

The Intuitionist A Novel

Although 2002 MacArthur Fellowship recipient Colson Whitehead ardently resists overarching categorizations of his work, Derek C. Maus argues in this volume that Whitehead's first six books are linked by a careful balance between adherence to and violation of the wisdom of past generations. Whitehead bids readers to come along with him on challenging, often open-ended literary excursions designed to reexamine accepted notions of truth. Understanding Colson Whitehead unravels the parallel structures found within Whitehead's fiction from his 1999 novel *The Intuitionist* through 2011's *Zone One*. In his choice of literary forms, Whitehead attempts to revitalize the limiting formulas to which they have been reduced by first imitating and then violating the conventions of those genres and sub-genres. Whitehead similarly tests subject matter, again imitating and then satirizing various forms of conventional wisdom as a means of calling out unexamined, ignored, and/or malevolent aspects of American culture. Although only one of many subjects that Whitehead addresses, race often takes a place of centrality in his works and, as such, serves as the prime example of how Whitehead asks his readers to revisit their assumptions about meanings and values. By jumbling the literary formulas of the detective novel, the heroic folktale, the coming-of-age story, and the zombie apocalypse, Whitehead reveals the flaws and shortcomings of many of the long-lasting stories through which Americans have defined themselves. Some of the stories Whitehead focuses on are explicitly literary in nature, but he more frequently directs his attention toward the historical and cultural processes that influence how race, class, gender, education, social status, and other categories of identity determine what an individual supposedly can and cannot do.

The Souls of Mixed Folk examines representations of mixed race in literature and the arts that redefine new millennial aesthetics and politics. Focusing on black-white mixes, Elam analyzes expressive works—novels, drama, graphic narrative, late-night television, art installations—as artistic rejoinders to the perception that post-Civil Rights politics are bereft and post-Black art is apolitical. Reorienting attention to the cultural invention of mixed race from the social sciences to the humanities, Elam considers the creative work of Lezley Saar, Aaron McGruder, Nate Creekmore, Danzy Senna, Colson Whitehead, Emily Raboteau, Carl Hancock Rux, and Dave Chappelle. All these writers and artists address mixed race as both an aesthetic challenge and a social concern, and together, they gesture toward a poetics of social justice for the "mulatto millennium." *The Souls of Mixed Folk* seeks a middle way between competing hagiographic and apocalyptic impulses in mixed race scholarship, between those who proselytize mixed race as the great hallelujah to the "race problem" and those who can only hear the alarmist bells of civil rights destruction. Both approaches can obscure some of the more critically astute engagements with new millennial iterations of mixed race by the multi-generic cohort of contemporary writers, artists, and performers discussed in this book. *The Souls of Mixed Folk* offers case studies of their creative work in an effort to expand the contemporary idiom about mixed race in the so-called post-race moment, asking how might new millennial expressive forms suggest an aesthetics of mixed race? And how might such an aesthetics productively reimagine the relations between race, art, and social equity in the twenty-first century?

This Encyclopedia is an indispensable reference guide to twentieth-century fiction in the English-language. With nearly 500 contributors and over 1 million words, it is the most comprehensive and authoritative reference guide to twentieth-century fiction in the English language. Contains over 500 entries of 1000-3000 words written in lucid, jargon-free prose, by an international cast of leading scholars Arranged in 3 volumes covering British and Irish Fiction, American Fiction, and World Fiction, with each volume edited by a leading scholar in the field Entries cover major writers (such as Saul Bellow, Raymond Chandler, John Steinbeck, Virginia Woolf, A.S Byatt, Samuel Beckett, D.H. Lawrence, Zadie Smith, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Nadine Gordimer, Alice Munro, Chinua Achebe, J.M. Coetzee, and Ng?g? Wa Thiong'o) and their key works Covers the genres and sub-genres of fiction in English across the twentieth century (including crime fiction, sci fi, chick lit, the noir novel, and the avante garde novel) as well as the major movements, debates, and rubrics within the field (censorship, globalization, modernist fiction, fiction and the film industry, and the fiction of migration, Diaspora, and exile)

A History of the African American Novel offers an in-depth overview of the development of the novel and its major genres. In the first part of this book, Valerie Babb examines the evolution of the novel from the 1850s to the present, showing how the concept of black identity has transformed along with the art form. The second part of this History explores the prominent genres of African American novels, such as neoslave narratives, detective fiction, and speculative fiction, and considers how each one reflects changing understandings of blackness. This book builds on other literary histories by including early black print culture, African American graphic novels, pulp fiction, and the history of adaptation of black novels to film. By placing novels in conversation with other documents - early black newspapers and magazines, film, and authorial correspondence - *A History of the African American Novel* brings many voices to the table to broaden interpretations of the novel's development.

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE FOR FICTION 2020 WINNER OF THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR POLITICAL FICTION 2020 Winner of the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction 2020 Time #1 Novel of the Year 2019

Author of *The Underground*

Railroad, Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in 1960s Florida. Elwood Curtis has taken the words of Dr Martin Luther King to heart: he is as good as anyone. Abandoned by his parents, brought up by his loving, strict and clear-sighted grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But given the time and the place, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy his future, and so Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy, which claims to provide 'physical, intellectual and moral training' which will equip its inmates to become 'honorable and honest men'. In reality, the Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where physical, emotional and sexual abuse is rife, where corrupt officials and

tradesmen do a brisk trade in supplies intended for the school, and where any boy who resists is likely to disappear 'out back'. Stunned to find himself in this vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold on to Dr King's ringing assertion, 'Throw us in jail, and we will still love you.' But Elwood's fellow inmate and new friend Turner thinks Elwood is naive and worse; the world is crooked, and the only way to survive is to emulate the cruelty and cynicism of their oppressors. The tension between Elwood's idealism and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision which will have decades-long repercussions. Based on the history of a real reform school in Florida that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped and destroyed the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative by a great American novelist whose work is essential to understanding the current reality of the United States. 'If greatness is excellence sustained over time, then without question, Whitehead is one of the greatest of his generation. In fact, figuring his age, acclaim, productivity and consistency, he is one of the greatest American writers alive' *Time* 'A commanding triumph' *Sunday Times* 'Every chapter hits its mark' *New York Times*

5 Great Stories That Grab You. Colson Whitehead charts the rise to fame of a truth-telling comedian. Stephen O'Connell transports us to a cabin in the woods, where a young woman becomes increasingly convinced she's not alone. Lydia Davis' narrator acutely details the behavior of three cows who live in a pasture just across the road. Plus inspiring work by Pasha Malla and Marisa Silver.

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. All the slaves lead a hellish existence, but Cora has it worse than most; she is an outcast even among her fellow Africans and she is approaching womanhood, where it is clear even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a slave recently arrived from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they take the perilous decision to escape to the North. In Whitehead's razor-sharp imagining of the antebellum South, the Underground Railroad has assumed a physical form: a dilapidated box car pulled along subterranean tracks by a steam locomotive, picking up fugitives wherever it can. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But its placid surface masks an infernal scheme designed for its unknowing black inhabitants. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher sent to find Cora, is close on their heels. Forced to flee again, Cora embarks on a harrowing flight, state by state, seeking true freedom. At each stop on her journey, Cora encounters a different world. As Whitehead brilliantly recreates the unique terrors for black people in the pre-Civil War era, his narrative seamlessly weaves the saga of America, from the brutal importation of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. The Underground Railroad is at once the story of one woman's ferocious will to escape the horrors of bondage and a shatteringly powerful meditation on history.

Increasing specialization within the discipline of English and American Studies has shifted the focus of scholarly discussion toward theoretical reflection and cultural contexts. These developments have benefitted the discipline in more ways than one, but they have also resulted in a certain neglect of close reading. As a result, students and researchers interested in such material are forced to turn to scholarship from the 1960s and 1970s, much of which relies on dated methodological and ideological presuppositions. The handbook aims to fill this gap by providing new readings of texts that figure prominently in the literature classroom and in scholarly debate ? from James's *The Ambassadors* to McCarthy's *The Road*. These readings do not revert naively to a time "before theory." Instead, they distil the insights of literary and cultural theory into concise introductions to the historical background, the themes, the formal strategies, and the reception of influential literary texts, and they do so in a jargon-free language accessible to readers on all levels of qualification.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, this #1 *New York Times* bestseller chronicles a young slave's adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South. The basis for the acclaimed original Amazon Prime Video series directed by Barry Jenkins. Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. And so when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering, like Gulliver, strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop. As Whitehead brilliantly re-creates the terrors of the antebellum era, he weaves in the saga of our nation, from the brutal abduction of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. The Underground Railroad is both the gripping tale of one woman's will to escape the horrors of bondage—and a powerful meditation on the history we all share. Look for Colson Whitehead's bestselling new novel, *Harlem Shuffle*!

Colson Whitehead's *The Intuitionist* wowed critics and readers everywhere and marked the debut of an important American writer. This marvellously inventive, genre-bending, noir-inflected novel, set in the curious world of elevator inspection, portrays a universe parallel to our own, where matters of morality, politics, and race reveal unexpected ironies.

The American Novel Now navigates the vast terrain of the American novel since 1980, exploring issues of identity, history, family, nation, and aesthetics, as well as cultural movements and narrative strategies from over seventy different authors and novels. Discusses an exceptionally wide-range of authors and novels, from established figures to significant emerging writers Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Louise Erdrich, Don DeLillo, Richard Powers, Kathy Acker and many more Explores the range of themes and styles offered in the wealth of contemporary American fiction since 1980, in both mainstream and experimental writings Reflects the liveliness and diversity of American fiction in the last thirty years Written in a style that makes it ideal for students and scholars, while also accessible for general readers

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER From two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author Colson Whitehead, a gloriously entertaining novel of heists, shakedowns and rip-offs set in Harlem in the 1960s. "Ray Carney was only slightly bent when it came to being crooked. . . ." To his customers and neighbours on 125th street, Carney is an upstanding salesman of reasonably priced furniture, making a life for himself and his family. He and his wife Elizabeth are expecting their second child, and if her parents on Striver's Row don't approve of him or their cramped apartment across from the subway tracks, it's still home. Few people know he descends from a line of uptown hoods and crooks, and that his façade of normalcy has more than a few cracks in it. Cracks that are getting bigger and bigger all the time. See, cash is tight, especially with all those installment-plan sofas, so if his cousin Freddie occasionally drops off the odd ring or necklace at the furniture store, Ray doesn't see the need to ask where it comes from. He knows a discreet jeweller downtown who also doesn't ask questions. Then Freddie falls in with a crew who plans to rob the Hotel Theresa--the "Waldorf of Harlem"--and volunteers Ray's services as the fence. The heist doesn't go as

From his first novel, *The Intuitionist*, in 1999, Colson Whitehead has produced fiction that brilliantly blurs genre and cultural lines to demonstrate the universal angst and integral bonds shared by all Americans. By neglecting to mention a character's racial heritage, Whitehead challenges the cultural assumptions of his readers. His African American protagonists are well educated and upwardly mobile and thus lack some of the social angst that is imposed by racial stratification. Despite the critical acclaim and literary awards Whitehead has received, there have been few in-depth examinations of his work. In *Colson Whitehead: The Postracial Voice of Contemporary Literature*, Kimberly Fain explores the work of this literary trailblazer, discussing how his novels reconstruct the American identity to be inclusive rather than exclusive and thus broaden the scope of who is considered an American. Whitehead attempts this feat by including African Americans among the class of people who may achieve the American Dream, assuming they are educated and economically mobile. While the conflicts faced by his characters are symptoms of the universal human condition, they assimilate at the expense of cultural alienation and emotional emptiness. In addition to *The Intuitionist*, Fain also examines *John Henry Days*, *Apex Hides the Hurt*, *The Colossus of New York*, *Sag Harbor*, and *Zone One*, demonstrating how they bend genre tropes and approach literary motifs from a postracial perspective. Comparing the author to his African American and American literary forebears, as well as examining his literary ambivalence between post-blackness and postracialism, Colson Whitehead offers readers a unique insight to one of the most important authors of the twenty-first century. As such, this book will be of interest to scholars of African American literature, American literature, African American studies, American studies, multicultural studies, gender studies, and literary theory.

Pure shimmering brilliance...One of the funniest books I've ever read' Gary Shteyngart

On assignment for a travel Web site, J. Sutter, a young African-American freelance journalist, heads for West Virginia to cover the "John Henry Days" festival in honor of the new U.S. postage stamp honoring John Henry and discovers the real-life story of John Henry and its relevance to his own life and times. By the author of *The Intuitionist*. Reader's Guide available. Reprint. 50,000 first printing.

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape. Though they manage to find a station and head north, they are being hunted. Their first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But the city's placid surface masks an insidious scheme designed for its black denizens. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher, is close on their heels.

The best-selling author of *Zone One* describes his uproarious participation in the World Series of Poker after only six weeks of training, recounting how he interacted with a gritty subculture of high-stakes players while endeavoring to maintain his parenting responsibilities. 50,000 first printing.

The first book in many years to take in the full sweep of national fiction, *The Dream of the Great American Novel* explains why this supposedly antiquated idea continues to thrive. It shows that four G.A.N. "scripts" are keys to the dynamics of American literature and identity--and to the myth of a nation perpetually under construction.

The Nickel Boys is Colson Whitehead's follow-up to the Pulitzer Prize- and National Book Award-winning bestseller *The Underground Railroad*, in which he dramatises another strand of United States history, this time through the story of two boys sentenced to a stretch in a hellish reform school in Jim-Crow-era Florida.

Hope Isn't Stupid is the first study to interrogate the neglected connections between affect and the practice of utopia in contemporary American literature. Although these concepts are rarely theorized together, it is difficult to fully articulate utopia without understanding how affects circulate within utopian texts. Moving away from science fiction—the genre in which utopian visions are often located—author Sean Grattan resuscitates the importance of utopianism in recent American literary history. Doing so enables him to assert the pivotal role contemporary American literature has to play in allowing us to envision alternatives to global neoliberal capitalism. Novelists William S. Burroughs, Dennis Cooper, John Darnielle, Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, and Colson Whitehead are deeply invested in the creation of utopian possibilities. A return to reading the utopian wager in literature from the postmodern to the contemporary period reinvigorates critical forms that imagine reading as an act of communication, friendship, solace, and succor. These forms also model richer modes of belonging than the diluted and impoverished ones on display in the neoliberal present. Simultaneously, by linking utopian studies and affect studies, Grattan's work resists the tendency for affect studies to codify around the negative, instead reorienting the field around the messy, rich, vibrant, and ambivalent affective possibilities of the world. *Hope Isn't Stupid* insists on the centrality of utopia not only in American literature, but in American life as well.

As the Civil Rights movement begins to reach the black enclave of Frenchtown in segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: He is "as good as anyone." Abandoned by his parents, but kept on the straight and narrow by his grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But for a black boy in the Jim Crow South of the early 1960s, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy the future. Elwood is sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, whose mission statement says it provides "physical, intellectual and moral training" so the delinquent boys in their charge can become "honorable and honest men." In reality, the Nickel Academy is a grotesque chamber of horrors where the sadistic staff beats and sexually abuses the students, corrupt officials and locals steal food and supplies, and any boy who resists is likely to disappear "out back." Stunned to find himself in such a vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold onto Dr. King's ringing assertion "Throw us in jail and we will still love you." His friend Turner thinks Elwood is worse than naive, that the world is crooked, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. The tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Formed in the crucible of the evils Jim Crow wrought, the boys' fates will be determined by what they endured at the Nickel Academy.

*The Intuitionist*Anchor

This Companion is an authoritative, comprehensive, and accessible guide to the key works, genres, and movements of postmodern American fiction.

African-American authors have consistently explored the political dimensions of literature and its ability to affect social change.

the particular methods of researching and writing that have proved valuable to telling his stories, and the ways in which he has managed the rollercoaster life of a professional writer. He also opens up about popular culture, particularly the unconventional blend of music, genre fiction, B movies, and comic books that he gleefully identifies as a passion that has persisted for him since his childhood.

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