scholars and critics, overseen by a board of distinguished editors headed by Emory Elliott of Princeton University. These contributors reexamine in contemporary terms traditional subjects such as the importance of Puritanism, Romanticism, and frontier humor in American life and writing, but they also fully explore themes and materials that have only begun to receive deserved attention in the last two decades. Among these are the role of women as writers, readers, and literary subjects and the impact of writers from minority groups, both inside and outside the literary establishment.

Examines the literary history of the American novel, and looks at the contributions of such writers as Herman Melville, Toni Morrison, and Saul Bellow

As a growing number of contemporary novelists write for publication in multiple languages, the genre's form and aims are shifting. Born-translated novels include passages that appear to be written in different tongues, narrators who speak to foreign audiences, and other visual and formal techniques that treat translation as a medium rather than as an afterthought. These strategies challenge the global dominance of English, complicate "native" readership, and protect creative works against misinterpretation as they circulate. They have also given rise to a new form of writing that confounds traditional models of literary history and political community. *Born Translated* builds a much-needed framework for understanding translation's effect on fictional works, as well as digital art, avant-garde magazines, literary anthologies, and visual media. Artists and novelists discussed include J. M. Coetzee, Junot Díaz, Jonathan Safran Foer, Mohsin Hamid, Kazuo Ishiguro, Jamaica Kincaid, Ben Lerner, China Miéville, David Mitchell, Walter Mosley, Caryl Phillips, Adam Thirlwell, Amy Waldman, and Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries. The book understands that contemporary literature begins at once in many places, engaging in a new type of social embeddedness and political solidarity. It recasts literary history as a series of convergences and departures and, by elevating the status of "born-translated" works, redefines common conceptions of author, reader, and nation.

Featuring over 140 Chinese and non-Chinese contributors, this landmark volume, edited by David Der-wei Wang, explores unconventional forms as well as traditional genres, emphasizes Chinese authors' influence on foreign writers as well as China's receptivity to outside literary influences, and offers vibrant contrasting voices and points of view.

Systematically taking in literary theory, genre and history, the author provides easy to understand descriptions of a variety of approaches to texts, thus offering an accessible and clear general survey of literature.

The canon of postwar American fiction has changed over the past few decades to include far more writers of color. It would appear that we are making progress—recovering marginalized voices and including those who were for far too long ignored. However, is this celebratory narrative borne out in the data? Richard Jean So draws on big data, literary history, and close readings to offer an unprecedented analysis of racial inequality in American publishing that reveals the persistence of an extreme bias toward white authors. In fact, a defining feature of the publishing industry is its vast whiteness, which has denied nonwhite authors, especially black writers, the coveted resources of publishing, reviews, prizes, and sales, with profound effects on the language, form, and content of the postwar novel. Rather than seeing the postwar period as the era of multiculturalism, So argues that we should understand it as the invention of a new form of racial inequality—one that continues to shape the arts and literature today.

Interweaving data analysis of large-scale patterns with a consideration of Toni Morrison's career as an editor at Random House and readings of individual works by Octavia Butler, Henry Dumas, Amy Tan, and others, So develops a form of criticism that brings together qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of literature. A vital and provocative work for American literary studies, critical race studies,

and the digital humanities, *Redlining Culture* shows the importance of data and computational methods for understanding and challenging racial inequality.

The *Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature* features more than fifty short essays on specific writers and literary trends from the Qing period (1895–1911) to the present. The volume opens with thematic essays on the politics and ethics of writing literary history, the formation of the canon, the relationship between language and form, the role of literary institutions and communities, the effects of censorship, the representation of the Chinese diaspora, the rise and meaning of Sinophone literature, and the role of different media in the development of literature. Subsequent essays focus on authors, their works, and the schools with which they were aligned, featuring key names, titles, and terms in English and in Chinese characters. Woven throughout are pieces on late Qing fiction, popular entertainment fiction, martial arts fiction, experimental theater, post-Mao avant-garde poetry, post-martial law fiction from Taiwan, contemporary genre fiction from China, and recent Internet literature. The volume includes essays on such authors as Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Shen Congwen, Eileen Chang, Jin Yong, Mo Yan, Wang Anyi, Gao Xingjian, and Yan Lianke. Both a teaching tool and a go-to research companion, this volume is a one-of-a-kind resource for mastering modern literature in the Chinese-speaking world.

Mythologized as the era of the “good war” and the “Greatest Generation,” the 1940s are frequently understood as a more heroic, uncomplicated time in American history. Yet just below the surface, a sense of dread, alienation, and the haunting specter of radical evil permeated American art and literature. Writers returned home from World War II and gave form to their disorienting experiences of violence and cruelty. They probed the darkness that the war opened up and confronted bigotry, existential guilt, ecological concerns, and fear about the nature and survival of the human race. In *Facing the Abyss*, George Hutchinson offers readings of individual works and the larger intellectual and cultural scene to reveal the 1940s as a period of profound and influential accomplishment. *Facing the Abyss* examines the relation of aesthetics to politics, the idea of universalism, and the connections among authors across racial, ethnic, and gender divisions. Modernist and avant-garde styles were absorbed into popular culture as writers and artists turned away from social realism to emphasize the process of artistic creation. Hutchinson explores a range of important writers, from Saul Bellow and Mary McCarthy to Richard Wright and James Baldwin. African American and Jewish novelists critiqued racism and anti-Semitism, women writers pushed back on the misogyny unleashed during the war, and authors such as Gore Vidal and Tennessee Williams reflected a new openness in the depiction of homosexuality. The decade also witnessed an awakening of American environmental and ecological consciousness. Hutchinson argues that despite the individualized experiences depicted in these works, a common belief in art’s ability to communicate the universal in particulars united the most important works of literature and art during the 1940s. Hutchinson’s capacious view of American literary and cultural history masterfully weaves together a wide range of creative and intellectual expression into a sweeping new narrative of this pivotal decade.

"The 'New Materialism,' as developed by such thinkers and critics as Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett, Elizabeth Grosz, and others, have provided new ways of thinking about the relationship of humans to the material world, the division of nature and culture, and nonhuman agency. Despite the political urgency found in many of these thinkers' work, it often sidesteps certain social and economic concerns found in historical materialism and Marxism such as extraction, accumulation, or commodity fetishism, all of which have been central to Latin American history and literature. In *Things with a History: Transcultural Materialism in Latin America*, Hector Hoyos argues that recent Latin American fiction offers a way to integrate various materialisms, old and new, to understand how objects shape social and political relations and how narrative and literary form allow us to rethink our place within the material world. In each chapter, Hoyos examines a specific material configuration crucial to understanding the contemporary. In his discussions of novels since 1989 but also looking back to earlier moments in Latin American literature, Hoyos considers, among other subjects, the desire for control over natural resources and how literary form confronts both the ungraspable vastness of earth or the unfathomable smallness of the sub-atomic. Hoyos combines close readings of authors like Roberto Bolano, Blanca Wiethuchter, Cesar Aria, and Alejandro Zambra with an engagement with theorists such as Jane Bennett, Tim Morton, Karl Marx, and Julia Kristeva to provide a model to invigorate traditional ideology and cultural critique with the powerful insights of new materialism"--

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