American Literature in Transition, 1970–1980 examines the literary developments of the twentieth century’s gaudiest decade. For a quarter century, filmmakers, musicians, and historians have returned to the era to explore the legacy of Watergate, stagflation, and Saturday Night Fever, uncovering the unique confluence of political and economic phenomena that make the period such a baffling time. Literary historians have never shown much interest in the era, however—a remarkable omission considering writers as diverse as Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Marilyn French, Adrienne Rich, Gay Talese, Norman Mailer, Alice Walker, and Octavia E. Butler were active. Over the course of twenty-one essays, contributors explore a range of controversial themes these writers tackled, from 1960s nostalgia to feminism and the redefinition of masculinity to sexual liberation and rock ’n’ roll. Other essays address New Journalism, the rise of blockbuster culture, memoir and self-help, and crime fiction—all demonstrating that the Me Decade was nothing short of mesmerizing.

Kirk Curnutt is Professor and Chair of English at Troy University in Alabama. He is the author of fifteen books of fiction and criticism, including The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald (Cambridge, 2007), Coffee with Hemingway (2007), and Reading Hemingway’s To Have and Have Not (2016). A member of the boards of both the Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald societies, he has served as managing editor of The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review since 2003.
American Literature in Transition captures the dynamic energies transmitted across the 20th- and 21st-century American literary landscapes. Revisionary and authoritative, the series offers a comprehensive new overview of the established literary landmarks that constitute American literary life. Ambitious in scope and depth, and accommodating new critical perspectives and approaches, this series captures the dynamic energies and ongoing change in 20th- and 21st-century American literature. These are decades of transition, but also periods of epochal upheaval. These decades – the Jazz Age, the Great Depression, the Cold War, the sixties, 9/11 – are turning points of real significance. But in a tumultuous century, these terms can mask deeper structural changes. Each one of these books challenges in different ways the dominant approaches to a period of literature by shifting the focus from what happened to understanding how and why it happened. They elucidate the multifaceted interaction between the social and literary fields and capture that era’s place in the incremental evolution of American literature up to the present moment. Taken together, this series of books constitutes a new kind of literary history in a century of intense cultural and literary creation, a century of liberation and also of immense destruction too. As a revisionary project grounded in pre-existing debates, American Literature in Transition offers an unprecedented analysis of the American literary experience.

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American Literature in Transition, 1930–1940 edited by Ichiro Takayoshi
American Literature in Transition, 1940–1950 edited by Christopher Vials
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11 Death Wishes: Crime Literature, Violence, and Detectives in the American 1970s
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12 The Great American Novel in the 1970s
    Tom Perrin

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KIRK CURNUTT is Professor and Chair of English at Troy University in Alabama. He is the author of fifteen books of fiction and criticism, including *The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Cambridge, 2007), *Coffee with Hemingway* (2007), and *Reading Hemingway’s To Have and Have Not* (2016). He also serves as managing editor of *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*, and is a member of both the boards of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society and the Ernest Hemingway Foundation and Society.

EVERETTE E. DENNIS is an author, educator, and institution builder, currently serving as Dean and CEO of Northwestern University in Qatar and holding a professorship at the Medill School of Journalism, Evanston. His first two books, *The Magic Writing Machine: Student Probes of the New Journalism* (1971) and *Other Voices: The New
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Journalism in America (1971), were followed by many more in a career that has included the presidency of the American Academy in Berlin, serving as executive director of the Media Studies Center at Columbia University, and other academic appointments at the universities of Oregon, Minnesota, Kansas State, and Fordham. He is an elected life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and of the American Antiquarian Society. He has had three advanced study fellowships at Harvard University. In 2017 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Christopher Douglas is Professor of English at the University of Victoria, where he teaches American literature and contemporary American fiction and religion, multiculturalism, and postmodernism. He is the author of If God Meant to Interfere: American Literature and the Rise of the Christian Right (2016) and A Genealogy of Literary Multiculturalism (2009).

Will Elliott teaches in the Humanities Department at the University of Alaska, Southeast. His work examines rapidly changing, reciprocal relationships between human narratives, bodies, and the environment, primarily in the Far North.

Steven Goldleaf, a Professor of American Literature at Pace University, is currently editing John O’Hara’s novels and short fictions of the 1930s for the Library of America. He covered the Watergate hearings for the Columbia Spectator in the summer and fall of 1973, and is beginning to get over his outraged at Richard Nixon’s unpunished criminality.

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Michael Hill is Associate Professor at the University of Iowa, and his book The Ethics of Swagger: Prizewinning African American Novels, 1977–1993 came out in 2013. Along with his wife, Lena, he coedited Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa During the Long
List of Contributors


David Linton is Professor Emeritus of Communication Arts at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. His curiosity has led to publications on topics as varied as the reading behavior of the Virgin Mary, the communications theories of William Shakespeare, the Luddite Movement, the function of metacanonical texts, the Prince Charles Camillagate scandal, Marshall McLuhan and Hugh Hefner, and media theory, to name a few. He has been a long-time activist in academic politics having served as President of the New York State Conference of the American Association of University Professors. Currently he is on the board of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research and has written extensively about the social and cultural construction of menstruation.

Matthew Luter is on the English faculty at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School in Jackson, Mississippi. He is the author of Understanding Jonathan Lethem (2015). His articles, on authors including Don DeLillo, Ellen Douglas, Willie Morris, and Bret Easton Ellis, have appeared in journals including Critique, the Southern Literary Journal, Genre, and Orbit: Writing Around Pynchon. He is a founding board member of the International David Foster Wallace Society.

Sam McBean is lecturer in Modern and Contemporary American Literature at Queen Mary University of London. She is the author of Feminism’s Queer Temporalities (2016) and has published on contemporary literature, new media and affect, queer theory, and feminist theory in journals including Feminist Review, Camera Obscura, and the Journal of Lesbian Studies.

Philip McGowan is President (2016–2020) of the European Association for American Studies and senior lecturer in American Literature at Queen’s University Belfast. His research and teaching focus on twentieth-century American poetry, fiction, and film, with wider interests in revolutionary America, the American nineteenth century, westerns, and American narratives of addiction and alcohol control. His
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publications include work on John Berryman, Anne Sexton, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Bishop, Saul Bellow, and Wallace Stevens.

James Penner is Associate Professor of English at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. He is the author of *Pinks, Pansies, and Punks: The Rhetoric of American Literary Culture* (2011) and *Timothy Leary: The Harvard Years* (2014). He is also a contributor for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

Tom Perrin is Associate Assistant Professor of English and Associate Provost at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama. He is the author of *The Aesthetics of Middlebrow Fiction* (2015), and his work has also appeared in *American Literature, Novel, the Times Literary Supplement, Public Books*, and elsewhere.


David Seed holds a Chair in American Literature at Liverpool University. He has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of American Studies* and currently edits the Science Fiction Texts and Studies series for Liverpool University Press. His publications include *Brainwashing* (2004), *Cinematic Fictions* (2009), and *Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives* (2012). He is currently working on a study of nuclear terrorism in American fiction.

Nicole Stamant is Associate Assistant Professor of English at Agnes Scott College, where she specializes in Autobiography Studies and Ethnic American Literature. She is the author of *Serial Memoir: Archiving American Lives* (2014), and her articles on memoir and American literature have appeared in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature, Studies in Comics, MELUS, South Central Review*, and *a/b: Auto/Biography*.

Alex Vernon has written two military memoirs, *The Eyes of Orion* and *most succinctly bred* (2001 and 2011 respectively), and two war literature studies, *Soldiers Once and Still: Ernest Hemingway, James Salter, and Tim O’Brien* and *Hemingway’s Second War: Bearing Witness to the Spanish Civil War* (2004 and 2011 respectively). He has edited four volumes on the subject: *Arms and the Self: War, the Military, and Autobiographical Writing* (2005); *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Tim O’Brien*.
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**Eric G. Waggoner** is Chair of the English Department and Director of General Education at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, West Virginia, where he also teaches in the MFA in Writing Program. His scholarly publications include work on Ernest Hemingway, William Burroughs, David Wojnarowicz, Diamanda Galás, Tim O’Brien, protest/resistance art and culture, and experimental narrative. In addition to academic writing, he has published creative nonfiction in a variety of journals and is currently contributing editor and writer for *Magnet* magazine in Philadelphia. He is the founder and managing editor of Latham House Press.

**Linda Wagner-Martin**, retired from University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, has returned to her first love, writing academic books. *Emily Dickinson, A Literary Life* (2015); *Toni Morrison and the Maternal* (2015); *The Routledge Introduction to American Modernism* (2016); and *Maya Angelou, Adventurous Spirit* (2015, which was given an ESSENTIAL rating by Choice) are among her recent books. She has also written books on Barbara Kingsolver, American literature from 1950 to the present, and Hemingway and war. She edits two book series, including Matthew J. Bruccoli’s Contemporary American Literature series. In 2012 she received the Hubbell Medal for lifetime service in American literature.
Chronology

1970  Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*
     Judy Blume, *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*
     Jimmy Breslin, *The Gang That Couldn’t Shoot Straight*
     Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*
     James Dickey, *Deliverance*
     Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*
     Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*
     Ernest Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*
     Audre Lorde, *Cables to Rage*
     Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*
     Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
     Erich Segal, *Love Story*
     Alice Walker, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

1971  Anonymous, *Go Ask Alice*
     William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*
     Frank Chin, *The Chickencoop Chinaman*
     E. L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel*
     Ernest J. Gaines, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*
     Donald Goines, *Dopefiend*
     Arthur Hailey, *Wheels*
     Norman Mailer, *The Prisoner of Sex*
     Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (first US publication)
     David Rabe, *Sticks and Bones* and *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel*
     Philip Roth, *Our Gang*
     Anne Sexton, *Transformations*
     Sam Shepard and Patti Smith, *Cowboy Mouth*
     Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*
     Gay Talese, *Honor Thy Father*
     John Updike, *Rabbit Redux*
Chronology

1972  
Oscar Zeta Acosta, *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*
Isaac Asimov, *The Gods Themselves*
Richard Bach, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*
Frances FitzGerald, *Fire in the Lake*
Charles Gaines, *Stay Hungry*
Brian Garfield, *Death Wish*
Allen Ginsberg, *The Fall of America: Poems of These States, 1965–1971*
George V. Higgins, *The Friends of Eddie Coyle*
Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore*
Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives*
Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*
Alix Kates Shulman, *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*
Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

1973  
Oscar Zeta Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People*
Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle*
Don DeLillo, *Great Jones Street*
Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*
Audre Lorde, *From a Land Where Other People Live*
Toni Morrison, *Sula*
Tim O’Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*
Robert B. Parker, *The Godwulf Manuscript*
Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*
Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck*
Philip Roth, *The Great American Novel*
Jacqueline Susann, *Once is Not Enough*
Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72*
Gore Vidal, *Burr*
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Breakfast of Champions*

1974  
James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*
Peter Benchley, *Jaws*
Frank Chin, *The Year of the Dragon*
Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong (eds.), *Aiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*
Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War*
Joseph Heller, *Something Happened*
Chronology

Stephen King, Carrie
Elmore Leonard, Fifty-Two Pick-Up and Mr. Majestyk
Audre Lorde, New York Head Shop and Museum
Miguel Piñero, Short Eyes
Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
Richard Price, The Wanderers
Ishmael Reed, The Last Days of Louisiana Red
Philip Roth, My Life as a Man
Jonathan Rubin, The Barking Deer
Robert Stone, Dog Soldiers
Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, All the President’s Men

1975
Edward Abbey, The Monkey Wrench Gang
Saul Bellow, Humboldt’s Gift
Truman Capote, “La Côte Basque 1965”
Samuel R. Delany, Dhalgren
E. L. Doctorow, Ragtime
William Gaddis, JR
Gayl Jones, Corregidora
David Mamet, American Buffalo
Judith Rossner, Looking for Mr. Goodbar
Joanna Russ, The Female Man
Alice Walker, “In Search of Zora Neale Hurston”

1976
Lisa Alther, Kinflicks
Maya Angelou, Singin’ and Swingin’ and Gettin’ Merry Like Christmas
Raymond Carver, Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?
Don DeLillo, Ratner’s Star
Alex Haley, Roots: The Saga of an American Family
Maxine Hong Kingston, The Woman Warrior
Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July
Elmore Leonard, Swag
Audre Lorde, Coal
Marge Piercy, Woman on the Edge of Time
David Rabe, Streamers
Ishmael Reed, Flight To Canada
Tom Robbins, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues
Ntozake Shange, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf
Gore Vidal, 1876
Chronology

Alice Walker, *Meridian*
Tom Wolfe, “The ‘Me’ Decade and the Third Great Awakening”
Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days*
Richard Yates, *The Easter Parade*

1977
John Cheever, *Falconer*
Robert Coover, *The Public Burning*
Marilyn French, *The Women’s Room*
Nancy Friday, *My Mother/My Self: The Daughter’s Search for Identity*
John Guare, *Landscape of the Body*
Michael Herr, *Dispatches*
Stephen King, *The Shining*
Elmore Leonard, *Unknown Man No. 89*
John McPhee, *Coming into the Country*
Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*
Marcia Muller, *Edwin of the Iron Shoes*
Philip Roth, *The Professor of Desire*
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

1978
Charles Bukowski, *Women*
Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*
Don DeLillo, *Running Dog*
John Irving, *The World According to Garp*
Elmore Leonard, *The Switch*
Larry Kramer, *Faggots*
Tim O’Brien, *Going After Cacciato*
Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*
Sam Shepard, *Buried Child* and *Curse of the Starving Class*
Alix Kates Shulman, *Burning Questions*
John Updike, *The Coup*
James Webb, *Fields of Fire*

1979
James Baldwin, *Just Above My Head*
Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*
Truman Capote, *Handcarved Coffins*
Joan Didion, *The White Album*
Arthur Hailey, *Overload*
Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*
Norman Mailer, *The Executioner’s Song*
Chronology

Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*
William Styron, *Sophie’s Choice*
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Jailbird*
Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*