**Hester Blum, ed. *Turns of Event: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies in Motion*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, £18.91). Pp. 224. ISBN 978-0812247985.**

In the Introduction to her state-of-the-field collection *Turns of Event*, Hester Blum acknowledges the “propensity of C19 literary studies to desire revolutionary movement” (4). It seems that nineteenth-century Americanists are always looking for something new, whether it be reorienting their approach to existing material or elevating a previously under-acknowledged author or text.[[1]](#footnote-1) Instead of providing detailed histories and particularitiesof each turn in the field, the chapters in *Turns of Event* “seek to understand the conditions that produce shifts in momentum” (4). In particular, the essays by Gregory Sanborn and Christopher Castiglia attend to the meaning of the “turn” itself within American literary studies.

In “Turn it Up: Affects, Structures of Feeling, and Face-to-Face Education”, Sanborn considers the idea of the turn through Silvan Tomkin’s concept of “affective amplification”, in which “a simultaneously new and familiar social entity has been formed” (15). The turn occurs as a “turning up the volume on our collective interest in a field”, bringing together and amplifying individual voices until they forge a new, collective movement and identity (15). Referring to the moment a party gets started in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Sanborn playfully asks, “is there a relationship between, say putting together a literary studies symposium and getting a party started on the dance floor? Yes. Is there anything wrong with that relationship? No” (15). Using this dancing analogy, Sanborn persuades us to think of the turn not simply as a change in critical direction, but as a momentum that energises individuals, and a movement that centres human interactions at the heart of academic discourse.

With Sanborn’s framework in mind, we can think of the British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists (BrANCA) amongst the “turnings” in American literary studies (16). Formed in 2012, BrANCA is UK-based network of academics, critics and writers invested in researching and teaching American literature of the long nineteenth century. Instead of a singular critical direction, BrANCA is a collective centred on human and digital interaction and collaboration, which amplifies discussion and debate in American literary studies.Through reading groups, Twitter #bookhours, conference panels, pedagogical projects and symposia, we seek to “turn up the volume” on progressive, interdisciplinary scholarship throughout the UK and foster a community of scholars across all career stages.

After asking us to become more “aware of our affective involvement in our intellectual activities”, Sanborn considers how face-to-face pedagogy can foster “affective amplification” (17). Like the party, the seminar is “the product of an occasion”, constantly moving and turning with each new participant adding to the discussion (21). The seminar has the “capacity to reveal faces as possible worlds” with their own experiences and energies to learn (21). Part of that possibility comes from what the student does not know, when they present to us a blank face. How do we engage with students who feel disconnected—historically, geographically, socially—from nineteenth-century American literature? As Sanborn writes a provocation and not a teaching handbook, it is up to his reader to find the seminar questions that acknowledge and celebrate the difficulty of this literature. Whilst making a convincing case for face-to-face education, Sanborn is quiet on how we could—if possible—translate education’s aim for students to “think and feel otherwise”, into digital learning (21). It’s clear that one of the challenges of teaching nineteenth-century American literature during the twenty-first century will be to make online or digital pedagogy an affective venue for discussion and debate.

Another challenge of researching and teaching literature of this period is how to maintain its aesthetic and affective vitality without reading contemporary “hidden” meanings into texts.[[2]](#footnote-2)In “Twists and Turns”, Castiglia takes a critical look at turns in the field, arguing that most still follow this form of critique, so “are not really changing much at all” (61). Without changing *how* we read, these turns never truly move forward, but instead simply rotate on the same axis, ending up twisted into knots. Noting the increasing questioning of the “contemporary viability of ‘critique’” by nineteenth-century Americanists, Castiglia pictures what “post-critique” could look like if we return to and elevate “the imaginative idealism, the *hope*, at the heart of criticism” (61, 62).[[3]](#footnote-3)

Bringing idealism back to the fore of critique, Castiglia echoes Sanborn in recognising possibility as a critical mode. Hope is never settled or solidified; it exists “in perpetual and productive incompletion”, always moving, or turning, forwards towards an un-materialised future (68). Therefore, hope inherently has a critical edge, always demanding more and always “profoundly *dis*satisfied” with the present (68). By freeing our own latent idealism, we can recognise “hope as a powerful force for social bodies” within the literature itself (71). Drawing on C. L. R. James and Richard Chase’s idealistic readings of *Moby-Dick* (1851), Castiglia contends that literature offers a “democratic countersociality”, which powerfully critiques contemporary society by insistently looking forwards to a better world (74).

Although not explicitly stated, both Sanborn and Castiglia’s essays are leading us to a critical practice of empathy. Grounded in the imagination, empathy engages with the lived experience of others, whether authors, characters or own peers and students. Sanborn’s affective pedagogy and Castiglia’s reframing of “post-critique” gesture toward this empathic approach. Both complement each other because by changing *how* we read as critics, we can amend how we ask students to read; and by bringing together Sanborn’s “faces” into conversation, we recognize the importance of the human at the heart of literature itself. In a distinctly non-empathic age, it is literature that teaches us how to “think and feel otherwise” (21). The power of imagination that Castiglia identifies is surely most potent when we try to imagine the experiences of those who are completely alien to us, yet share a common humanity. As perhaps the most radical “Provocations” in this collection, it is not the job of Sanborn and Castiglia’s essays to answer every challenge of researching and teaching nineteenth-century American literature today. However, where they both succeed is in reasserting the affective and social vitality of literature of this period and literary studies itself, inviting us onto the dance floor as a new party gets started.

Hannah Lauren Murray

*The University of Nottingham*

\*\*\*\*

Hester Blum’s exciting and field-shifting collection, *Turns of Event*, sets out not just to chart and interrogate the varied methodological and theoretical “turns” that have animated the field of nineteenth-century American literary studies over the past two decades, but most vitally to argue that the ongoing “critical mobility” within the field is one of its primary strengths. As Blum herself puts it in the introduction, “These turns are not fads or fashions or weather vanes. Nor are they negations, nor revolutions, nor wheels on fire. The turns that continue to sustain Americanist scholarship reflect instead the field’s flexible qualities of reinvention” (3). The volume thus points to, though does not itself exactly reference, a larger re-energizing of the field that has developed over the past decade. This not so much turn exactly as instead critical constellation, recalibration, and expanding digital and physical scholarly community can be signalled by the founding, in 2009, of C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, and the 2013 launch of *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* as well as through the inaugural symposium of BrANCA: the British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists later that year. Likewise, it can be evidenced by the recent publication of two ground-breaking volumes with which *Turns of Events* resonates and equally importantly complements: Dana Luciano and Ivy Wilson’s *Unsettled States: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies* (New York University Press, 2014) and Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby’s *American Literature’s Aesthetic Dimensions* (Columbia UP, 2012). Where Weinstein and Looby’s volume stemmed from what Nancy Bentley termed the field’s increasing “disenchant[ment] with disenchantment” (6) and sought to “provide examples of how literary critics might move forward as they position American literature’s aesthetic dimensions in relation to its ideological ones” (10), Luciano and Wilson’s collection aimed instead to index the flux in the field or, as they put it, “to consider how [temporal, spatial and canonical] uncertainty might unsettle and remap our critical relations to the field itself” (5) by attending to these questions not from the vantage point of enchantment but rather through the lens of ostensibly “minor” fields in Americanist literary studies: critical race and ethnic studies, feminist and gender studies, labour studies, and queer/sexuality studies.

*Turns of Event* builds on that conversation to provide us with a multidimensional meditation on the state-of-the field, offering readings of the theoretical, critical, and pedagogical possibilities and limits of the affective turn, the rise of new media studies and its intersections with book history, literary studies’ fixation with “all things cartographic,” the recent exhaustion with critique, as well as sustained genealogies of and provocations for transnational American Studies, the Caribbean turn, and the recent reorientations to the archipelagic and the oceanic in literary studies. The value of Blum’s volume is the thoroughness with which it navigates these turns—Sean X. Goudie’s masterful essay on the multiple figures, texts and larger institutional turns that together served as catalysts for bringing the Caribbean into central focus for nineteenth-century Americanists will no doubt became required reading in a variety of undergraduate and graduate seminars, mine included. But it is also its determination to wrestle with where, exactly, they might take us in future. Meredith L. McGill thus suggests that book history and comparative media studies ought to attend to the ways that “literary texts can offer crucial insights into the politics, economics, technology, infrastructure, history and culture of media writ large” (35), while Geoffrey Sanborn exhorts us to “articulate the value of traditional college courses” in the age of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) by way of the critical turns that occur in our own classrooms. Where Martin Brückner, for example, points to critical blind spots underlying our impulse to offer cartographies of everything from texts to structures of feeling—in particular, a failure to acknowledge the materiality, metaphoricity and ideological weight of maps as a figure and as a thing, Michelle Burnham’s tour-de-force account of the emergence of Oceanic studies articulates “water as a material in which simultaneously to remap and renarrativize American literature in a global context” (171) precisely insofar as it helps us to “imagine America as both there and not there, at once central to and yet profoundly decentred from the globe…part of both Atlantic and Pacific waterworlds that are in turn linked to other seas and oceans” (170).

Burnham’s expansive vision of where the oceanic orientation might lead us amplifies the central claim that Goudie makes in his essay on the Caribbean turn: namely, that that turn has been, so far, a “half turn” (135) in Americanist scholarship precisely because it most often has unwittingly focused attention back on the United States, “a reality that reflects their and their field’s institutional location, hierarchies of assumption, and investments” (135). It is a trenchant critique. Yet *Turns of Event* is itself a salient example of the degree to which Americanist literary studies, nineteenth-century or otherwise, is a product of precisely its field’s primary geographical locus and “hierarchies of assumption”: for all the approaches remapped here and intellectual luminescence on display, its articulation of the field—if the institutional affiliation of its contributors is any indication—is strictly confined to U.S. centres of higher education. Likewise, the scholarship so dexterously mapped for us here is by and large produced entirely *within* the U.S. academy. For all its turning away from the nation, in other words, the volume testifies that the field it unpacks for us continues to suggest—or rather, assume—that the borders of the United States overwhelmingly delineate the scholarly turns and voices to which we ought primarily to attend. As a scholar of nineteenth-century American literature trained in the U.S. but working in Britain, I raise this issue from an admittedly vertiginous position—with one foot in and one foot out of academia, American style. Before I took up this post, I’d rarely attended academic conferences organized outside the U.S., seldom invited non-U.S. based scholars to speak on panels that I’d organized within the U.S., and, with the exception of critical theorists, must admit that I’d far too rarely cited or assigned scholarly work originating outside the U.S. academy. Teaching, researching and viewing American literature and culture from across the water has encouraged me to see some of what gets left out when we fail to imagine that “America is both there and not there,” central and not at the centre of everything, as has participation in multi-national scholarly events such as the “Regionalizing American Studies” conference organized by Aaron Nygeres and Thomas Adams at the U.S. Studies Centre in Sydney this summer. Put a little differently, if we are teaching in the age of MOOCs, we are also researching nineteenth-century American literature in the age of Skype and Twitter. Navigating that new world makes it possible to imagine academic conferences, collaborative courses, and critical volumes that find ways to more fully complete the trans- and post- national turns that have done so much to reinvent our field and about which this volume otherwise has so much to say.

J. Michelle Coghlan

*University of Manchester*

\*\*\*\*

Why is American literary studies always noisily reconsidering its own boundaries, categories, and methodologies? Is it because of an insecurity about its viability? Or is this continual revision a welcome calisthenics, a sign of intellectual and political health? I was drawn to American literary studies because I believed the latter, but the person who raised this question at an autumn 2015 BrANCA reading group thought the former. This exchange crystallises one distinction between American literary study as it is practiced in many countries and British life. Which better expresses strength and vitality: open discussion about how one’s field has turned over time or confidence about that field’s permanence and longevity? “Confidence” is a keyword of the National Student Survey. One of the module descriptions for an introduction to nineteenth-century American literature on the BrANCA website explains that the module raises students’ “confidence” about American history, but should modules teach “confidence” or knowledge? Aren’t British university students confident enough about their opinions of the United States? Shouldn’t lecturers rather be dampening that confidence by teaching students (and others) to read, read, and reread, in a recursive process in which more evidence means asking new questions in the expectation of obtaining new answers?

Given this context in which longevity and seemingly unreflective confidence are seen as signs of strength it was with concern that I approached the Hester Blum, edited volume *Turns of Event*. Hester Blum’s Introduction, though, anticipated the concerned reader. “Rehearsing the specific contours and trajectories of the various turns the field has made in recent years is not our primary aim,” Blum writes, partially because contributors realise that “[t]he critic and student alike . . . might be rendered dizzy” (2). The essay collection is good at discussing new approaches while nevertheless treating them as provisional strategies likely to shift and evolve over time.

Meredith McGill’s essay “Literary History, Book History, and Media Studies” makes valuable points about the conceptual work and inter-disciplinary skirmishes for funding and clout that are changing how scholars think about the distinction between “text” and “book.” Until recently, “the overwhelmingly historically minded discipline of literary studies has forged a loose alliance with the interdisciplinary field of book history, in part by splitting the object of study into ‘text’ and ‘book,’” the text, referring to all aspects of signification, and the book, an object that transmits ideas and culture through material means, that exemplifies “how social relations are mediated by culture” (25-27). This concept of a “book” helped historians in cultural and intellectual history “rescue” their subfield from its “diminishment” by the *Annales* school historians, who “privileged collective ‘mentalities’ over individual thinkers” (27). The rise of digital media has undermined this division of intellectual labour and made it necessary for book history to redefine its relation to media studies, for both media studies departments and English departments to examine “the politics, economics, technology, [and] infrastructure” of both “high” print culture and “low” popular cultural forms (24). In the process, McGill argues that the “text” and “book” distinction might be dissolved:

[f]or all their demystifying, anti-idealist rhetoric, book historians are often looking through and not at the book. In these modes of analysis, a text’s structure, its negotiations with genre, its thematic preoccupations and figures of address are invoked only insofar as they are impinged on from without. (32)

Other scholars have made similar complaints about book history’s unwillingness to see the aesthetic aspects of a book as one of the root causes of that book’s cultural work.[[4]](#footnote-4) It’s tantalising to feel this shift in one’s own work and in that of other scholars giving conference papers and publishing in less prominent venues and comforting (if a bit annoying) to see it articulated here by such a leading scholar.

Half of the book is dedicated to the spatializing and expansive turns of transnationalism, hemispheric, and oceanic studies. Of the essays in this half of the volume, Sean X. Goudie’s “The Caribbean Turn in C19 American Literary Studies” is the most critical of American literary study’s recent tendency to expand its geographical and cultural reach beyond the borders of the current United States:

Yet even as scholars turn more and more toward the Caribbean, or more precisely toward Caribbean presences in the making of nineteenth-century American literature, they have often done so in unidirectional ways. Indeed, much scholarship produced in nineteenth-century American literary studies from the 1990s to the present time, richly provocative and important as it is, might best be characterized as making a Caribbean “half turn.” By Caribbean “half turn,” I mean to suggest how scholars and critics, in treating Caribbean presences in works authored by U.S. authors, turn to the Caribbean according to a North-South trajectory to spy out influence without ever relocating themselves according to a South-North directionality, a reality that reflects their and their field’s institutional location, hierarchies of assumption, and investments. (135)

This criticism is well founded; it is not enough to trace the Caribbean presence in the novels of James Weldon Johnson or Zora Neale Hurston without inquiring about the authors, texts, and contexts of a South-North trajectory, such as Goudie’s example of Louis S. Meikkle, a U.S.-trained medical professional who migrated from Jamaica and wrote about West Indian labourers working on the Panama Canal. Certainly the Caribbean and hemispheric turns has given me, an Americanist, permission to inquire why Elizabeth Stuart Phelps sent the errant husband in her novel *Confessions of a Wife* (1902) to a consulship in Uruguay. Rather than seek to “expand” American literary studies, Goudie encourages scholars to consider both the American turn to the Caribbean and the Caribbean turn to America. This seems like an enormously valuable intellectual move for rethinking not just the Caribbean turn but the transatlantic and transpacific turns as well, even though I wonder whether the kind of work Goudie proposes would be classed in my U.K.-based English subject team as “American literary study” or “postcolonialism,” with all the ramifications for teaching and REF narratives (though thankfully not knowledge itself) that those classifications imply.

Most of the essays in this volume actively eschew the language of conflict—except for Goudie, and for McGill, who refers to a “loose alliance” (23), a “mutual non-aggression pact” (24), and “the common ground staked out” (24) between disciplines. Yet the conflicts over canon expansion seem worthy of resurrecting after reading this volume. Women and minorities did not “light out for the territory” in the same ways as men, and the character of the whole tradition changed in light of their work, as should discussions of trends in how we study American literature. In this volume, references to Melville and Hawthorne are plentiful, but of pre-1900 American women writers, there are only the briefest of references to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Susanna Rowson, Elizabeth Cochran Seaman (author of *Nellie Bly’s Book*), and Elizabeth W. Champney (an author of young adult fiction). Yet the dissolving of the distinction between “text” and “book” that McGill proposes would not look or feel the same if it were not for the long, slow work of scholars expanding the national canon to account for both new cultural work and new aesthetics. Perhaps I should just sit back and express confidence in my own field’s longevity and permanence.

Stephanie Palmer   
*Nottingham Trent University*

\*\*\*\*

Nineteenth-Century American literary studies is going places. Having emerged intact from the theory and canon wars and outgrown comforting New Historicist constraints, its scholars operate with a renewed sense of purpose. *Turns of Event* surveys a field confidently aware not only of its own health but its renewed relevance, as it contributes to new conversations across disciplinary boundaries. However, since this exceptional collection of essays is destined to become a state-of-the-field way marker, it also provides a valuable moment to reflect upon some of the subtleties of its rhetoric of *turns,* and on the less acknowledged hazards of a field defining itself as being “in motion.” I want to offer some thoughts along these lines from the perspective of a UK-based Americanist, by focusing on two resonances of the word turn that Blum’s collection does not explicitly engage.

The first is the idea of “turn” as *a* *performance*. The disappearing custom of asking everyone present at a gathering to give their own recital or distinct “act” used to be called “doing a turn.” Reading *Turns of Event,* I was struck by how this usage might offer a heuristic route into understanding academic behaviours that are at once beneficial yet involve their own unintended consequences. Like members of a gathering, those participants in conference panels or the contents page of Americanist journals – the digital humanist, queer temporality theorist, the new aestheticist, and so on – all prove their worth by obeying a set of recognisable procedures, signalling their distinctiveness, and performing carefully-crafted critical selves. Just as the London theatre world refers to star actors as “turns”, academic performers are inevitably defined by the kind of “turn” they give.

Particular kinds of *turn* have traditionally been expected from British Americanists. In previous decades, the combination of cultural distance and physical removal, not least from frequent access to print archives, had encouraged a sometimes productively estranged intellectual-historical slant on American writings, one based in part on the authority of detachment.[[5]](#footnote-5) More recently, those based in the UK have found the space opened up by transnational turns accommodating, frequently playing instrumental roles in such transformations.[[6]](#footnote-6) As Ralph Bauer, one of the *Turns of Event*’s contributors argued some years ago, in transnationalism’s wake, “early American literature has once again become British” and global, and UK scholars were often well placed to flesh out these links.[[7]](#footnote-7) Yet even now, as the potency of the transatlanticist turn recedes, and digitisation has shrunk the archival Atlantic, early Americanists in Britain retain an outpost mentality. As J. Michelle points out in her contribution to this roundtable, they often do so with sound institutional reasons. Often the only specialist in their immediate orbit or institution, they are simultaneously marginalised yet less obliged to fight for space within their field or jostle amidst paradigm shifts. These facts can allow for a detached understanding of the changes charted in *Turns of Event,* and specifically the market logic that underpins them.

Blum’s collection excels in exploring “the conditions” that have produced recent “field redefinitions” (2), but is less reflexive than it could be on the role of institutional forces and the ways in which they create a particular set of market “conditions.” A commitment to the value that lies in the cartographic, postnational, postsecular or affective turns need not blind us to the extent to which their emergence is inevitably dictated by the shifting demands of publishers, graduate programs, funders, conference convenors, and most powerfully of all by volatile political and financial climates. Both Blum and Goudie are rightly eager to distinguish the kinds of work charted in the book from either “passing fads” (128) or “fashions or weather vanes” (3). But they are “turns” nonetheless in the sense of performances, ones that help dictate what Sanborn terms “professional fate.” (16). Emerging and even established scholars encounter acute pressure to make choices about which horse to back, or which paradigm to embrace. Surely it was ever thus. But by making this coming to market ever more explicit, and the positioning ever more urgent, the rhetoric of projects such as *Turns of Event* also encourages the eagerness of the modern humanities to internalise some of the very market ideologies that much scholarship otherwise seems resistant to: both the virtues of multiplicity, diversity and renewal; but also the veneration of accelerated fragmentation, truncated memories and disruption.

One particular consequence of a field defining itself by its own restlessness can be that provocations are valued above Kuhnian “normal” practice. To return to my earlier image of the gathering, we might conceive of one in which participants’ *turns* are especially valued when they upend or undo previous performances. In encouraging what can seem an entrepreneurial unconscious in the field, the potential is that the urge to provoke, unsettle and re-shape shifts from an encouragement to an obligation. Given apparently dwindling public attention spans or patience for what the humanities offers, it is easy to foresee a situation in which “motion” becomes the only state to be admired, “provocation” the only rhetoric to be valued, and “disruption” the paramount turn that performers can offer. Just as some ideals seem to deserve protection from the logic of disruptive markets, so certain modes of inquiry might flower best when separated from the vagaries of what is either disruptive or current.

This leads me onto the final use of “turn”as *cycle:* the sense of taking or waiting for one’s allotted opportunity, with a “turn” as the point at which one named period of time gives way to the next. When reading the first-rate summative essays by Martin Bruckner, Michelle Burnham, Sean Goudie and others on the “Cartographic”, “Caribbean” or “Oceanic” and other turns, I was thankful for the multiple fascinating questions they threw up about what the logic and rhetoric of turns means in practice. Does each mode of thinking or set of concerns deserve its turn, and must that duly give way to another? What is the life-span of a methodology? Can a scholar or even a field turn in more than one direction at once and still cohere, with its intellectual and disciplinary memory intact? Does this moment of multiple turns leave nineteenth century Americanists in the position of the narrator in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s famous allegory “Earth’s Holocaust”, watching as cherished but unfashionable modes of thought and practice are consigned to the flames. Or are we rather enjoying a moment of exhilaration, like Emily Dickinson’s “blacksmith” in “Dare You See a Soul at White Heat?”, “whose anvil’s even din / stands symbol for the finer forge” of sensitive rebirth. A bit like the knife grinder whose image sits on the front cover of *Turns of Event* itself.

By definition, Blum and her contributors offer a positive spin on these choices, while side-stepping some of their broader implications. McGill offers a vision of the “re-integration” of warring tendencies into one overarching form of media studies (34), for example, while Bauer imagines a field in which new ideas “grow out of, overlap and co-exist with established ones … competing with but hardly ever invalidating or replacing.” (86). Perhaps, as Blum argues, early American literary studies is simply more riven by insecurities about its assumptions and parameters than most, taking its cue from the literary material it studies to constantly light out for new territory. The confidence of the field, as demonstrated in collections such as this, offers hope that it will avoid fulfilling the ultimate logic of market segmentation, and that its scholars will not make the ultimate *turn* of turning away from the continuities that hold us together.

Tom F. Wright

*University of Sussex*

1. Recent “unearthed” and republished texts include Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* (c. 1853), ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Warner Books, 2002), Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee* (1836), ed. by Christopher Looby (New York: New York Review Books, 2008), Theodore Winthrop, *Cecil Dreeme* (1861) (Philadelphia: University Pennsylvania Press and New York: NYU Press, both 2016), and Austin Reed, *The Life and Adventures of a Haunted Convict* (1858) ed. by Caleb Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus provide an overview of “suspicious” or “symptomatic” reading’s hunt for hidden, repressed depth in “Surface Reading: An Introduction”, *Representations*, Volume 108, No 1 (Fall 2009), 1-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In her introduction to a forum in the inaugural issue of *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, Nancy Bentley identifies a trend of “critical *disenchantment*” and distrust within literary scholarship, and instead presses her readers to “reimagine critique as *enchantment*”. Nancy Bentley, “Introduction: Forum: In the Spirit of the Thing: Critique as Enchantment”, *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, Volume 1, No 1 (Spring 2013), 147-153 (p. 148). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Brian S. McGrath makes this point very clearly in “Are Literary Studies Any Good as History?” [Review of Amy Blair, *Reading Up: Middle-Class Readers and the Culture of Success in the Early Twentieth Century United States* and Andrew J. Lawson, *Downwardly Mobile: the Changing Force of American Realism*] *Henry James Review* 34.3 (2013), p. 296-304. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A tradition that might stretch from D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York: Seltzer, 1923) to Tony Tanner, *Scenes of Nature, Signs of Men*. Cambridge (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Including in particular Susan Manning, *The Puritan-Provincial Vision* (CUP, 1990) and *Fragments of Union* (Palgrave, 2002) and Paul Giles’s work from *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Culture, 1730-1860*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press) onwards. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ralph Bauer, “The Literature of ‘British America’”, *American Literary History*, November 3, 2009, X. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)