

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-108-84189-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century  
American Literature and Politics  
Edited by John D. Kerkerling  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND POLITICS

*The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Politics* addresses the political contexts in which nineteenth-century American literature was conceived, consumed, and criticized. Individual chapters examine how US literature from this period engaged with broad political concepts and urgent political issues, such as liberalism, conservatism, radicalism, nationalism, communitarianism, sovereignty, religious liberty, partisanship and factionalism, slavery, segregation, immigration, territorial disputes, voting rights, gendered spheres, and urban/rural tensions. Chapters on literary genres and forms show how poetry, drama, fiction, oratory, and nonfiction participated in political debate. The volume's Introduction situates these chapters in relation to two larger disciplines, the history of political thought and literary history. This Companion provides a valuable resource for students and instructors interested in nineteenth-century American literature and politics.

JOHN D. KERKERLING is Professor of English at Loyola University Chicago. His first book, *The Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2003), was a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title. He has published essays in *American Literature*, *Studies in Romanticism*, and *Victorian Poetry*. His latest book is *Racial Rhapsody: The Aesthetics of Contemporary U.S. Identity* (2019).

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-108-84189-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century  
American Literature and Politics  
Edited by John D. Kerkerling  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
AMERICAN LITERATURE  
AND POLITICS

JOHN D. KERKERLING

*Loyola University Chicago*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-108-84189-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century  
American Literature and Politics  
Edited by John D. Kerker  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of  
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108841894](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108841894)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108895095

© Cambridge University Press 2024

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions  
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take  
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2024

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-108-84189-4 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-108-81526-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this  
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,  
accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-108-84189-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century  
American Literature and Politics  
Edited by John D. Kerker  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

*In memory of  
Carol Jean Murphy  
1941–2013*

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv
<i>Chronology of Major Works and Events</i>	xv
 Introduction: Politics and Literary History <i>John D. Kerkerling</i>	 1
 PART I CONCEPTS	
1 The Liberal Tradition and Slavery <i>Arthur Riss</i>	19
2 Conservatism: Tradition, Hierarchy, and Fictions of Social Change <i>Edward Whitley</i>	35
3 The Literature of Radicalism <i>J. Michelle Coghlan</i>	51
4 Nationalism: Character, Identity, and Hyphenated Selfhood <i>John D. Kerkerling</i>	67
5 Communitarianism and Its Literary Contexts <i>David Faflik</i>	93
6 Constructing Sovereignty through Legal and Religious Discourses <i>Rochelle Raineri Zuck</i>	107
7 Religious Reestablishment from Pulpit to Page <i>Ashley Reed</i>	125
8 Competing Views of Partisanship and Factionalism <i>Sandra M. Gustafson</i>	143

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
PART II ISSUES		
9	Slavery: African American Vigilance in Slave Narratives of the 1820s and 1830s <i>Kelly Ross</i>	161
10	Disfranchisement, Segregation, and the Rise of African American Literature <i>Kenneth W. Warren</i>	178
11	Immigration: “The Chinese Question” in Economics, Law, and Literature <i>Spencer Tricker</i>	190
12	Territoriality: The Possessive Logics of American Placemaking <i>Kathryn Walkiewicz</i>	205
13	Voting Rights: “The Most Salient and Peculiar Point in Our Social Life” <i>Leslie Petty</i>	221
14	Defining and Defying a Woman’s Sphere <i>Monika M. Elbert</i>	238
15	Beyond the City and the Country: Rural Scarcity and Indigenous Survivance <i>John Funchion</i>	253
PART III GENRES		
16	Political Poetics: Intercrossing Discourses and American Belonging <i>Shira Wolosky</i>	271
17	Staging Debate in American Drama: Cheeses and Politics and Pigs <i>Heather S. Nathans</i>	289
18	The Evolving Modalities of Fiction and Politics <i>D. Berton Emerson</i>	304
19	Oratory: Persuasion in Performance <i>Angela G. Ray</i>	319
20	Authors on the Campaign Trail: “We Are Politicians Now” <i>John Hay</i>	332
	<i>Index</i>	348

## Figures

- |     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| 4.1 | <i>Southern Chivalry</i> , John L. Magee, lithograph, 1856.<br>Division of Home and Community Life, National<br>Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution,<br>Catalog Number 60.3451.  | page 69 |
| 4.2 | <i>Walt Whitman, 1819–1892</i> , Samuel Hollyer, steel engraving,<br>1854. <a href="http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002710162/">www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002710162/</a> .  | 71      |
| 4.3 | <i>The Laying of the Cable</i> , Baker & Godwin Printers,<br>New York, woodcut, 1858. <a href="https://lccn.loc.gov/2004665357">https://lccn.loc.gov/2004665357</a> .  | 73      |
| 4.4 | <i>The Stride of a Century</i> , Currier & Ives, New York,<br>lithograph, 1876. <a href="https://lccn.loc.gov/93506699">https://lccn.loc.gov/93506699</a> .  | 75      |
| 4.5 | <i>I Become a Transparent Eyeball</i> , Christopher Pearse Cranch,<br>manuscript drawing (recto), undated. <a href="https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/myerson/id/566/">https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/myerson/id/566/</a> . | 90      |

## Contributors

J. MICHELLE COGHLAN is Senior Lecturer in American Literature and Programme Director for American Studies at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Sensational Internationalism: The Paris Commune and the Remapping of American Memory in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 2016), which won the 2017 Arthur Miller Centre First Book Prize in American Studies, and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Food* (Cambridge, 2020). Her new project is *Louise Michel in America*.

MONIKA M. ELBERT is Professor of English and Distinguished University Scholar at Montclair State University. She edits the *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* and has published widely on the Gothic and on such nineteenth-century writers as Louisa May Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. She is the editor of *Hawthorne in Context* (Cambridge, 2018) and coeditor of *American Women's Regionalist Fiction: Mapping the Gothic* (Palgrave, 2021).

D. BERTON EMERSON is Associate Professor of English at Whitworth University. His work has appeared in *American Literature*, *ESQ*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. With Gregory Laski, he edited *Democracies in America* (Oxford, 2023). His monograph titled *American Literary Misfits: The Alternative Democracies of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Print Cultures* is in press (North Carolina).

DAVID FAFLIK is Professor of English at the University of Rhode Island. A specialist in nineteenth-century American literature and culture, he is the author, most recently, of *Transcendental Heresies: Harvard and the Modern American Practice of Unbelief* (Massachusetts, 2020) and *Urban Formalism: The Work of City Reading* (Fordham, 2020).



*List of Contributors*

xi

JOHN FUNCHION is Associate Professor of English at the University of Miami. He is the author of *Novel Nostalgias: The Aesthetics of Antagonism in Nineteenth-Century US Literature* (Ohio State, 2015) and coeditor with Edward Watts and Keri Holt of *Mapping Region in Early American Writing* (Georgia, 2015). His essays have appeared in *Early American Literature*, *ESQ*, and *Modern Language Quarterly*, and his next book is entitled “Insurgent Fictions: Partisan Mythology and the War State in Nineteenth-Century US Literature.”

SANDRA M. GUSTAFSON is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame and is the author of *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic* (Chicago, 2011) and *Peace in the US Republic of Letters, 1840–1900* (Oxford, 2023) as well as the coeditor, with Robert S. Levine, of *Reimagining the Republic: Race, Citizenship, and Nation in the Literary Work of Albion W. Tourgée* (Fordham, 2023).

JOHN HAY is Associate Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he specializes in nineteenth-century American literature. He is the author of *Postapocalyptic Fantasies in Antebellum American Literature* (Cambridge, 2017) and the editor of *Apocalypse in American Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, 2020).

JOHN D. KERKERLING is Professor of English at Loyola University Chicago. He is the author of *The Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge, 2003) and *Racial Rhapsody: The Aesthetics of Contemporary U.S. Identity* (Routledge, 2019). His essays have appeared in *American Literature*, *Victorian Poetry*, *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*, and *The Cambridge History of American Poetry*.

HEATHER S. NATHANS is Professor in the Tufts University Department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies and is also the Nathan and Alice Gantcher Professor in Judaic Studies. Her publications include *Early American Theatre from the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, 2003), *Slavery and Sentiment on the American Stage, 1787–1861* (Cambridge, 2009), and *Hideous Characters and Beautiful Pagans: Performing Jewish Identity on the Antebellum American Stage* (Michigan, 2017). She is the recipient of Guggenheim, Mellon, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and Katz Center fellowships.

LESLIE PETTY is Professor of English and T. K. Young Chair of English Literature at Rhodes College. Her research focuses on first-wave feminism and American literature. She has published essays in *Legacy*, *Studies in the American Short Story*, and *Women's Studies* and is currently writing a book entitled "Feminism, Modern Fiction, and American Literature Culture."

ANGELA G. RAY is Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the School of Communication at Northwestern University. She is the author of *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Michigan State, 2005) and coeditor, with Paul Stob, of *Thinking Together: Lecturing, Learning, and Difference in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Penn State, 2018). She recently has contributed chapters to *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies* (Oxford, 2017) and *Nineteenth-Century American Activist Rhetorics* (MLA, 2021).

ASHLEY REED is Associate Professor of English at Virginia Tech and author of *Heaven's Interpreters: Women Writers and Religious Agency in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cornell, 2020). Her articles have appeared in *J19*, *ESQ*, and *Religion Compass*.

ARTHUR RISS is Associate Professor of English at Salem State University. He has published *Race, Slavery, and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge, 2006) and is currently working on a project that examines the question of "When did slavery end in the United States?"

KELLY ROSS, Associate Professor of English at Rider University, is the author of *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre in Antebellum United States Literature* (Oxford, 2022). Her work has appeared in *PMLA*, the *Oxford Handbook of Edgar Allan Poe* (Oxford, 2019), and *American Literature in Transition: 1820–1860* (Cambridge, 2022). She coedits, with Emron Esplin, the journal *Poe Studies: History, Theory, Interpretation*.

SPENCER TRICKER is Assistant Professor of English at Clark University. His book manuscript in progress is titled "Imminent Communities: Liberal Cosmopolitanism and Empire in Transpacific Literature." He has published essays in *Studies in American Fiction*, *American Literary Realism*, and the edited volume *Crossings in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Edinburgh, 2022).

*List of Contributors*

xiii

KATHRYN WALKIEWICZ (walk-uh-wits) is an enrolled citizen of Cherokee Nation and Associate Professor of Literature at the University of California – San Diego. Walkiewicz is the author of *Reading Territory: Indigenous and Black Freedom, Removal, and the Nineteenth-Century State* (North Carolina, 2023).

KENNETH W. WARREN is Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. His books include *Black and White Strangers: Race and American Literary Realism* (Chicago, 1993), *So Black and Blue: Ralph Ellison and the Occasion of Criticism* (Chicago, 2003), and *What Was African American Literature?* (Harvard, 2010).

EDWARD WHITLEY is Professor and Chair of English at Lehigh University. He is the author of *American Bards: Walt Whitman and Other Unlikely Candidates for National Poet* (North Carolina, 2010) and the co-editor, with Joanna Levin, of both *Whitman among the Bohemians* (Iowa, 2014) and *Walt Whitman in Context* (Cambridge, 2018).

SHIRA WOLOSKY is Professor Emerita of the Hebrew University. Her books include *Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War* (Illinois, 1984), *Language Mysticism* (Stanford, 1995), *The Art of Poetry* (Oxford, 2001), *Poetry and Public Discourse* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), *Feminist Theory across Disciplines* (Routledge, 2013), and *The Bible in American Poetic Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). Her foundation fellowships include Guggenheim, American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), Fulbright, Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Tikvah Center, Katz Center, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, and Oxford's Drue Heinz Professorship.

ROCHELLE RAINERI ZUCK is Associate Professor of English at Iowa State University. Her publications include *Divided Sovereignities: Race, Nationhood, and Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century America* (Georgia, 2016) and articles in scholarly journals such as *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *ELH*, *American Periodicals*, *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, and *Journal of American Studies*.

## *Acknowledgments*

I have many people to thank for their various contributions to bringing this volume to fruition. I am grateful to Ray Ryan for inviting me to submit an initial proposal and to readers of that proposal for helpful suggestions. I thank the Syndics of Cambridge University Press for approving that proposal and the various contributors to this volume for agreeing to write the chapters appearing here. The contributors have all been graciously receptive to my feedback, and I thank them for that as well as for their patience with me and with each other as we have all faced the challenges of pandemic-altered schedules and lives. I thank Anthony Shoplik for creating this volume's chronology and helping select the suggestions for further reading. My students at Loyola University Chicago have been a tremendous asset to me as I taught courses exploring the issues addressed in this volume; of notable help were extended conversations with graduate students Daniel Cheung, Emma Horst, Jack O'Briant, and Anthony Shoplik. I received helpful critical feedback on my Introduction and Chapter 4 on nationalism from Daniel Cheung, Jake Fournier, Leslie Petty, and Anthony Shoplik, and I thank all of them for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. Adam Maze challenged me to think better about how to place Abraham Lincoln within the history of political thought, which greatly assisted me in writing this volume's Introduction. Finally, I am grateful to my wife, Jennifer, and my stepchildren, Alexandra, Anna, Audrey, Amelina, and Andrew, for their support and patience as we all lived with this project much longer than any of us anticipated.