This ambitious literary history traces the American novel from its emergence in the late eighteenth century to its diverse incarnations in the multi-ethnic, multi-media culture of the present. Original essays by internationally renowned scholars present fresh readings of American classics and break new ground to show the role of popular genres – such as science fiction and mystery novels – in the creation of the US literary tradition. In an exciting departure from its predecessors, the essays in this book talk to each other. Their dialogue highlights surprising connections within and across eras. As a collective, interwoven chronicle of America’s dominant literary genre, *The Cambridge History of the American Novel* will change the way we think about the history – and the future – of American literature.

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Figure 5  “New American Library” Interoffice Memo, May 14, 1951. Image provided by Columbia University. Printed courtesy of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.  


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It takes a village to raise a book like this. In a volume that is explicitly dedicated to the idea of collaboration, it’s a pleasure to recognize some of the many who have helped us assemble this omnibus.

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Finally, we thank our families, who let us do this, and whom we do it for.

Leonard Cassuto
Clare Virginia Eby
Benjamin Reiss
Note on the text

Secondary sources (i.e., criticism and contextual scholarship) are fully referenced in the endnotes that follow each chapter, but the novels – because they often exist in multiple editions – are not sourced.