

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-316-51270-8 — The Cambridge History of the American Essay  
Edited by Christy Wampole, Jason Childs  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF  
THE AMERICAN ESSAY

From the country's beginning, essayists in the United States have used their prose to articulate the many ways their individuality has been shaped by the politics, social life, and culture of this place. *The Cambridge History of the American Essay* offers the fullest account to date of this diverse and complex history. From Puritan writings to essays by Indigenous authors, from Transcendentalist and Pragmatist texts to Harlem Renaissance essays, from New Criticism to New Journalism: The story of the American essay is told here, beginning in the early eighteenth century and ending with the vibrant, heterogeneous scene of contemporary essayistic writing. The essay in the United States has taken many forms: nature writing, travel writing, the genteel tradition, literary criticism, and hybrid genres such as the essay film and the photo essay. Across genres and identities, this volume offers a stirring account of American essayism into the twenty-first century.

CHRISTY WAMPOLE is an essayist and professor at Princeton University. She has published two scholarly books, *Degenerative Realism: Novel and Nation in Twenty-First-Century France* (2020) and *Rootedness: The Ramifications of a Metaphor* (2016), and a collection of essays titled *The Other Serious: Essays for the New American Generation* (2015).

JASON CHILDS is a writer and independent scholar based in Berlin and Dijon. He has published research on the essay in *The Cambridge Companion to the Essay* (2022), *The Edinburgh Companion to the Essay* (2022), and *The Essay at the Limits: Poetics, Politics and Form* (2021).

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-316-51270-8 — The Cambridge History of the American Essay  
Edited by Christy Wampole , Jason Childs  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE  
HISTORY OF THE  
AMERICAN ESSAY

\*

*Edited by*  
CHRISTY WAMPOLE  
*Princeton University, New Jersey*

JASON CHILDS  
*Independent Scholar*



Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
 978-1-316-51270-8 — The Cambridge History of the American Essay  
 Edited by Christy Wampole, Jason Childs  
 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/9781316512708](http://www.cambridge.org/9781316512708)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009070041

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 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

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJJ Books Limited, Padstow, Cornwall 2024

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

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Wampole, Christy, 1977– editor. | Childs, Jason (Independent scholar), editor.

TITLE: The Cambridge history of the American essay / edited by Christy Wampole,  
 Jason Childs.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2024. | Includes  
 bibliographical references.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2023027898 (print) | LCCN 2023027899 (ebook) | ISBN 9781316512708  
 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009069021 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009070041 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: American essays – History and criticism.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PS420 .C36 2024 (print) | LCC PS420 (ebook) | DDC 814.009–dc23/eng/  
 20230919

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023027898>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023027899>

ISBN 978-1-316-51270-8 Hardback

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.

## Contents

*Acknowledgments* page ix  
*Notes on Contributors* xi

Introduction 1  
CHRISTY WAMPOLE

### PART I THE EMERGENCE OF THE AMERICAN ESSAY (1710–1865)

1 · Essays to Do Good: Puritanism and the Birth of the American Essay 15  
JAN STIEVERMANN

2 · Prattlers, Meddlers, Bachelors, Busy-Bodies: The Periodical Essay in the  
Eighteenth Century 32  
RICHARD SQUIBBS

3 · *The Federalist* and the Founders 46  
MATTHEW GARRETT

4 · American Nature Writing: 1700–1900 61  
NOAH RAWLINGS

5 · The Essay and Transcendentalism 81  
LAURA DASSOW WALLS

6 · Old World Shadows in the New: Europe and the Nineteenth-Century  
American Essay 96  
PHILIP COLEMAN

*Contents*

- 7 · Poet-Essayists and Magazine Culture in the Nineteenth Century 114  
 JOHN MICHAEL

- 8 · Antebellum Women Essayists 129  
 CHARLENE AVALLONE

PART II  
 VOICING THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT  
 (1865–1945)

- 9 · Writing Freedom before and after Emancipation 149  
 KINOHI NISHIKAWA

- 10 · Social Justice and the American Essay 166  
 CHRISTY WAMPOLE

- 11 · “Zones of Contention” in the Genteel Essay 182  
 JENNY SPINNER

- 12 · The American Comic Essay 197  
 DAVID E. E. SLOANE

- 13 · Nineteenth-Century American Travel Essays: Aesthetics, Modernity,  
 and National Identity 218  
 BRIGITTE BAILEY

- 14 · American Pragmatism: An Essayistic Conception of Truth 235  
 JONATHAN LEVIN

- 15 · The Essay in the Harlem Renaissance 250  
 SHAWN ANTHONY CHRISTIAN

- 16 · The Southern Agrarians and the New Criticism 265  
 SARAH E. GARDNER

- 17 · Subjective and Objective: Newspaper Columns 280  
 WILLIAM E. DOW

- 18 · The Experience of Art: The Essay in Visual Culture 300  
 TOM HUHN

*Contents*

- 19 · The Essay in American Music 314  
 KYLE GANN

PART III  
 POSTWAR ESSAYS AND ESSAYISM (1945–2000)

- 20 · The Essay and the Twentieth-Century Literary Magazine 337  
 ELENI THEODOROPOULOS
- 21 · Germans in Amerika: Written Possibility, Uninhabitable Reality 361  
 FLORIAN FUCHS
- 22 · The Essay and the American Left 378  
 ANDREA CAPRA
- 23 · The Native American Essay 395  
 HERTHA D. SWEET WONG
- 24 · Conservatism and the Essay 410  
 JEFFREY R. DUDAS
- 25 · Opinions and Decisions: Legal Essays 425  
 PETER GOODRICH
- 26 · World War Two to #MeToo: The Personal and the Political in the  
 American Feminist Essay 441  
 ELLENA SAVAGE
- 27 · Self-Portraits in a Convex Mirror: The Essay in American Poetry 460  
 LUCY ALFORD
- 28 · The American Essay and (Social) Science 477  
 TED ANTON
- 29 · Philosophy as a Kind of Writing 490  
 PAUL JENNER
- 30 · The Essay and Literary Postmodernism: Seriousness  
 and Exhaustion 509  
 STEFANO ERCOLINO

*Contents*

PART IV  
 TOWARD THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ESSAY  
 (2000–2020)

- 31 · The American Essay Film: A Neglected Genre 527  
 NORA M. ALTER
- 32 · Literary Theory, Criticism, and the Essay 545  
 CAROLINA IRIBARREN
- 33 · Gender, Queerness, and the American Essay 565  
 DAVID LAZAR
- 34 · Disability and the American Essay 582  
 ANNE FINGER
- 35 · The Radical Hybridity of the Lyric Essay 597  
 MICHAEL ASKEW
- 36 · Writing Migration: Multiculturalism, Democracy, and the Essay  
 Form 612  
 CYRUS R. K. PATELL
- 37 · Latinx Culture and the Essay 627  
 YOLANDA PADILLA
- 38 · Black Experience through the Essay 643  
 WALTON MUYUMBA
- 39 · The Essay and the Anthropocene 668  
 DAVID CARLIN
- Recommendations for Further Reading* 683  
*Index* 697



## *Acknowledgments*

First, we'd like to thank all of the contributors to this volume, who did much of the writing and research for their chapters under the challenging circumstances brought by the pandemic. Their perseverance in the face of those difficulties is commendable, and we appreciate all of the efforts they made to get their contributions to us and work alongside us through the various phases of editing.

Ray Ryan at Cambridge University Press has been a wonderful interlocutor and editor as we tackled this intimidating project. Thank you, Ray, for your sharp editorial eye and your guidance as this book of such enormity came together. We'd also like to thank Edgar Mendez at the press for his help with the project logistics.

Joseph Tabbi and Thomas Karshan offered helpful and encouraging feedback on the project in its earliest stages. Pierre Azou, Carolina Iribarren, and Hannah Grunow did incredible work on the Recommendations for Further Reading section, for which we are very grateful. Their thoroughness, determination, and many hours of work are much appreciated. We are also grateful for the attentive copy-editing done by Anne Sussmann, Hannah Grunow, Cecelia Ramsey, Pierre Azou, and Molly O'Brien, which put the finishing touches on the volume. Special credit is owed to Hannah Grunow, who went above and beyond on the many chapters she worked on.

We would like to thank our friends, family, and colleagues who supported us over the years this volume took to come together. Their encouragement was especially important during the most challenging phases of the project, which we might not have completed without their moral support. In particular, Jason Childs would like to thank Marion Childs and Noah Childs for their love, generosity, and patience. Christy Wampole would like to thank Florian, her loved ones and colleagues in Texas, Florida, California, New Jersey, Germany, and France, and the students at Princeton in her graduate

*Acknowledgments*

seminars and creative writing courses on the essay for their thoughtfulness, originality, and the inspiration they provided.

Finally, we wanted to honor the rich contributions to the field of essay studies of two tremendous scholars who, sadly, passed away recently. The first is Cheryl A. Wall (Rutgers University), whose book *On Freedom and the Will to Adorn: The Art of the African American Essay* (2019) showed the vast impact of Black writing on expanding the possibilities of what the essay can do. We'd also like to honor Ned Stuckey-French (Florida State University), whose many interventions on the essay were read and appreciated by essay lovers across the country, and who had pledged a chapter to this volume that his passing regrettably prevented him from writing. His book *The American Essay in the American Century* (2011) was an important model and inspiration for our own volume.

## Notes on Contributors

LUCY ALFORD is Assistant Professor of Literature at Wake Forest University, specializing in twentieth- and twenty-first-century American and comparative poetry and poetics. Her book *Forms of Poetic Attention* (2020) examines the modes of attention poems both require and produce, drawing examples from a range of historical and linguistic settings. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Stanford University and a PhD in Modern Thought from the University of Aberdeen. Her poems have been published in the *Warwick Review*, *Literary Matters*, *Streetlight*, *Harpur Palate*, *Mantis*, *Atelier*, *Action*, *Spectacle*, and *Fence*.

NORA M. ALTER is a scholar of comparative film and media arts and Professor at Temple University in Philadelphia. She has published numerous essays on cultural and visual studies, contemporary art, and sound studies. She is author of *Vietnam Protest Theatre: The Television War on Stage* (1996), *Sound Matters* (2004), *Chris Marker* (2006), and *The Essay Film after Fact and Fiction* (2018). She has a forthcoming monograph on Harun Farocki.

TED ANTON is Professor of English specializing in nonfiction and science writing at Chicago's DePaul University. He is the author of five books, including *Programmable Planet: The Synthetic Biology Revolution* (2023). His articles have appeared in *Nautilus*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Publishers Weekly*, and other magazines. He is a winner of a Carl Sandburg Award for nonfiction from the Chicago Public Library and a finalist for a National Magazine Award.

MICHAEL ASKEW is an independent scholar and Eric Gregory Award-winning poet based in Gloucestershire, UK. He was recently awarded his PhD from the University of East Anglia for his thesis, entitled "The Lyric Essay: A Contemporary Mode of Reading and Writing." He has also published research on the essayist Eliot Weinberger.

CHARLENE AVALLONE works as an independent scholar, having served on the faculties of the University of Hawai'i and the University of Notre Dame, where she was a cofounder of the Gender Studies Program. Her essays on nineteenth-century literary culture appear in such venues as *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, *George Sand Studies*, *Legacy*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *PMLA*, *Reception*, and in numerous critical anthologies. She was president of the Margaret Fuller Society from 2017 to 2020.

Notes on Contributors

BRIGITTE BAILEY is Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire. She is the author of *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824–1862* (2018), has coedited two books – *Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain* (2012) and *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* (2013) – and has edited a special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* on Margaret Fuller (2015). She is coediting the Library of America volume *Margaret Fuller: Collected Writing* (forthcoming). Her current book project examines periodical depictions of metropolitan spaces, especially of New York, from 1830 to 1860.

ANDREA CAPRA holds a PhD in Italian from Stanford University and is a Cotsen postdoctoral fellow at Princeton's Society of Fellows. His current book project analyzes horror's phenomenology in modernity and its representation in literary texts beyond the horror genre. He also writes for academic audiences on the storytelling surrounding computational technologies and for more public-facing venues on internet-centered fringe political movements. Some of his most recent work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *il verri*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*.

DAVID CARLIN is Professor of Creative Writing at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University in Australia. His books include the collaboratively authored *The After-Normal* (2019) and *100 Atmospheres: Studies in Scale and Wonder* (2019), as well as *Our Father Who Wasn't There* (2010) and *The Abyssinian Contortionist* (2015). He has coedited volumes including *A to Z of Creative Writing Methods* (2023), *The Near and the Far*, volumes 1 and 2 (2016 and 2019), and *Performing Digital* (2015) and made award-winning works for radio, film, theater, and circus. David is a copresident of the NonfictionNOW Conference and cofounder of the WrICE Asia-Pacific Collaborative Residency program and the non/fictionLab research group.

JASON CHILDS is a writer and independent scholar based in Berlin and Dijon. He coedited *The Cambridge History of the British Essay* (forthcoming) and has published research on the essay in *The Cambridge Companion to the Essay* (2022), *The Edinburgh Companion to the Essay* (2022), and *The Essay at the Limits: Poetics, Politics and Form* (2021). His writing has also appeared in the *Sydney Review of Books* and *American Book Review*, among others. He received his PhD from the University of Technology, Sydney, and trained as a psychotherapist at Deakin University in Melbourne. He maintains a small private counseling practice.

SHAWN ANTHONY CHRISTIAN is Associate Professor and Chairperson of English at Florida International University. He is the author of *The Harlem Renaissance and the Idea of a New Negro Reader* (2016). His other writings on the Harlem Renaissance and African American literary and print culture have appeared in several journals and volumes, including *The Harlem Renaissance Revisited* (2010), *Editing the Harlem Renaissance* (2021), and *African American Literature in Transition, 1930–1940* (2022).

PHILIP COLEMAN is Professor in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin, where he is a fellow. With Calista McRae, he coedited *The Selected Letters of John Berryman* (2020), and he has published *John Berryman's Public Vision* (2014). He has coedited several essay

Notes on Contributors

collections, including *“After thirty Falls”*: *New Essays on John Berryman* (2007), *Critical Insights: David Foster Wallace* (2015), *John Berryman: Centenary Essays* (2017), *George Saunders: Critical Essays* (2017), and *Robert Lowell and Irish Poetry* (2020). He contributed an essay entitled “Transatlantic Essayism” to *The Cambridge History of the British Essay*, edited by Jason Childs and Denise Gigante (forthcoming).

WILLIAM E. DOW is Professor of American Literature at the Université Gustave Eiffel (Paris-Est) and Professor of English at The American University of Paris. He is an associate editor of *Literary Journalism Studies* (Northwestern University Press) and has published articles in such journals as *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, and *MELUS*. He is the author of the book *Narrating Class in American Fiction* (2009) and coeditor of *Richard Wright: New Readings in the 21st Century* (2011), *Richard Wright in a Post-Racial Imaginary* (2014), *Latitudes Unknown: James Baldwin’s Radical Imagination* (2019), and *The Routledge Companion to American Literary Journalism* (2020).

JEFFREY R. DUDAS is Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut, where he also serves on the American Studies Executive Committee. He is cofounder and co-coordinator of UConn’s MA program in Politics and Popular Culture. He is author of *The Cultivation of Resentment: Treaty Rights and the New Right* (2008) and *Raised Right: Fatherhood in Modern American Conservatism* (2017). His essays appear in numerous venues, including *Law and Society Review*, *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*, *Law and Social Inquiry*, *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.

STEFANO ERCOLINO is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. His work has appeared in *Comparative Literature*, *Novel*, and *Historical Materialism*, among others. He is the author of *The Maximalist Novel: From Thomas Pynchon’s “Gravity’s Rainbow” to Roberto Bolaño’s “2666”* (2014), *The Novel-Essay, 1884–1947* (2014), and, with Massimo Fusillo, of *Empatia negativa: Il punto di vista del male* (Negative empathy: The point of view of evil) (2022). He taught at Yonsei University’s Underwood International College and has been a visiting professor at the University of Manchester, postdoctoral fellow at Freie Universität Berlin, and Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University. He co-edited the volume *Critica sperimentale: Franco Moretti e la letteratura* (*Experimental Criticism: Franco Moretti and Literature*) (2021), to be translated into English by Verso.

ANNE FINGER is a memoirist, novelist, and short story writer. Her most recent novel is *A Woman, in Bed* (2018). Her short story collection *Call Me Ahab* (2009), which won the Prairie Schooner Award, takes iconic disability stories such as *Moby-Dick* and “crips” them, rewriting them from a disabled perspective. She has also written two memoirs, two short story collections, and a novel, *Bone Truth* (1994). She is the recipient of a Creative Capital Grant and the Berlin Prize (2019), and she has held residencies at MacDowell, Djerassi, Yaddo, and Hedgebrook.

FLORIAN FUCHS is a postdoctoral researcher in Comparative Literature and Media Studies in the EXC 2020 “Temporal Communities” at Freie Universität Berlin. He received his PhD from Yale University in 2017 and was a postdoctoral researcher at

Notes on Contributors

Princeton University from 2018 to 2021. His first book, entitled *Civic Storytelling: The Rise of Short Forms and the Agency of Literature*, was published with Zone Books in 2023. He coedited and cotranslated *History, Metaphors, Fables: A Hans Blumenberg Reader*, published in 2020 with Cornell University Press.

KYLE GANN is a composer and the author of seven books, including *The Arithmetic of Listening: Tuning Theory and History for the Impractical Musician* (2019) and *Charles Ives's Concord: Essays after a Sonata* (2017), as well as books on Robert Ashley, Conlon Nancarrow, and John Cage's 4'33". From 1986 to 2005, he was new-music critic for the *Village Voice* in New York City. Since 1997, he has taught at Bard College, where he is Hawver Professor of Music. His musical magnum opus is *Hyperchromatica* (2015–2021), a three-hour-plus work for retuned, computerized pianos.

SARAH E. GARDNER is Distinguished University Professor and Professor of History at Mercer University. She is author most recently of *Reviewing the South: The Literary Marketplace and the Southern Renaissance, 1920–1941* (2017) and coeditor of *The Lost Lectures of C. Vann Woodward* (2020) and *Insiders/Outsiders: Toward a New History of Southern Thought* (2021). She has written extensively on mid-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary culture. She is currently writing a book on reading during the American Civil War.

MATTHEW GARRETT is Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Wesleyan University. His work concerns the relationship between literary form and social history. He is the author of *Episodic Poetics: Politics and Literary Form after the Constitution* (2014) and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative Theory* (2018), and his essays have appeared in *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, *Critical Inquiry*, *ELH*, the *Journal of Cultural Economy*, *Radical History Review*, and other venues.

PETER GOODRICH is Professor of Law and Director of the Program in Law and Humanities at Cardozo School of Law and Visiting Professor in the School of Social Science, NYU Abu Dhabi. He is an ardent advocate of argute alliterations and of the silent *p*, as in raspberry or psittacist. Chef, filmmaker, and essayist, his most recent book, *Judicial Uses of Images: Vision in Decision*, was published in 2023.

TOM HUHN is Chair of the Art History and Visual and Critical Studies departments at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He wrote *Imitation and Society: The Persistence of Mimesis in the Aesthetics of Burke, Hogarth, and Kant* (2004) and has edited or coedited *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno* (2004), *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of Taste* (1998), and *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory* (1997). His essays have appeared in *Art in America*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, *New German Critique*, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, and *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.

CAROLINA IRIBARREN is a PhD candidate in French at Princeton University. Her areas of focus are twentieth-century literature and film, with a special interest in Marxism and feminist theory. She has forthcoming and published articles on Simone Weil and ecology, Virginia Woolf and communication, and Anne Carson's translations of ancient Greek

*Notes on Contributors*

plays. Her present research concerns experimental fiction and film after May 1968 and the interplay of realist-utopian impulses therein.

PAUL JENNER is a lecturer in English at Loughborough University. His primary research areas are literature and the philosophy of literature. He has published, among others, on Marilynne Robinson, Stanley Cavell, Thomas Kuhn, George Santayana, and Richard Rorty. He is currently writing a monograph on Stanley Cavell and Marilynne Robinson.

DAVID LAZAR'S most recent books are *Celeste Holm Syndrome: On Character Actors* (2020) and the anthology *Don't Look Now: Writers on What They Wish They Hadn't Seen* (2020). His other essay collections include *I'll Be Your Mirror: Essays and Aphorisms* (2017), *Occasional Desire* (2013), *The Body of Brooklyn* (2012), and two prose poem collections, including *Who's Afraid of Helen of Troy* (2016). Ten of his essays were named Notable Essays of the Year by *Best American Essays*. Lazar was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Nonfiction in 2016. He is the coeditor of Ohio State University's 21st Century Essays imprint. Lazar created the undergraduate and graduate nonfiction programs at Ohio University and Columbia College Chicago.

JONATHAN LEVIN is Professor of English at the University of Mary Washington. He is the author of *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, and American Literary Modernism* (1999), as well as numerous essays and reviews on American literature and culture. He has edited editions of Thoreau's *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" and Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives*, as well as a children's illustrated *Walt Whitman*. He has taught at Columbia and Fordham Universities, served as Dean at SUNY-Purchase and at Drew University, and served as Provost at Mary Washington, where he presently teaches and chairs the Department of English and Linguistics.

JOHN MICHAEL is John Hall Deane Professor of English and of Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. He is the author of *Emerson and Skepticism: The Cipher of the World* (1988), *Anxious Intellectuals: Academic Professionals, Public Intellectuals, and Enlightenment Values* (2000), *Identity and the Failure of America from Thomas Jefferson to the War on Terror* (2008), and *Secular Lyric: The Modernization of the Poem in Poe, Whitman and Dickinson* (2018). He has published many articles on American literature, cultural studies, and critical theory, most recently on the novel epistemology of Amitav Ghosh and on history as lyric. He is finishing a book on globalization and the humanities.

WALTON MUYUMBA is Ruth N. Halls Associate Professor at Indiana University Bloomington. He teaches literary studies and creative writing. Muyumba's essays have appeared in the *Atlantic*, the *Believer*, *Film Quarterly*, *liquid blackness*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *Oxford American*, among other outlets. He has produced scholarship for *The Cambridge History of American Poetry*, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisational Studies*, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, and *Trained Capacities: John Dewey, Rhetoric, and Democratic Practice*. Muyumba is the author of *The Shadow and the Act: Black Intellectual Practice, Jazz Improvisation, and Philosophical Pragmatism* (2009).

Notes on Contributors

KINOHI NISHIKAWA is Associate Professor of English and African American Studies at Princeton University. He is the author of *Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground* (2018), and he is currently writing “Black Paratext,” a history of modern African American literature and book design. Nishikawa’s essays have appeared in *PMLA*, *American Literary History*, *MELUS*, *Chicago Review*, and other journals.

YOLANDA PADILLA is Associate Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington, Bothell. She is coeditor of three volumes: *Latina Histories and Cultures: Feminist Readings and Recoveries of Archival Knowledge* (2023), *Bridges, Borders, and Breaks: History, Narrative, and Nation in Twenty-First-Century Chicana/o Literary Criticism* (2016), and *The Plays of Josefina Niggli: Recovered Landmarks of Latina Literature* (2007). She is currently working on a book on early twentieth-century borderlands literature and print culture, and has published work related to this project in journals such as *New Centennial Review*, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, *English Language Notes*, and *Aztlan*.

CYRUS R. K. PATELL is Professor of English at New York University and the author of *Emergent U.S. Literatures: From Multiculturalism to Cosmopolitanism in the Late Twentieth Century* (2014), *Cosmopolitanism and the Literary Imagination* (2015), and, most recently, *Lucasfilm: Filmmaking, Philosophy, and the Star Wars Universe* (2021). He is the coeditor (with Deborah Lindsay Williams) of the *Oxford History of the Novel in English*, volume 8, *American Fiction since 1940* and is presently at work on a study of the global spread of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and a personal narrative about the importance of cosmopolitanism.

NOAH RAWLINGS is a writer from North Carolina and a doctoral student in Princeton University’s Department of French and Italian. His criticism, reporting, and creative writing have appeared in *Art Papers*, *Burnaway*, *Joyland*, and elsewhere; he also copy-edits for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. His research concerns the history of environmental thought and its manifestations in literature, philosophy, visual art, and material practices (agriculture, horticulture) in the long nineteenth century.

ELLENA SAVAGE is an early career scholar in creative writing with an interest in the essay; life writing; queer, feminist, and activist literatures; and experimental textual practices. Her debut essay collection, *Blueberries* (2020), was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier’s Literary Award and longlisted for the Stella Prize. She was a Marten Bequest traveling scholar in 2019–21 and a teaching fellow at the University of Birmingham in 2022–23. She is currently working on a novel with support from the Australia Council for the Arts.

DAVID E. E. SLOANE is Professor Emeritus, University of New Haven. He earned his PhD at Duke University in 1970. Among the books he has authored are *Mark Twain as a Literary Comedian* (1979), *The Literary Humor of the Urban Northeast, 1830–1890* (1983), *American Humor Magazines and Comic Periodicals* (1987), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: American Comic Vision* (1988), and *Student Companion to Mark Twain* (2001). He is the editor of *Mark Twain’s Humor: Critical Essays* (1993) and *New Directions in American Humor* (1998); he also contributed “Huckleberry Finn and Race:



Notes on Contributors

A Teacher's Toolbox" to Victor Doyno's CD *Huck Finn: The Complete Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Manuscript* (2003).

JENNY SPINNER is Professor of English at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. She is the author of creative essays as well as numerous works on the history of women essayists, including *Of Women and the Essay: An Anthology from 1655 to 2000* (2018). She serves as a senior editor of *Essay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies*.

RICHARD SQUIBBS is Associate Professor of English at DePaul University in Chicago and author of *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay* (2014), as well as more recent articles and chapters on British and early American periodicals. He is currently writing a monograph that explores the messy entanglements of picaresque fiction and the early English novel, portions of which have appeared in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (2018) and *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (2019).

JAN STIEVERMANN is Professor of the History of Christianity in the United States at Heidelberg University. His publications include book-length studies of Emerson's theology and aesthetics (2007), as well as of Cotton Mather's *Biblia Americana* (2016). For the scholarly edition of the *Biblia*, he has edited volumes 5 and 10 (2015 and 2022), and he serves as the executive editor of the whole project. Among other multiauthored volumes, he coedited *A Peculiar Mixture: German-Language Cultures and Identities in Eighteenth-Century North America* (2013), *The Oxford Handbook of Jonathan Edwards* (2021), and *The Bible in Early Transatlantic Pietism and Evangelicalism* (2022).

ELENI THEODOROPOULOS is a PhD student in comparative thought and literature at Johns Hopkins University, where she works on the essay and twentieth-century essayistic fiction.

LAURA DASSOW WALLS is Professor Emerita at the University of Notre Dame, where she taught American literature and the history and theory of ecological thought; previously she taught at Lafayette College and the University of South Carolina. Her book *Henry David Thoreau: A Life* (2017) received Phi Beta Kappa's Christian Gauss Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for Biography. Her other books include the award-winning *Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America* (2009), *Emerson's Life in Science: The Culture of Truth* (2003), and *Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science* (1995). Currently she is working on a literary biography of the American writer Barry Lopez.

CHRISTY WAMPOLE is an essayist and professor at Princeton University. In addition to her two scholarly books, *Degenerative Realism: Novel and Nation in Twenty-First-Century France* (2020) and *Rootedness: The Ramifications of a Metaphor* (2016), she has published a collection of essays titled *The Other Serious: Essays for the New American Generation* (2015). Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *Aeon Magazine*, the *European Review of Books*, *Public Books*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

*Notes on Contributors*

HERTHA D. SWEET WONG, Professor of the Graduate School at the University of California, Berkeley, teaches and writes about autobiography, visual culture, and American literature, particularly Indigenous literatures. She is author of *Picturing Identity: Contemporary American Autobiography in Image and Text* and *Sending My Heart Back across the Years: Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* and numerous essays on Indigenous literatures, as well as editor or coeditor of three anthologies of Native American literatures.