## Contents

*Foreword by Heather Dubrow* vii

*Acknowledgments* xix

*Notes on Contributors* xx

### Part I  Introduction

1  **New Formalism(s): A Prologue** 3
   *Verena Theile*

### Part II  Theory

2  **Toward a New Formalism: The Intrinsic and Related Problems in Criticism and Theory** 29
   *Fredric V. Bogel*

3  **Doing Genre** 54
   *Group Phi*

### Part III  Practice

4  **Inventing an Ancestor: The Scholar-Poet and the Sonnet** 71
   *Edward Brunner*

5  **From Close Reading to Cross-Reading: Sacco-Vanzetti Poetry and the Politics of New Formalism** 96
   *Bartholomew Brinkman*

6  **Re-Reading for Forms in Sir Philip Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy*** 116
   *Corey McEleney and Jacqueline Wernimont*

7  **Collecting Body Parts in Leonardo’s Cave: Vasari’s *Lives* and the Erotics of Obscene Connoisseurship** 140
   *Harry Berger Jr*

8  **Form as a Pattern of Thinking: Cognitive Poetics and New Formalism** 159
   *Karin Kukkonen*

### Part IV  Pedagogy

9  **Reading Like a Writer: A Creative Writer’s Approach to New Formalism** 179
   *Kelcey Parker*
Contents

10  Punk Bodies, Jorie Graham, and the Draft Itself:  
    Notes Toward a Lyric Formalism  
    *Cynthia Nichols*  
    197

11  ‘One Another's Hermitage’: New Formalist Pedagogy  
    *Linda Tredennick*  
    223

*Bibliography*  
242

*Index*  
256
Part I
Introduction
New Formalism(s): A Prologue

Verena Theile

Joining the conversation

New Formalisms and Literary Theory is a conversation that began between Linda Tredennick and myself, but it is also an on-going conversation into which we stumbled, to which we listened for a while, and one which we felt needed to be formalized (pun intended). This collection aims to share this conversation. It is our goal, with the help of our contributors, to trace the beginnings of New Formalism and to sketch how it, too – much like our branch of its conversation – began to grow, reach out, and theorize itself, long before it shared in our conversation or before we participated in its.

Linda and I were both working at Gonzaga University when we began talking about how we teach literature, how we attempt to apply critical theory to even the first-year writing classroom, and how we both seem to grapple with the tenets of New Historicism, particularly in our Shakespeare courses. We noticed we had something in common that day. Besides sharing an office wall and a coffee maker, we also shared a certain sense of dissatisfaction with the way we had been trained to read and write in graduate school and a sense of wonderment at how that training did not translate into the teaching of literature, or even the teaching of theory. We both realized at that moment that New Historicism had failed us, as teachers and as critics. And that it did so despite the fact that both Linda and I strongly believe in cultural, historical, and political approaches to literature and that we recognize the importance of work, both in the classroom and without, that illuminates a text’s cultural tensions.

For example, I was teaching King Lear at the time in a senior level course on literary theory where we discussed Edmund's speech, ‘This is the excellent foppery of the world’ (1.2), as an instance in the play in which two entirely disparate worldviews are structurally poised against each other: one which firmly holds on to the Platonic concept of the musica universalis, or universal harmony, in which macro- and micro-cosmos are connected like the strings of a musical instrument – when a chord is struck in the heavens,
its vibrations are felt on earth; and a second one which is clearly impacted by Renaissance humanism and Reformation philosophy and actively considers the possibility of free will and individualism, thus granting humans the potential to make decisions – wrong ones as well as good ones.

Where the Old Historicism would have insisted on one uniform and universal Elizabethan worldview, New Historicists quote this passage as an instance in which a fictional character partakes in contemporary philosophical debates and abandons medieval certainties:

…. when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behavior, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on.

(1.2.109–16)

By mocking his father’s trust in ‘spherical predominance’, Edmund distances himself from the ‘old’ and instead assumes full responsibility for his ill deeds:

an admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon’s tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

(1.2.116–22)

Because the play provides such a meaningful visual for the access points of New Historicist criticism, *King Lear* is how I teach New Historicism. Indeed, in many ways, both Linda and I would have described ourselves as New Historicists, disciples of Montrose and Greenblatt, Geertz groupies and Foucault fans, but that is in spite of the fact that we are, at our core and in our classrooms, close readers.

Talking about this incongruence between our teaching and our theoretical training, Linda and I came to realize that neither she nor I were in step with New Historicism, and perhaps never had been. Linda felt especially dislodged and uncertain of where her allegiance lay. She and Roland Greene had been talking about the ways in which literary theory and classroom practice had become disjointed, how theory itself had become destabilized and how that destabilization had found its way into the classroom. My own dissertation director, Will Hamlin – a practicing New Historicist and a skeptic, who would, unfailingly careful and ever respectful, answer questions with questions and offer advice only when I directly asked for it – initiated similar reflections in me.
I remember I went to Will, armed with a newly designed handout, when I was prepping a Shakespeare course. Trying to figure out how to get my students to talk about the plays with more confidence, I had discovered Nicholas Royle’s *How to Read Shakespeare*, with its contextualizing via language and metaphor. Royle walked students through the plays – or, more often, a specific scene within a play – and, often, by means of deciphering, paraphrasing, and contextualizing a single word, he showed them how a scene or an image might bear upon the rest of the play. To me this was reminiscent of New Historicism’s fondness for anecdotes – it showed by a single example how a greater context could be related (and, indeed, persuasively did relate) to the world of the play. That, at least, was my understanding of it at the time.

I liked Royle. Will, however, seemed subtly unimpressed. After having looked over my handout, he first nodded and then cautiously commented, query-like: ‘That looks great … if you want to be a formalist. Do you?’ Did I? I walked away deep in thought. I had no clue what I wanted to be or who I was right there and then, nor had I been aware that I had designed a handout with formalist leanings. That sounded almost criminal, theoretically deviant for sure. But how did I want to teach Shakespeare? Seemed to me I read Shakespeare like Royle, didn’t I? Only, what I had liked about him had not been, or so I thought, his formalist approach, but his New Historicist methodology, right? I pondered.

I pondered some more. And then I decided that what crucially separated me from New Historicism is that while I might teach New Historicism via *King Lear*, I certainly do not teach *King Lear* like a New Historicist; like Royle, I walk my students toward discovery, conflict, and resolution via a text’s diction, its formal features, and aesthetics. What I was looking for was a theoretical framework within which critical inquiries and teaching practices like mine could take place, where my scholarship and my pedagogy could meet, inform each other, and still harmonize with current literary criticism.

It was at the crossroads of aesthetic readings and historical, political criticism that Linda and I met, shared conversations and experiences we’d had over the years, and, finally, confessed, after much reflection and unabashedly, that, above all else, we are, indeed, close readers. We teach close reading. We treasure form. We make our students memorize and identify stylistic devices, meter, rhyme scheme. Occasionally, we spend a whole class period dissecting and discussing a single poem, a soliloquy, or even a metaphor. Metaphors, we believe, are reflections of a culture’s creative imagination. Marjorie Levinson’s article ‘What is New Formalism?’ had come out right about this time. In it, Levinson addressed some of my concerns, explained why I felt in flux and as though literary theory was running away with me, carrying me toward history and culture but away from what I felt comfortable with: the text. I know Linda felt the same way; Levinson was a constant companion in our conversations. Like me, Linda recognized the
need to rethink the role of the text in both theory and the classroom; her essay “One Another’s Hermitage” (Chapter 11 in this volume) effectively proposes a New Formalist pedagogy that does just that: it theorizes such rethinking and then applies its methodology to the teaching of literature. ‘What is New Formalism?’ had left a deep impression on our understanding of contemporary, literary-cultural research. Additionally, it significantly contributed to the way in which Linda and I began thinking of this collection and the shape we wanted it assume, maybe the shape we thought it needed to assume, by necessity and in order to convey what both Linda and I felt were the major tenets of New Formalist theory.

In the extended version of her essay, Levinson states that her general goal in composing the article is aimed at giving ‘readers a feel for the general resurgence of formalist interests, for the variety of these interests, and for the inner tensions within new formalism.’ It was those ‘inner tensions’ – politics vs. aesthetics, history vs. form, contextuality vs. intertextuality, cross-cultural vs. cross-textual inquiries, and so on – that Linda and I felt ourselves drawn to, because it was these tensions that we saw rippling through other theories and criticisms as well; understanding New Formalism, to us, meant understanding the epicenter of those tensions and comprehending them as internal to a new methodology and central to a new theoretical approach to literature. In particular, New Formalisms and Literary Theory is interested in the political motivations of a return to formalism, but, together with our contributors, we also, and perhaps simultaneously, want to propose and challenge the conception of New Formalism as an extension of contextual readings or a ‘mere’ return to aesthetic readings. As we assembled the collection, it was important to us, therefore, that the central questions that govern and guide all the chapters address these tensions and actively encourage reflection upon the points of intersection with other theoretical approaches, such as formalism, New Criticism, gender studies, queer theory, post-structuralism, New Historicism, cultural materialism, and Marxist criticism, to name but a few.

But in order to shape the collection, Linda and I first had to re-imagining ourselves, to come to terms with our new identities, that is, we had to understand and accept the way in which we saw our identities as teachers and critics as separate from each other and how both seemed to move away from current cultural studies and New Historicism practices to formalize themselves within a new critical context, via new theoretical methodologies, and as New Formalists. Allowing and indeed facilitating this process entailed, first and foremost, an acceptance as well as a conscious reworking of a training that had put us at odds with our profession, the practical day-to-day toils, troubles, and tribulations we all face in our respective English departments: the teaching of literature. And so, as we continued talking over the next few months, Linda and I realized that in order to engage with our critical heritage and our theoretical upbringing, we necessarily had to tackle our teaching practices, and we knew, almost immediately, that our
own contributions to this collection would have to be both pedagogical and theoretical – the two had to meet. There was no other way: we had to confront our classroom experiences critically and find a way to describe the ways in which we endeavor to integrate formalist analysis in our teaching of literature, within social and cultural contexts.

I have talked about my pedagogical concerns a little bit above. It is perhaps time to connect pedagogy and theory more firmly and to highlight how my own concerns resonate with the scholars represented in this collection. Contributors to *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* recognize that form signifies as much about the milieu in which literature is composed as it does about the manner in which literature is consumed (and, perhaps, is meant to be consumed) by an audience. The scholars gathered here agree that New Formalism stems from a literary-cultural theory that harkens back to New Criticism, Russian formalism, and structuralism, but that embraces cultural theory and actively draws on New Historicist methodologies. Form is perceived as a social construct: society imposes form on literature, but this passage of form is never passive, neither for the society nor the literature. A text does not live sealed off from the historical, cultural, political moments in which it participated; it does not exist in isolation. Literature actively transforms formal features; it individualizes as well as historicizes. New Historicism, even as its methodology is based on interdisciplinary investigations, does not suffice. Instead a theory is needed that addresses teacher training and actively confronts the incongruence between our current teaching practices and our professional research interests. Enabling a theoretical meeting of the two (three?) is of the essence. That’s what *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* aims for, in theory, practice, and pedagogy.

Fredric Jameson starts his *Political Unconscious* with his now famous call to all critics of literature: ‘Always historicize!’ It sounds easy enough, but, of course, it isn’t – especially not today when cultural studies dominate our field. Too often, Jameson’s urgent recall of Kenneth Burke to read (or is it recognize?) ‘narrative as a socially symbolic act,’ leads to a politicizing, historicizing, and a personifying of the text that effectively silences literature – literature as an art form, that is, something purposefully and deliberately designed by an author whose profession it is to compose texts for specific purposes. Jameson acknowledges this and, indeed, makes a conscious choice to do one and not the other – that is, to read for interpretation (culture) and not for form (literature):

In the area of culture ... we are thus confronted with a choice between study of the nature of the ‘objective’ structures of a given cultural text (the historicity of its form and of its content, the historical moment of emergence of its linguistic possibilities, the situation-specific function of its aesthetic) and something rather different which would instead
foreground the interpretive categories or codes through which [we] read and receive the text in question.\textsuperscript{6}

Jameson opts for the latter (‘For better or for worse,’ as he says) and thus ‘presupposes … that we never really confront a text immediately, in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself. Rather texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretation, or – if the text is brand-new – through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions.’\textsuperscript{7} I agree with everything Jameson says here, of course, in theory. What I object to is the active replacement of text with history, of literature with interpretation, and of form with culture. And in the same way in which I take issue with New Historicism and how it has been appropriated as a template rather than an interpretive tool, I find the ideological switch Jameson performs here troublesome insofar as it leads the cobbler away from her last and the literature teacher away from the teaching of literature.

How can we teach literature if we don’t ‘Always historicize!’ form, content, diction, and aesthetics, even as we sift ‘through sedimented layers of previous interpretations … reading habits and categories’? But perhaps this question should read differently and abandon its own paradox. Maybe the question that needs to be asked first is not a pitifully nostalgic lamentation (‘What happened to close reading?’) or a radical outcry (‘How did we get here?’) but rather an emphatic acknowledgment that there is no such thing as historicity or interpretation without form and aesthetics – neither in theory nor in the classroom (and that both Greenblatt and Jameson know this and do, indeed, engage with form and aesthetics the same way I do and everybody else does, only that one emphasizes their context while the other focuses on their ideology). New Formalism is not about the causality of history or the historicity of philosophy. It’s not about the invention of new ways of expressing the old, or rephrasing in some nifty way how there’s always already been a form. Instead, New Formalism recognizes the form literature has taken and the aesthetics it has appropriated, and it is these that New Formalist critics examine in order to comment on that literature’s unique contribution to the canon and to the culture in which it was composed, consumed, and collected. New Formalism, in all its incarnations, be they intrinsic, lyrical, or historical, seeks to understand the way in which form is reinvented and reshaped and reinterpreted, and it does so against a historically and politically charged background, one that is, above all, meaningfully informed by both literary and literary-critical tradition.

What that means and how this approach is different from conventional New Historicism and current cultural studies practices can perhaps best be demonstrated via an anecdote, or a tangential, contemporaneous, cultural reference, the sort of device New Historicists, in general, favor. On 12 July 2010, Reuters published an article concerning an important archeological
find in London. In an area that appears to have been used as a rubbish pit and that was close to where Shakespeare worked (and potentially lived), shards of at least three ceramic bowls were discovered: ‘The area where they were found was settled in pre-historic and Roman times and was a boisterous place in the 17th century famed for taverns, bear-baiting theatres and brothels.’ Important to our discussion here, scientists were able to successfully date these bowls to the seventeenth century and thus, temporally as well as spatially (‘a boisterous place in the 17th century famed for taverns, bear-baiting theatres and brothels’), locate them within the cultural access of the Great Bard. The article describes how the bowls had been painted by hand and in intricate patterns: ‘a charger decorated with tulips made in the 1660s ... a bowl depicting a boy tormenting a dog with a stick and another celebrating the marriage of one Nathaniel Townsend – an employee of a local industry, the Leathersellers Company, dated 1674. The bowl is adorned with the crest of the firm.’

What makes this article uniquely useful to my theoretical repositioning here is the way in which both Roy Stephenson, Head of Archaeological Collections at the Museum of London, and Stefan Ambrogi, the journalist writing for Reuters, draw conclusions from these bowls and how both of them historicize, politicize, and contextualize (that is, culturalize) the find. I have numbered the excerpts I’d like to discuss but maintained the original paragraph breaks as they appear in the article:

1. Roy Stephenson, Head of Archaeological Collections at the Museum of London, said the richly decorated bowls should be seen as rare pieces of fine art in their own right today.

2. ‘The thing about tin-glazed wear is every piece is unique because it is painted individually by hand,’ he told Reuters.

3. ‘Each of these items is a piece of art in its own right, it’s just that we don’t know who the artist is. They may not have been regarded as top class pieces of art of the day. But I think we should regard them as pieces of fine art now.’

4. The term ‘Delftware’ was widely used from the 18th century onwards to refer to tin-glazed earthenware made in Britain, rather than the products of the famous Dutch centre of Delft.

5. The vessels, each about 30–35 cm in diameter, offer a glimpse into a Londoner’s life at the time. The bowls would have been displayed on a dresser in a typical home, experts [somebody in addition to or in place of Stephenson, apparently] say.
6. ‘Are these things that have gone out of fashion. [sic] Or, has Mrs Townsend come home and found Mr Townsend in bed with someone and thrown all of them away?’ he [Stephenson] said.

7. ‘Maybe the Townsends went bust, maybe the bailiffs arrived and chucked their stuff away. My preference is that they simply went out of fashion.’

Within the confines of this article, we will assign the role of the critic to Stephenson, the role of the reader to Ambrogi, and the role of literature to the delftware. At the beginning, Stephenson is careful not to generalize; items 1 through 3 show him reading for form and appreciating the uniqueness of each one of the three bowls. But even toward the end of 3, Stephenson enters into theory when he places the ceramics into their most immediate context (the rubbish pit) and then historically situates them because of that: they had clearly been discarded and while they might have become useless in their seventeenth-century context, they are now art again because they convey a story of the past to us, in the twenty-first century. Ambrogi, following Stephenson’s argument, steps in via 4 and 5 to provide (a) a historical fact and (b) a generalized, researched, and factually sound seeming conclusion. In items 6 and 7, Stephenson picks up where Ambrogi left off and proffers a research question as well as an explanation why the pieces were found in this specific location – let’s ignore his jump from scientifically supportable conclusion to his preferred reason for the moment and instead concentrate on the methodology and the article’s rhetoric. Both Stephenson and Ambrogi partake in a cultural studies conversation of which this article is but a tiny excerpt. Stephenson, even as he initially gives a nod to form, soon moves on to cultural context and thus the way in which ‘every piece is unique’ suddenly, if not unexpectedly, succumbs to ‘The vessels .... offer a glimpse into a Londoner’s life at the time.’ Importantly, the reason why they do has been left by the wayside (or in the rubbish pit) at this point: the uniqueness of each bowl and the vastly different patterns with which each has been painted no longer matter. The bowls are no longer talked about individually; their (notice the plural in item 5) value no longer lies in their aesthetics; instead they are viewed as representative of seventeenth-century bowls in general: ‘The bowls would have been displayed on a dresser in a typical home, experts say.’ Obviously, this is a crude example of New Historicist methodology, but the template fits.

The New Formalism that this volume is proposing here would not have fit this template, however, and that is despite the fact that it likely would have provided similar historical context and would have likewise thought to link the earthenware to the seventeenth century culturally. But it would not have let go of the patterns; in none of the chapters below would such abandonment have been tolerated. Instead, the New Formalism we advocate would have examined the bowls’ aesthetics individually,
researched seventeenth-century art generally, and then contextualized the tulips, the boy with the stick, and Mr Townsend. It would have examined the shape of each bowl and contemplated the use to which it would have been put. It would have wondered why these three bowls were tossed together: What is it that made them similar or distinct from each other, in addition or aside from the painted decorations? It would have looked at the colors, the brush strokes, and the glazing, and it would have analyzed whether different artists or the same artist designed each bowl. If possible, and it would be possible in the example above, New Formalism re-reads and cross-reads a text’s formal features.

To return to a more clearly literary context, which is, after all, what we desire to do with this collection and with New Formalisms more generally, let’s turn to another recent critical intervention, one I have already touched upon briefly above. Methodologically, this collection’s confrontation with the tensions embedded in New Formalism resembles perhaps most closely Stephen Cohen’s *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*. In his foreword, Cohen demonstrates the expectations that form carries and, conventionally, conveys successfully, by examining the formal features of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and comparing them to those of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the tragedy embedded within the comedy and, perhaps, more importantly, to tragedy’s generic counterpart, comedy. Cohen concludes that ‘[i]n producing the unions of Hermia with Lysander and Helena with Demetrius, Shakespeare’s play provides the generically appropriate effect that his play-within-a-play fails to: not, in this case, pity and fear, but rather joy and relief.’10 Importantly, Cohen argues, ‘the play’s formal satisfactions’ are anything but ‘ideologically innocent.’11 In continuing his argument, Cohen addresses one of our major concerns about the waning attention to form both in the study and in the teaching of literature. He argues that ‘[i]f historicist criticism is to seek affirmation and inspiration in early modern literature and literary theory, it should not be based on their purported refusal of the differences between literature and other discourses, but on their sensitivity to the particularity of literary forms and their ideological functions – a sensitivity that can help to revivify our own critical practice.’12

Once novel in its approach, the typical ‘Greenblatt reading’ which has, by now, been standardized can be sketched as one, ‘which, often by means of a compelling anecdote, introduces a nonliterary cultural practice and proceeds to locate it in a literary or dramatic text.’13 Cohen’s criticism is geared toward its purpose as much as at its stale-tasting methodology, which he sees as less to illuminate the meaning or function of the text itself than to demonstrate the functional continuity between different cultural discourses.’14 The limitations of New Historicism are obvious, therefore:

when [it] does expand the scope of its literary analysis beyond the historical contents and functions of individual texts, it tends to look not
to genre or other formal conventions but to the category of literature itself as one cultural discourse among others—a category that is largely heuristic, existing primarily to be dissolved into the broader field of cultural practice, and thus usually left untheorized.¹⁵

While Cohen cautions us that ‘in their efforts to establish literature as one socially efficacious discourse among others, [New Historicists] downplay or ignore an equally fundamental aspect of Renaissance criticism: its careful delineation of the unique ways in which “poesy” performs its ideological suasion,’¹⁶ it is its fading into a routine and into being a template for literary critics who seem to have lost the innovativeness New Historicism initially introduced to the discipline that troubles scholars. Mark D. Rasmussen offers a reasonably effective summary of contemporary concerns when he describes New Historicism’s current state of affairs as ‘exhausted, its initial excitement now long since cooled.’¹⁷

**Tracing a movement**

To follow in Cohen’s footsteps then and to expand on New Historicist readings of varying cultural discourses, Linda and I suggest that the impetus driving *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* is a sense that an important aspect of the literary experience has been neglected during the heyday of politico-historical, contextual theories. That aspect can be understood as the aesthetic experience, or it can be understood as that which makes the study of literature distinctive from the study of history or culture. To us the challenge facing New Formalism is twofold. On the one hand, we wonder how we might be able to pay close attention to the aesthetic and to the distinctive experience of literature without succumbing to either the reactionary conservatism or the ahistorical and apolitical nature of New Criticism. On the other hand, we wonder how we are to understand the role form plays without compromising our understanding of history, cultural context, and the mandates of post-structuralist literary inquiries.

In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Greenblatt recalls the connection between text and culture and invokes his desire to bring the two back together:

> But I believe strongly that the historical and contextual work that critics do succeeds only if it acquires its own imaginative interest, a gravitational pull that makes it feel almost wrenching to turn back to the thing that was the original focus of interest ... For even when in the course of this book I seem to be venturing far away from *Hamlet*, the play shapes virtually everything I have to say.¹⁸

Greenblatt’s painful return ‘to the thing that was the original focus’ follows hard upon his passionate expression of and longing for the literary
experience, for the feelings a text affects in its reader and in the culture of readership of which we are only the newest and most recent incarnation. In the hope to both capture his eloquence and translate my interpretation of his meaning, I quote Greenblatt at length:

My goal was not to understand the theology behind the ghost; still less, to determine whether it was ‘Catholic’ or ‘Protestant.’ My goal was to immerse myself in the tragedy’s magical intensity. It seems a bit absurd to bear witness to the intensity of Hamlet; but my profession has become so oddly diffident and even phobic about literary power, so suspicious and tense, that it risks losing sight of – or at least failing to articulate – the whole reason anyone bothers with the enterprise in the first place. The ghost in Hamlet is like none other – not just in Shakespeare but in any literary or historical text that I have ever read. It does not have very many lines – it appears in three scenes and speaks only in two – but it is amazingly disturbing and vivid. I wanted to let the feeling of this vividness wash over me, and I wanted to understand how it was achieved.19

Even after all these years and several re-readings, I am still struck with the emotive urgency of Greenblatt’s reading here, an urgency that has effectively been transferred onto my own reading of Hamlet. But I also see in Greenblatt the beginnings of Linda’s and my own coming-to-terms with feelings and aesthetics, with culture and literature. Hamlet in Purgatory, to me, goes beyond even Greenblatt’s own, formative New Historicist practices. It is a deliberate turn to the text and its emotive power. Greenblatt’s inherently emotional response to a text’s ability to convey culture’s multivalency via its language and its images thus presents another shard in a kaleidoscope of literary interpretation and signifies another reimagining of literary theory, another step toward carving a New Formalism out of New Historicist inquiries and formalist methodologies.

Some trends – or shards, to stick with the metaphor – do seem to overlap in New Formalism’s journey toward its critical theory status, in its historical trajectory – as well as from one chapter within this collection to the next. Let us take stock then, for a moment, of the ways in which New Formalism has developed over the last few decades and how it has been shaped and formed into a method and perhaps even into a tangible and a teachable theory since Heather Dubrow’s coinage of the term in 198920 and its subsequent dissections, redirections, and transformations through the critical, theoretical work of such scholars as George Levine, Ellen Rooney, Marjorie Levinson, Herbert Tucker, Caroline Levine, Susan Wolfson, Terry Eagleton, Richard Strier, Harry Berger, Heather Dubrow herself, and, as I have begun arguing above, Stephen Greenblatt. Caroline Levine opens her 2006 essay, ‘Strategic Formalism: Toward a New Method in Cultural Studies,’ with the by then already stale-tasting adage, ‘Since the demise of New Criticism,’ in
order to introduce what she perceives as current theory’s effort to reunite form and context, ‘to articulate links between literary forms and social formations.’21 Her goal, in other words, is to suggest and create a ‘politically aware historicism’ that takes into account form and aesthetics but refuses to read either as a reflection or a foreshadowing of social formations, urging instead a reading in which form and aesthetics function as destabilizing forces that shake and rattle structures. This ‘politically aware historicism,’ Levine argues, will ultimately lead to the re-reading of social relationships even as its intention and direction are decidedly less strategic and purposeful than recent New Historicist and Marxist inquiries have led us to believe.22

In many ways, this is where Cohen’s collection picks up. To date the most succinct single-purpose, multiple-author collection, Shakespeare and Historical Formalism comes closest to formulating a coherent cultural theoretical approach and to reforming a New Historicism alongside formal, close reading practices, even as it denies its (new) historical formalism’s claim to theory, perhaps unjustifiably so. Cohen outlines his collection’s rhetorical, theoretical purpose as ‘[v]aried and inclusive’ and emphasizes especially its ‘critical commitment: …. it engages the issues raised by both formal and historical criticism, avoiding both the programmatic and the effective exclusion of either form or history that has characterized most formalisms and historicisms.’23 Cohen goes on to explain historical formalism in these non-programmatic terms:

… enmeshed in a web of institutional and cultural as well as social and political histories, literary forms are overdetermined by their historical circumstances and thus multiple and variable in their results, neither consistently ideological nor inherently demystificatory but instead reacting unpredictably with each other and with other cultural discourses. The goal of a historical formalism is to explore the variety of these interactions, mutually implicating literature’s formal individuation and its historical situation in order to illuminate at once text, form, and history.24

It is perhaps no surprise then that Cohen, as many of our authors here, sees historical formalism’s chief goal as a revivification of

New Historicism as a source of theoretical innovation in early modern studies by engaging it with the period’s formal complexity, and in so doing, to arrest the form-history pendulum by producing a historically and ideologically sensitive formalism, one that neither denies the cultural function of form nor reduces it to a single inherent or inevitable effect, whether conservative or liberatory.25

Importantly, the road to Cohen’s reformulation of critical theory leads him through his 2002 essay, ‘New Historicism and the Promise of a
Historical Formalism,’ in which he originally set out ‘not to challenge new historicism’s valuation of New Critical formalism … but rather to recon-contextualize new historicism, to remove it from the narrative of origins it has created for itself and resituate it in the broader critical context of the period of its emergence.’ To Cohen, as to many literary critics, New Historicism then lies at the heart of any successful reshaping of literary-cultural theory, and what is under scrutiny is not so much New Historicism’s philosophical, theoretical inception but rather its gradual, practical drifting away from its own context, from how it came to be and from what it meant to do. Cohen’s new brand of formalism, his historical formalism, by contrast, provides ‘a conceptual paradigm for thinking about the various roles that form may play in the historical study of literature.’

That this definition harkens back to Caroline Levine’s conception of the goals of cultural studies is telling, especially as her essay allows us to broaden our focus beyond the early modern period. ‘Cultural Studies,’ Levine proposes, ‘has been concerned, above all, with understanding the politics of cultural production within particular historical moments or locations.’ She goes on to explain that in her definition of the word:

[form] refers to shaping patterns, to identifiable interlacings of repetitions and differences, to dense networks of structuring principles and categories. It is conceptual and abstract, generalizing and transhistorical. But it is neither apolitical nor ahistorical. It does not fix or reduce every pattern to the same. Nor is it confined to the literary text, to the canon, or to the aesthetic. It does involve a kind of close reading, a careful attention to the ways that historical texts, bodies, and institutions are organized – what shapes they take, what models they follow and rework. But it is all about the social: it involves reading particular, historically specific collisions among generalizing political, cultural, and social forms. One could call it ‘social close reading’; I prefer to call it ‘strategic formalism.’

While Cohen’s historical formalism, then, positions itself as the heir of New Historicism, Caroline Levine invokes a very different lineage for her brand of New Formalism. Following Gayatri Spivak, Levine calls her approach: post-post-structuralist formalism … in that it departs from familiar deconstructive practices in one specific regard: instead of attending to the ways that two sides of a binary contaminate and destabilize each other, strategic formalism considers the ways that social, cultural, political, and literary ordering principles rub against one another, operating simultaneously but not in concert.

Importantly, Levine emphasizes that social change ‘comes not so much from active and intentional agency as from the openings that materialize
in the collisions among social and cultural forms." In response to Caroline Levine's article, Herbert Tucker offers his support for a strategic formalism by extending Levine's claim that '[f]ormalist modes of thought are the best that these disciplines have to offer': 'In approaching the cultural studies roundtable – where historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and media specialists with distinct disciplinary credentials of their own will all be drawing up a chair – taking along anything less than our best seems professionally foolhardy.' If structure is the best the discipline has to offer and if New Historicism is the template upon which we need to re-inscribe innovation, inquiry, and interpretation in order to invent a new but previously tested critical intervention, then New Formalism is the way to go. Whether it is called strategic or historical, cultural context and form have to meet if the discipline's appreciation of the creative imagination is to survive alongside theoretical probing.

**Defining a theory**

For many, Levinson's reading of New Formalism as 'a movement rather than a theory or a method' was a call to theorize; her essay has inspired a movement to become a methodology and to develop its own theoretical framework. *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* is our response to this call. The chapters in this collection suggest more than a movement. Like Rasmussen's and Cohen's collections, the chapters here, at the very least, imply a common supposition, namely that literary theory is changing, that New Criticism is not nefarious, that Russian formalism has never been disreputable, that post-structuralism, despite its prefix, does not mark the end of structure, and that New Historicism is not the catch-all that it has frequently been made out to be. Perhaps most importantly, the chapters below re-read form as a primary property of history and culture, one which shapes language into discourse and one without which no critical inquiry can attain the name and status of literary theory. The techniques employed by our various authors may suggest 'a movement rather than … a method' in the Levinsonesque sense of the word, but only insofar as a movement means a purposeful steering toward a specific goal, one that is perceived as fluid until such time as it achieves its rhetorical function and its mechanisms become common practice. And it is this goal that unifies our authors’ contributions to this collection and to the movement of New Formalism more generally, effectively investing New Formalism with a driving force and an intentionality that requires its signification as both a theory and a methodology.

It has been said that the type of close reading developed and taught by the New Critics is the fundamental methodology of all literary criticism. It is, perhaps, tempting to agree with Levinson that there is no need for a new theory called New Formalism, that all we need is to remind ourselves
and our colleagues to read closely and carefully, and that form would, so to speak, take care of itself. It is a mistake to give into this temptation, to allow New Formalism to drift; doing so robs us of an opportunity to re-engage with some questions basic to our discipline and our profession. Non-theorized, it will continue to simmer just beneath the surface, manifesting itself here and there, but not changing the discipline, or our way of teaching and functioning professionally. Linda and I agree that thinking about form is a way of thinking about whether there is such a trait as ‘literariness,’ and what it might be, and it allows us to address, head on, the lurking question, ‘What is it we do in literature departments that isn’t done elsewhere in the humanities?’ The New Critics answered this question, but they did so in ways that kept them from addressing a question that seems, to us, both more important and more basic: ‘How do aesthetics, the power of beauty, the variability of words, help literature do what it does?’ In ways both direct and indirect, this is the question that every chapter in this collection seeks to address.

Levinson also claims that New Formalism has yet to re-theorize key terms such as ‘form.’ That is what we attempt to do here. Reading form as ideologically charged, as anything but ‘innocent,’ New Formalisms and Literary Theory suggests that a text's formal features, its aesthetics, in close conjunction with cultural context, convey a politically and historically significant literary experience that is both intentional and affective. In much the same way in which recent digs in London unearthed rare delftware, dating back to the seventeenth century and revealing both delicate hand-painted tulip decorations and seventeenth-century tableware fashion, this volume perceives poetic language and form as something that has to be dug up and unearthed and that cannot be ignored if one’s object is to read and, indeed, to experience any given literary text in its entirety and to its fullest. The chapters below thus seek to intervene in Levinson’s ‘movement’ and to provide the kind of theorizing that she claims New Formalism is lacking.

That Linda and I are not alone in our desire to rediscover and re-read form became clear not only in the overwhelming response to our call for contributions, but also in the variety of approaches we received, all of them addressing the various myths that had sprung up over the last few decades claiming that form, in order to function as form, necessarily had to occlude history and politics. Most popular perhaps, was the myth that historicism (old and new) along with cultural studies had forcefully abandoned form in an effort to experience cultural moments instead – moments, of course, that had been superimposed onto the text, but moments, nonetheless, that others claimed only tangentially related back to the literary text under discussion.

Still, what we saw unfold before us was not what we had expected. What we had been looking for was one answer and one solution to the
disconnectedness we were feeling. Instead, what we received was a myriad of answers and kaleidoscopically fragmented visions of how to hone form (back) into a viable theoretical shape and to (re)assign it a critically interventive power. Many of the responses we entertained viewed this intervention as a reinvigoration of historicist, cultural analysis. Others added that they saw it as a return perhaps even to those idealistic beginnings of New Historicism in which Stephen Greenblatt still held strongly to formalist methodologies and insisted on a literary analysis that considered the creative imagination’s role in form, not for form’s sake, but in order to move form beyond formalism to a consideration of how intentional and affective a text might be, how overwhelmingly literary and aesthetic a piece of art, a Shakespearean play, is and how it instills breath and life in us, through its form, its language, its beauty, and its poesy.

As mentioned above, Heather Dubrow first used the term ‘new formalism’ in 1989 to call attention to a theoretical return to formal considerations in literary studies; she used ‘new formalism’ as a corrective to what she and others saw as the profession’s excessive embrace of cultural studies. While initially the response to Dubrow’s call was slow in developing, scholars, as we have seen, are now increasingly willing to accept her assessment as they see critics turn to form and aesthetics as a starting point in their own literary analyses. We see the increase in this type of scholarship evidenced by such publications as *Aesthetics and Ideology*, edited by George Levine (Rutgers University Press, 1994), *Renaissance Literature and its Formal Engagements*, edited by Mark Rasmussen (Palgrave, 2002), *Modern Language Quarterly*’s special edition on new formalism in 2007, in which Levinson’s article appeared, and Stephen Cohen’s *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism* (Ashgate, 2007). Importantly, this collection, *New Formalisms and Literary Theory*, is introduced by Heather Dubrow, whose own journey has led her through both Rasmussen’s and Cohen’s collections and who has arrived here to recapitalize on what she meant and what she continues to see as the discipline’s move toward a New Formalist future, a disciplinary ‘turn,’ as she calls it, likening theory to a car that is being driven purposefully by an agent who is both critically aware of the vehicle’s possibilities and its past trajectories. *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* defines, examines, and applies what has been called New Formalism as a vehicle of literary inquiry.

This collection seeks to solidify Levinson’s movement into a method by uniformly reading for form, embracing cultural theory, and actively drawing on New Historicist methodologies. As such, Frederic V. Bogel (Chapter 2) places a non-intrinsic formalism into a philosophical context as well as a literary theoretical one, Group Phi (Chapter 3) precisely retheorizes form, and Linda Tredennick (Chapter 11) examines the pedagogical implications for placing close reading in a progressive ideology, both in terms of theory and praxis. In its rhetorical, theoretical thrust, then, *New
**Formalisms** represents a forceful step forward in the process of defining and reflecting on the state of formalism today. The essays gathered here sketch the movement's histories and trajectories, as well as describing its current scope, direction, and contemporary branchings in an effort to arrive at a clearer sense of what it is that we as scholars of language, literature, and culture mean when we apply the term New Formalism to a theoretical approach, a critical analysis, or a style of composition. The fundamental challenge with which all the chapters below grapple concerns the question of how literary studies can retain that distinct identity without abdicating ethical and ideological imperatives. What they have in common is (1) their concept of empathy, that is, they either grant the text, and by extension its form and its formal features, autotelic status in the manner of the New Critics – they treat the text as an entity, even a person (for example, Tredennick in Chapter 11 and Bogel in Chapter 2) – or in the manner of New Historicists, in that they emphasize how form and formal features contribute to the creation of empathetic and intensely emotive responses (for example, Brinkman in Chapter 5 and McEleney and Wernimont in Chapter 6); (2) their reading of form as an activity rather than as an object (Group Phi in Chapter 3 and Brunner in Chapter 4); and (3) their focus on New Formalism’s refusal to fetishize a stable argument (for example, McEleney and Wernimont, and Nichols in Chapter 10). This leads to some non-traditional, even uncomfortable essays that consciously refuse the traditional academic model of thesis and argument, but which are theoretically consistent with the desire to approach form and interpretation of form as dynamic and constructed.

Structurally, we have separated the collection into three distinct sections, which are representative of literary studies as practiced now in the university: theory, practice, and pedagogy. The contributors to the first section of *New Formalisms* engage in the type of defining and theorizing work that Marjorie Levinson’s critical survey demands. For these authors, New Formalism takes from New Historicism sensitivity to historical and cultural uses as well as motivations of form, and, in doing so, New Formalism refutes the notion that engagement with form means an uncritical nostalgia for or an affirmation of Enlightenment models of ‘humanness.’ The chapters in this section assume as their starting point the idea that literary studies is a domain distinct from cultural studies, history, sociology (and so on) and that the diversity of literary studies lies deeply embedded within the discipline’s engagement with form and the aesthetic. Together our contributors to this section endeavor to redefine the field by considering its history as well as imagining its future. As a whole then, the collection’s theory section meaningfully redraws and reimagines the boundaries and limitations of both New Critical and formalist inquiries even as it endeavors to stretch and broaden those of New Historicism and post-structural analyses more generally.
Chapter 2 emphasizes New Criticism’s reliance on both the language and the assumptions of the intrinsic. In ‘Toward a New Formalism: The Intrinsic and Related Problems in Theory and Criticism,’ Fredric V. Bogel argues that this reliance led to New Criticism’s development as a limiting rather than a liberating tool of literary inquiry. Usefully revising the central terms of New Criticism – form, intention, meaning, and reading – in light of a philosophical tradition that originates in Kant and that recognizes the unknowability of intrinsic content and the constitutive role of perspective and methodology, Bogel works toward a goal of paying close and ethical attention to the textual nature of a text beyond the marshaling of evidence. ‘[C]lose reading,’ he posits, can be understood as a technique for mounting ‘a regular and salutary resistance to the surmises and projections of the interpreter and the more or less fantasmatic coalescences of meaning that can obscure the text’s linguistic actuality.’

The second essay in Part II is particularly representative of the collection’s scope and purpose, in both its composite authorship and its comprehensive approach to New Formalism’s emergence as a school of literary theory. Its many voiced narrator explicitly reflects, perhaps even mimics critical conversations that take place across the literary-theoretical spectrum of scholarship and that unanimously engage with the state of literary theory and collectively inquire into its direction. Rather than attempting to resuscitate New Critical formulas, in Chapter 3, ‘Doing Genre,’ the writing collective which refers to itself as Group Phi, and which consists of Scott Black, Nora Johnson, Laura McGrane, Steven Newman, Kristin Poole, Katherine Rowe, Lauren Shohet, and Julian Yates, provides a manifesto for a new theoretical model for approaching form and genre. Their concept of a ‘transactional view’ of form foregrounds the dynamic nature of genre and sees the relationship between history and form as a ‘feedback loop,’ in which neither has definitional power over the other (57). Group Phi envisions forms as uses rather than structures or taxonomies – ‘more as action than as object’ – and as actions which have agency within the matrices of history and hermeneutics (59).

Our authors in Part III of New Formalisms extend and challenge the theories laid out in Part II by demonstrating the variety and scope of New Formalist analysis. Engaging with texts as diverse as Giorgio Vasari’s Lives of the Artists, contemporary African American sonnet sequences, and Alan Moore and David Gibbon’s graphic novel The Watchmen, to name but a few, our authors actively confront the complexity of New Formalist literary analysis. In the process, they examine the value inherent in the specificity of an interpretation, one that can only be generated through a close reading of a text, and then use that particularity, that level of complexity to divulge how form creates, defines, and attacks ideology and context. The authors of the chapters in Part III of New Formalisms have put theory into practice, in other words: they apply and demonstrate New Formalist approaches to the study of literary texts.
In many ways, Edward Brunner's Chapter 4, ‘Inventing an Ancestor: The Scholar-Poet and the Sonnet,’ builds the bridge between the theory laid out in Part II and the practice heralded in the title of Part III in that it puts into action the understanding of ‘form as transaction’ advocated by Group Phi, even as it offers a powerful argument for the continued relevance of lyrical poetry itself. Looking at recent publications of sonnet sequences that wrestle with America’s racial and racist history, Brunner contrasts neo-formalist practices of the 1970s with New Formalist critical theory and posits that ‘For African American poets .... the sonnet was not just another form but a powerful device associated with their heritage: a form specifically deployed for its ideological and political significance by poets of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s’ (71). Their sonnets, he explains, are ‘double-voiced. Each summon a voice presented as out of the past, a voice that is engaged by taking action in the past, while at the same time recognizing that voice as ancestral, as moving expressively and meaningfully into the present’ (72). In the process, ‘As past and present dynamically overlap, history becomes an archive open to alteration, not a repository of the antiquarian’ (72).

In Chapter 5, Bartholomew Brinkman follows in Brunner's theoretically practical footsteps in that his chapter, too, confronts form ideologically and reads history both transactionally and cross-culturally. For its politically and ideologically charged context, the chapter draws on the much publicized 1927 trials of Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two immigrant anarchists who were sent to the electric chair for crimes the public believed they had not committed. Brinkman’s ‘From Close Reading to Cross-Reading: Sacco-Vanzetti Poetry and the Politics of New Formalism’ forcefully demonstrates a cross-reading of contemporary poetry that was published in their defense. Important in the context of this volume, his cross-reading engages both form and content in order to lay bare their interconnectedness and to provide a framework within which literary scholarship may come to appreciate the communal nature of popular production alongside artistic composition. His New Formalist approach meaningfully extends close reading techniques, because it historically situates a body of poetry within a specific historical moment that considers time alongside authorship and readership and that pays careful attention to the formal aesthetics of individual poems as they ponder and converse with contemporaneous poetic texts.

In Chapter 6, ‘Re-Reading for Forms in Sir Philip Sidney’s Defence of Poesy,’ an essay that is itself formally experimental, Corey McEleney and Jacqueline Wernimont begin by initiating a conventional approach to Sidney only to offer a new insight into the originality of The Defence’s model, form, and power of creative mimesis in the latter section of their essay. Thus the second half of this chapter strategically undermines the unified and stable reading of the text championed in its first half, arguing that the digressio severely limits if it does not contradict the creative freedom celebrated in the rest of the text. What is truly provocative about McEleney and Wernimont's
New Formalisms and Literary Theory

project is their demonstration of how formalism is not, and perhaps never has been, able to delineate the integrated and immanent meaning of a text. The authors insist that the end-point of attentions to form ought to be ‘productive irresolution’ (134). New Formalism, they venture, ‘reminds us that a text was and is alive with agency and feeling’: it ‘activates the dynamic reflexivity of form, content, and context’ and treats ‘form as a contingent, historically imbedded vector of analysis’ (116).

Another chapter that engages with what used to be the realm of New Historicism inquiry, the early modern period, and more precisely, its varying discourses, is Harry Berger’s ‘Collecting Body Parts in Leonardo’s Cave: Vasari’s Lives and the Erotics of Obscene Connoisseurship’ (Chapter 7). In this powerfully insightful and revelatory reading of Giorgio Vasari’s Lives of the Artists, Harry Berger Jr performs a formalism of another kind. A self-proclaimed ‘Reconstructed Old New Critic (RONC for short)’ and an ‘unwilling student of Cleanth Brooks … and a willing student of William K. Wimsatt who still is, in a deep way, [his] mentor,’ Berger explains his own approach to sociology, anthropology, philosophy, art history, classical studies, and literary theory as one that is informed by New Criticism and ‘the close reading [he] learned as an undergraduate at Yale.’36 Probing into the depths and the folds of this text, Berger discovers a Leonardo who walks the line between obsession and genius. What makes Berger’s analysis so interesting though is not necessarily his sketching of Leonardo’s talents and compulsions – though this sketching by itself is marvelous and emerges as a true artistic masterpiece in its own right under Berger’s almost playful direction – but his careful drawing of a wistful author who gives life to Leonardo through a deeply personal seeming biography, personal to both artists, Vasari and Leonardo. ‘Vasari’s portrayal of Leonardo da Vinci in Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects,’ Berger explains, ‘is a strange performance because the text of this life speaks back to its author as if Leonardo is happy neither with Vasari’s portrayal nor with his ideology.’37 Under Berger’s watchful eye then, both author and object come to life, speaking to each other and struggling to come to terms with a legacy and a life, one to be lived and one that had expired long before the quill touched the parchment.

The final chapter in Part III takes a decisive temporal leap forward and brings us face-to-face with a contemporary text that weds form and aesthetics with culture and context perhaps more obviously and seamlessly than any of the other texts discussed so far. In Chapter 8, ‘Form as a Pattern of Thinking: Cognitive Poetics and New Formalism,’ Karin Kukkonen uses recent insights from cognitive stylistics to consider such basic hermeneutic questions as what the location of meaning is and how the human mind apprehends meaning in art. Using the critically acclaimed graphic novel The Watchmen as her proof text, Kukkonen maps a wide array of formal features – including traditional figurative language, visual juxtapositions, and narrative structure – to
cognitive operations of meaning-making and defamiliarization. Since a cognitive approach assumes that meaning is made in the mind of the audience rather than within the text, Kukkonen argues that cognitive stylistics forges a path for New Formalism and toward the necessary integration of formal analysis and a socio-historical awareness of context.

The discussion of New Formalism within the fourth and final section of the collection is situated within the literature classroom. As mentioned at the outset, this is where Linda and my journey began and where we felt the most disconnected. Theorizing form and contextualizing culture, the work our contributors have done in Part II, has helped us understand the porous nature of both formalist and New Historicist boundaries. Testing such theories and applying such methodologies, the work our contributors have done in Part III, has created a visual image of the ways in which New Formalism can and has, indeed, reshaped critical practice. In Part IV, Linda and two of our contributors pursue the history of New Formalism back to the classroom setting, in which form and aesthetics were never successfully replaced but instead lingered on only to re-emerge ever more powerfully first in student writing and then in pedagogical essays and creative works. Particularly focusing on the creative writing workshop, Kelcey Parker and Cynthia Nichols discuss New Formalism as a pedagogical tool and tackle questions of how to teach close reading while encouraging students’ political engagement and fostering the interdisciplinary nature of current literary studies. Linda’s essay attempts to come to terms with the conundrum that gave birth to this collection: How do we teach literature as close readers whose theoretical training was deeply entrenched in New Historicist readings for culture as context?

In Chapter 9, ‘Reading Like a Writer: A Creative Writer’s Approach to New Formalism,’ Kelcey Parker begins by considering the changing structures of English departments, particularly the growth of creative writing as a discipline, and argues that a creative writing pedagogy based on ‘reading like a writer’ is formalist in nature and that it actively redirects literary studies towards a New Formalism. In particular, Parker engages with the creative writer’s investment in form and demonstrates how her own personal and pedagogical concerns, those of a creative writer and a teacher of writing, have led to her New Formalist approach in the literature classroom and how this approach both enhances students’ textual understanding and introduces them to the importance of their roles as readers. Her larger claim addresses New Formalism’s special contribution to literary studies and suggests that even Marxist or feminist or New Historicist considerations about content are, ultimately, about form.

In Chapter 10, ‘Punk Bodies, Jorie Graham, and the Draft Itself: Notes Toward a Lyric Formalism,’ Cynthia Nichols addresses the discrepancy between the creative writing, the literature, and the theory classroom from the perspective of an MFA with a background in lyric poetry. Naming her approach, as her
title suggests, ‘lyric formalism,’ Nichols impatiently awaits the arrival of a new type of critic, one who honors the literary text as both discrete and contingent without intellectualizing these conflicting premises and who brings both the creative writer’s and the critic’s mind into the act of ‘literary appreciation without forgoing the benefits and challenges of either’ (197). With her clear focus on pedagogy, Nichols’s objective is obvious: she wants her students to recognize creative writing as organic and constitutive. Creative writing, to Nichols, is the place where formalist and historicist analysis meet and are in conversation, naturally and continually.

Like Bogel, Linda Tredennick takes aim at the intrinsic assumptions of formalist’s Anglican sibling, New Criticism, in her essay “‘One Another’s Hermitage’: New Formalist Pedagogy’ (Chapter 11). Her title, derived from the same poem as Cleanth Brooks’s famous ‘Well Wrought Urn,’ signals her intention to reclaim New Critical practices in a way consistent with her other political and methodological allegiances, such as gender studies, the philosophy of alterity, and New Historicism. But by replacing Brooks’s concept of the ideal reader with an interpretive model based on composition theory, Linda importantly repositions close reading practices within a progressive ideology, one which emphasizes the transformative and transgressive potential of all literary activity. For her, ‘the hermeneutic relationships between artist, content, and reader are mapped onto the relationships between self, others, and world in a way that renders all those relationships simultaneously fluid and meaningful’ (235). In addition, this chapter provides suggestions and descriptions of classroom exercises and assignments designed to teach formalism in a student-centered classroom, so that arguing about a text requires listening to the text as an other, listening to the discourse community as an other, and allowing those others to impact the commitments and assumptions the individual students bring into the process.

True to the goals of the book and our critical endgame, Linda, as I have attempted to do in the introduction, proposes a intervention in contemporary theory, practice, and pedagogy, one that creates not so much a critical compromise as a comprehensive criticism, a New Formalism, historically charged and aesthetically informed. Our position as the editors of this volume has equipped us with a bird’s-eye view of the collection’s development of New Formalism into a critical theory; we saw it emerge as a movement, evolve into a method, and grow into a theory. What we learned, we tried to put into words – but more important than this verbal reproduction perhaps might be that what we learned we put into use in our classrooms every day. (The explication assignment, for example, has found a new home in my theory classroom.) The chapters below move beyond both history and aesthetics, grouped as they are within our discipline’s range of literary forums – theory, practice, and pedagogy – in an effort to imagine a future for the academic study of literature in university English departments.
In many ways, this introduction has endeavored to explain our purpose and to redraw our journey to *New Formalisms and Literary Theory*. It is has been my goal to contextualize how and why we conceived of this collection and what we saw as our call, to our contributors as well as to ourselves and, perhaps most importantly, how we see our contributors and ourselves respond to this call and partake in the formation of a literary theory called New Formalism.

**Notes**

4. Levinson: The quote comes from page 2 of the longer version of this article, available at [http://sitemap.unc.edu/pmla_article/home](http://sitemap.unc.edu/pmla_article/home) (accessed 13 November 2012; see also its comprehensive bibliography of New Formalist scholarship).
22. Levine, ‘Strategic Formalism,’ 626.
29. Levine, ‘Strategic Formalism,’ 632.
32. Levine, ‘Strategic Formalism,’ 631.
34. Levinson, ‘What is New Formalism?’, 558–69.
35. Fredric V. Bogel, Chapter 2, below, 34. All subsequent chapter references will be given in parentheses in the text.
36. Harry Berger, Jr, email communication with Verena Theile, 3 October 2012.
37. Berger, email communication with Verena Theile, 28 July 2010.
Index

academic discourse
and conventions of academic writing, 207
and masculinist tendencies in, 225–6
and shift to first-person mode, 226
Adams, Michael, 85
Adorno, Theodor, 34–5, 38
aesthetics
and literature, 17
and neglect of aesthetic experience, 12
and New Formalism, 8, 12
and particularity of form, 43
and relational aesthetics, 90
African American poets, see sonnets and the scholar-poet
agency
and aesthetic agency, 98, 112
and different approaches to, xiv
and form, 60–2
and New Formalism, viii
Alberti, Leon Battista, 143
allegory, 173n4
Altieri, Charles, 91
Altman, Rick, 65
Ambrogi, Stefan, 9–10
anaphora, 165–6
in Moore's Watchmen, 169–70
Aristotle, 130
and mimesis, 122
Armstrong, Paul B., 98
Auerbach, Erich, x
and autonomy of text, 121, 123
and mimesis, 121
Austen, Jane, and Northanger Abbey, 180
autonomy
of the author, 100
of the text, 121, 123
back-formation, 45, 52n49
and reference, 45–6
Baez, Joan, 96
Baker, Josephine, 82, 93n37
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 100, 204, 205
Barolsky, Paul, 141, 143, 144–5
Barthes, Roland, 189, 195n43
Beardsley, M.C., 44
Beat poets, 198–9
Beethoven, Ludwig van, and Dove's Sonata Mulattica, 83–6
belief, and constitution of meaning, 36
Bell, Marvin, 200, 201
Belloq, E.J., and Tretheway's Bellocq's Ophelia, 76–80
Benjamin, Walter, 71, 74
Bentley, Nancy, 56
Berger, Harry, Jr, xv, 13
Bernstein, Susan, 226
Besant, Walter, 194n20
bikini, 45
Bizzaro, Patrick, 202
Blake, William, 170
Blanchot, Maurice, 55
blending theory, 175n37
bookmarking, 62–3
Bradford, Richard, 161
Bradstreet, Anne, 111
Brecht, Bertolt, and the Verfremdungseffekt, 161
Bridgetower, George Polgreen Augustus, and Dove's Sonata Mulattica, 83–7
Brooks, Cleanth, 223–4
and critical relativism, 224, 225
and Herrick's 'Corinna's Going a-Maying', 232, 233
and ideal reader, 41, 224–5: critiques of, 225–6; as Western ideal of an intellectual, 225
Brooks, Peter, 60
Broow, Reuben A., xi, 229
Brown, Marshall, ix
Bruster, Douglas, xii
Burke, Kenneth, 7, 32, 64
Burns, Vincent G., 110
Burt, Stephen, 76, 88
Bush, Douglas, xii
Butler, Judith, 226
Bynner, Witter, 97, 105–6
Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da, 154
Carew, Harold D, 107
Cassill, R.V., 192
Cassirer, Ernst, 35, 36
Cavell, Stanley, 230
Certeau, Michel de, 58–9
Cervantes, Miguel de, 64
cracter names, and formalist analysis of, 187–9
chiasmus, 166
in Moore’s Watchmen, 171
Chicago School, viii, xii
Chomsky, Noam, 163
Cicero, 118, 119, 144
Cisneros, Sandra, 185
Clark, Michael, 221n28
classroom teaching, and lyric formalism, 212–13
and prepare for reading in classroom, 213
and prepare students for experience of language, 214
and reading the poem, 214–15
and reflection on the poem, 215–16
and re-reading the poem, 216–17
and Wright’s ‘Lying in a Hammock’, 217–19
close reading, 5, 20
and analysis of text, 33–5
and discovering meaning, 34
as ethical imperative, 34
as fundamental methodology, 16–17, 34
and Herrick’s ‘Corinna’s Going a-Maying’: New Critical approach to, 232, 233; New Formalist approach, 234–6; political readings of, 232–3
and multiplicity of meanings, 228
and New Criticism, 239
and New Formalism, 224, 239–40
and reading like a writer, 183, 194n20
and re-evaluation of, 98
and rescuing texts from distortions of paraphrase, 34–5
and transformative power of, 229, 234
as transgressive praxis, 224
cognition
and Kant’s argument about, 30
and perspectives, 30–1
cognitive linguistics, 162, 163–4, 165
Cognitive Stylistics, 160
and application to multimodal media, 164–5, 166–7, 172
and approach of, 162
and cognitive effects of literary texts, 161–2
and cognitive linguistics, 162
and ‘cognitive turn’, 162
and context, 164
and focus of, 162, 164
and foregrounding, 165–6
and form as pattern of thinking, 164, 165–6, 172–3
and meaning-making through form, 163–4
and metaphors, 167
and narratology, 162
and New Formalism, 172–3
and organization of content, 164
and roots, 161
Cohen, Stephen, ix, 18
and early modern literature, 116
and limitations of New Historicism, 11–12
and ‘New Historicism and the Promise of a Historical Formalism’, 14–15
and Shakespeare and Historical Formalism, 11, 14
Cole, Nat King, 82, 93n37
Colie, Rosalie L., xii, xiii
and literary ‘kinds’, 55–6
comics
and Cognitive Stylistics, 164
and features of, 164
and horror comics, 159–60
and metaphor, 167
see also Moore, Alan, and Watchmen
Comics Code (1954), 159
commonplace books, 63
conceptual metaphor theory, 159, 167
Confessional poetry, 199
confessional writing, 226
couplets, 109–10
Cowley, Malcolm, 97
Cox, MacNolia, and Jordan’s M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A, 80–3
craft
and conscious craft, 127
and creative writing, 200
and New Formalism, xvi–xvii
creative writing
and analytical questions about
creative work, 183–4
and character names, 187–9
as complement to literary/cultural
studies, 186
and content and form, 187: Olsen’s
Anxious Pleasures, 189–91
and contribution to English studies, 206
and craft, 200
and creative writing workshops,
184–5, 200–1: Jorie Graham, 210–12;
lyric poet’s experience of the text,
206–9; multiple lens approach, 202;
questions about the enterprise, 207;
teaching methodology, 212–17
and decisions about form, 179
and disciplinary norms, 207
in English departments, 181–2
and formal experimentation, 190–1
and formalism, 205: antipathy towards,
198–200; close ties with, 200–1
and formalist component of, 183
and literary criticism, 191–2:
creative-critical experiments, 205;
critification, 192; dialogic interaction
with, 182, 192, 193, 205; hybridized
forms of, 192–3
and literary politics, 185
and literature-in-progress, 206–9
and literature, nature of, 206–7
and the lyric act, 208–9
as mode of literary research, 182–3:
application to Chick Lit, 185–6;
methods of, 183; pragmatic and
active, 185
and new literary forms, 181
and paradox, 208
and pleasure of reading, 189: Olsen’s
Anxious Pleasures, 189–91
and post-formalist precepts, hostility
towards, 201
and reading like a writer, 183, 194n20:
as close reading, 183
and use of form: Austen’s Northanger
Abbey, 180; Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway,
180–1
and value of work, 184
critics and writers, relationship between,
xvi
critification, 192
cross-reading
as augmentation of author-centered
approaches, 112
and modern lyric poetry, 100
and New Formalism, 97, 100, 113
and publication networks, 97–8, 113
and Sacco-Vanzetti poetry, 108,
111–12
Crosswhite, James, 230
Cullen, Countee, 97
Culler, Jonathan, 43, 49n9, 90
Culpeper, Jonathan, 164
cultural studies, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18, 71,
182
cultural work, 186
culture, as conscious and collective
activity, 64
Daniel, Stephen H., 30
Davies, Mary Carolyn, 107
Davis, Todd F., 202
dawson, Paul, 182, 194n20
and creative writing, 182–3
and Iowa Writer’s Workshop, 200
deconstruction, and relationship of
form and history, 55
defamiliarization, 161, 163
dé Man, Paul, ix, 44, 128, 133, 172
and critique of New Criticism, 227–9
Dernavich, Drew, 57–8
Derrida, Jacques, xii, 52n54, 56, 197,
204, 208
Dimock, Wai-Chee, 56
disciplines
and conventions of, 30
and Kant’s argument about cognition,
30
and perspectives, 30–1
Donoghue, Douglas, 43, 48
Dos Passos, John, and ‘They Are Dead
Now’, 102
Dove, Rita, and Sonata Mulattica, 72,
83–7, 89
Dubrow, Heather, 13, 18, 48
Eagleton, Terry, 13, 99, 184, 232
early modern literature, 116
see also Sidney, Sir Philip, and Defence
of Poesy

early modern studies, 55
Eggers, Dave, 198
elegy, and Renaissance understanding
of, 61
Eliot, T.S., 200
Ellis, John M., 29
Emory, William Closson, 107
empathy, 19, 83
Empson, William, x, 228
Engel, Monroe, xi
English departments, and growth of
creative writing, 181–2
epiphora, in Moore’s *Watchmen*, 170
Feinstein, Martin, 106–7
feminism
and confessional writing, 226
and critique of the ideal reader, 225–6
feminist poetics, 90
Ferguson, Margaret, 127
Ficke, Arthur Davison, 97
fictocriticism, 192, 204
film studies, and renewed interest in
form, 55
Fish, Stanley, 29
and formal units, 41, 43–4
and *Is There a Text in This Class*, 31
and meanings of a poem, 31
Fludernik, Monika, 162
Forceville, Charles, 167
foregrounding, 163, 165–6
in Moore’s *Watchmen*, 171
form
as an activity, 19
and agency, 60–2
and appropriate use of, 179
and communal form, 111–13
and connection between textual and
everyday forms, 61
as distinguishing characteristic of art,
43
and expanding concept of, 182
and foregrounding, 163
and genre, 54
and history, 54: as active social
performance, 55–6; failure to
theorize relationship between, 55;
relationship between, 56–8, 63, 64,
97, 98, 99, 134
and interpretation of, 42–3
and Levine’s definition of, 15
and Marxist criticism, 99
and meaning, 37, 43
as metric of textual and social
developments, 59
and myths surrounding, 17
and New Formalism, 8, 17: renewed
emphasis on, 98
and particularity of, 41–4
as pattern of thinking, 162, 163, 164,
165–6, 172–3
as practice, 60
as primary property of history and
culture, 16
and questions of use, 58, 60, 62–4
and reading, 58–9
and reconstructing historical cultural
fields, 63
and shaping of users of, 60
and significance of, 7
as social construct, 7
and wariness in return to, 99
formalism
and activist and normative formalism,
135n7, 160–1
and creative writers’ relationship with:
antipathy towards, 198–200; close
ties between, 200–1
and criticism of practices of, ix, 186
and goal of objective literary analysis,
162
and misreadings of, xii–xiii
and necessity of, 47–9
and New Criticism, xii
and politics, xiii
and professionalization of literary
studies, 48
and reinvigoration of, 182
and rejection of historical
interpretation, 43
and value of practices of, 187
and variety of approaches, xii–xiii
Fowler, Alastair, viii
Freeman, Donald C., 164
Freud, Sigmund, 153
Frye, Northrop, 39
Fuller, Charles, 96, 101, 102, 105, 107
Gallup, Jane, 98
Galvin, James, 198
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gardner, Thomas</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender, relational</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aesthetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generative grammar</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and constructing</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuously</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emergent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dynamic nature</td>
<td>54,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59–60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emergent nature</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyday genre</td>
<td>64–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and genre</td>
<td>59–64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ecologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as non-linear</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recursive system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questions</td>
<td>58,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60, 62–4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>58–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recycling</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and relationship</td>
<td>54,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of form and history</td>
<td>56,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54–8, 63, 64: as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance, 55–6;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>failure to theorize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and theoretical</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as transaction</td>
<td>56–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginsberg, Allen</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gioia, Dana</td>
<td>88,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gledhill, Christine</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and literary</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gombrich, Ernst, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasari’s Lives</td>
<td>141–2, 146, 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodenough, Carolyn</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard, Nelson</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosson, Stephen</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and The School of</td>
<td>116–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graff, Gerald</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham, Jorie</td>
<td>199, 203–4, 209–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and creating</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and creative</td>
<td>210–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and text-as-live-drama</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenblatt, Stephen</td>
<td>xiii, 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Hamlet in</td>
<td>12–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purgatory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the literary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and text and culture</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene, Roland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Phi</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillen, Claudio</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guthrie, Woody</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutmann, Peter</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacker, Marilyn</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadfield, Andrew</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale, Ruth</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halliwell, Stephen</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton, A.C.,</td>
<td>125, 136n25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem Renaissance</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris, Jonathan Gil</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison, Henry</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartman, Geoffroy</td>
<td>34, 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey, Gabriel</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidegger, Martin</td>
<td>221n26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helgerson, Richard</td>
<td>xiii–xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman, David</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernadi, Paul</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrick, Robert</td>
<td>and close reading of, 231–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical change</td>
<td>and models of, ix–x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and historical</td>
<td>formalism, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and African American</td>
<td>poets, 88–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and dialectic</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between past and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and form</td>
<td>54: as active social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance, 55–6;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>failure to theorize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship between</td>
<td>55;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship between</td>
<td>56–8, 63, 64,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97, 98, 99, 134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and New Criticism</td>
<td>xi, 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see also Sacco-Vanzetti poetry; sonnets and the scholar-poet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollander, John</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holmes, John Haynes</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horror comics</td>
<td>159–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howe, Susan</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hughes, Langston</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Clay</td>
<td>vii, x–xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter, J. Paul, and</td>
<td>109–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>couplets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutcheon, Linda</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hysteria proteron</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Moore’s</td>
<td>168–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchmen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideal reader</td>
<td>41, 224–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and feminist critique of, 225–6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and maintenance of</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patriarchal culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and rejection of</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical relativism</td>
<td>227–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and removing from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Criticism, 227–9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as Western ideal of</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an intellectual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ideology
and activist formalism, 161
and African American poets’ use of
the sonnet, 71–2
and form, 17, 20, 99
and questioning of, 204
and Renaissance criticism, 12
and skepticism towards, 240
and value judgments, 184
intention
and concept of, 44–5
and New Criticism, 227
intrinsic meaning, 29, 41, 48
irony, 128, 133, 207–8
Iser, Wolfgang, 205

Jakobson, Roman, 181–2
Jameson, Fredric, 7–8, 55, 99
Johnson, Barbara, 44
Johnson, Mark, 163, 167
Jordan, A. Van, and M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A,
72, 80–3, 89
Joughlin, G. Louis, and Sacco-Vanzetti
poetry, 96–7

Kafka, Franz, and The Metamorphosis,
189, 190
Kalaidjian, Walter, 98–9
Kalstone, David, xi
Kant, Immanuel, and nature of
knowledge, 29–30
Kaufman, Robert, xiii, xvi, 48
Keating, John, 199–200
Keen, Suzanne, 186–7
and character names, 187–8
Keller, Josh, 192, 193
Kerman, Mary Plowden, 107
Kinzie, Mary, and the sonnet, 74–6
Knapp, Steven, 44, 49n9
Knopper, Laura, 56
knowledge
and belief’s role in constitution of
meaning, 36
and nature of, 29–30
and point of view, 29–30, 41
and role of language, 35
and role of symbols, 35, 36
Kress, Gunther, 164
Kreutzer, Rudolphe, 84
Krieger, Murray, 204, 209

Kuhn, Thomas, 31
Kundera, Milan, 179

Lahiri, Jhumpa, and ‘This Blessed
House’, 188–9
Lakoff, George, 163, 167
Landrum, David, 234–5
Langacker, Ronald, 165
Langer, Susanne, 35
Language poets, 199
Latour, Bruno, 60–1
Lehnhof, Kent, 117
Leighton, Angela, 48
Levinas, Emmanuel, 230
Levine, Caroline
and cultural studies, 15
and form, 15
and New Formalism as movement, 16
and post-post-structuralist formalism,
15
and social change, 15–16
and ‘Strategic Formalism’, 13–14,
15–16
Levine, George, 13, 18
Levinson, Marjorie, ix, 13, 48, 55
and activist and normative formalism,
135n7, 160
and close reading, 239
and criticism of New Formalism, 240
and form as effect of reading, 43
and pleasure of reading, 189
and ‘What is New Formalism?’; 5, 6,
88, 135n3, 239
linguistics, and Chomskyan linguistics,
163
literary criticism
and centrality of language, 36–7
and choice of critical method, 31–2:
impact on constitution of a text, 32
and creative writing, 191–2:
creative-critical experiments, 205;
critification, 192; dialogic interaction
with, 182, 192, 193, 205
and critical orientations, 31
and critification/fictocriticism, 192
and formalist analysis, 33
and hybridized forms of, 192–3
and interpretive conventions and
expectations, 31
and lyric poetry, 198
literary criticism – continued
and relationship to literature, 39, 40
as response to creative use of
language, 33
literary experience, and neglect of
aspects of, 12–13
literary studies
and author-centered inquiry, 112
as distinct domain, 19
and diversity of, 19
literary theory, and destabilization of, 4
literary work, as central and serious
concern, 88
literature
and aesthetic experience, 12, 17
and creating, 206
and creative writing, 206–7
and distinctive feature of, 49n9
and Eagleton’s ‘What is Literature?’, 184
and new respect for institution of, 48–9
and specialness, 206–7
and teaching of, 3, 6–7, 8, 181–2
Liu, Alan, xiii
Lodge, David, 33, 36
Loesberg, Jonathan, 48
logical positivism, and New Criticism, 227–8
London, and archeological find in, 8–11
Lorca, Federico Garcia, 197
Lowell, Robert, 199
and blank sonnets, 74, 75
lyric formalism, 198
and classroom approach to, 212–13:
prepare for reading in the classroom, 213;
prepare students for experience of
language, 214; reading the
poem, 214–15; reflection on the
poem, 215–16; re-reading the
poem, 216–17; Wright’s ‘Lying in a
Hammock’, 217–19
and creative-critical experiments, 205
and creative writers’ relationship
with formalism: antipathy towards, 198–200;
close ties between, 200–1
and creative writing workshops, Jorie
Graham, 210–12
and critical bodies, 203
and different modes of analysis, 204
and the lyric act, 208–9
and lyric poet’s experience of the text, 206–9
and making criticism like literature, 203–5
and methodology, 212–13
and multiple lens approach of, 202:
problems with, 202–3
as punk formalism, 203
lyric poetry
and characteristics of, 100
and cross-reading, 100
and literary criticism, 198
and modern notion of, 90
Magill, A.B., 106
Magritte, René, 185
Manilius, Marcus, 124
Mao, Douglas, 38–9
Marcus, Ben, 187
Marotti, Arthur L., xiv
Marsyas, 143
Martin, Charles, and sonnets by, 73, 75
Marxist criticism, and form, 99
Maslen, R.W., 127–8, 132
Matz, Robert, 117
McGann, J., 219
MacLeish, Archibald, and what a poem
should be, 39–40
McLuhan, Marshall, 202
meaning
and belief’s role in constitution of, 36
and close reading, 34
and cognitive linguistics, 162
and context, 47
and form, 37, 43
as product of interpretation, 31, 38,
39, 41, 43, 44
Medusa, 143, 152, 153–4
metafiction, 204
metaphors
in comics, 167
and conceptual metaphor theory, 159,
167
and culture, 163–4
in Moore’s Watchmen, 168
and rupture between everyday and
poetic usage, 167
Michaels, Walter Benn, 35–6, 44
Mikics, David, 76
Mill, John Stuart, 39
Millay, Edna St Vincent, 97, 101
Miller, J. Hillis, 42, 51n32
mimesis, 121
and Aristotle, 122
and different approaches to, 122
and idealization, 141
and Plato, 122
and Sidney’s Defence of Poesy, 117, 118, 119, 120, 133: distinguishing imitative and creative, 123;
and Sidney’s Defence of Poesy, 117, 118, 119, 120, 133: distinguishing imitative and creative, 123;
emerging form of, 122–3
mimetic idealism, and Vasari’s Lives, 142
analysis in terms of myths, 143–4
fearful desire, 153–4
necessity of violence, 146
role of patrons in emergence of, 142
Modern American Poetry Site, 113
Modern Language Quarterly, ix
Modernist Journals Project, 113
Montrose, Louis A., xiii
Moore, Alan, and Watchmen, 159
and activist formalism account of, 161
and figures of speech, 164–5
and foregrounding, 165–6, 171
and form and content, 172
and metaphorical matching, 159, 160
and narrative arc, 167–8
and normative formalism account of, 161
and patterns of thinking in, 167–71
and stylistic devices, 167: anaphora, 165–6, 169–70; chiasmus, 166, 171;
epiphora, 170; extended metaphor, 164; hysteron proteron, 166, 168–9;
match-cut, 168; metaphors, 168;
symmetry theme, 170–1
Morgan, Edmund M., and
Sacco-Vanzetti poetry, 96–7
Morton, Timothy, 88
Mukařovský, Jan, 165
Mullaney, Steven, 116, 135n1
Myrick, Kenneth O., and Sidney’s Defence of Poesy, 117, 118, 119, 121–2, 133
Nabokov, Vladimir, 179, 181–2
Narcissus, 143
narratology, 162
Nelson, Cary, 100
neo-formalist poets
and Charles Martin, 73
and conservative appeal of, 88
and criticism of, 73–4, 89
and return to basics, 88
and the sonnet, 72–3
New Criticism
and attacks on, xii: as ahistorical, xi;
as apolitical, xi
and Beat poets, 198–9
and breaking from assumptions of, 29
and close reading, 16, 239: Herrick’s ‘Corinna’s Going a-Maying’, 232, 233
and constructivist dimension of, 35
and criticized by the Left, 98–9
and early formalism of, 33
and formalism, xii
and goal of objective literary analysis, 162
and history, xi, 99
and independence of literary studies, 48
and intention, 227
and irony and paradox, 207–8
as limiting tool of inquiry, 20
and logical positivism, 227–8
and misreadings of, x–xii
and representations of, x
and resistance to and rejection of, xi–xii
and text-object model, 39
and variety of approaches, x–xi
see also Brooks, Cleanth
New Formalism
and activist and normative formalism, 135n7, 160–1
and aesthetics, 8, 12
and agency, viii
and anecdotal illustration (London archeological find), 8–11
and approach of, 187
and aspirations of, 160
and autonomy of author, 100
and challenge facing, 12
and close reading, 239–40
and Cognitive Stylistics, 172–3
and communal form, 113
and craft, xvi–xvii
and criticism of, 240
and cross-reading, 97, 100, 113
New Formalism – continued
and development of, ix, 13–14:
Cohen’s *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*, 14; Levine’s ‘Strategic Formalism’, 13–14, 15–16
and early modern literature, 116
and first use of term, 13, 18
and form, 8, 17: as pattern of thinking, 172–3; renewed emphasis on, 98
and history and form, 98, 99
and inner tensions within, 6
and interaction of form, content and context, 172
and meaning, 41
as a movement, 16, 240
and multiple lens approach of, 202: problems with, 202–3
and nature of New Formalist criticism, 33
and necessity of, 47–9
and need for theory, 16–17
and New Criticism, breaking from assumptions of, 29
and pleasure of reading, 189
and poetry’s central role, 91
and predecessors of: balanced approach to, xiv–xv; dangers of comparing and contrasting with, ix–xiv
and questions raised by, viii
and relationship between critics and writers, xvi
and roots of, viii–ix, 7
New Formalist pedagogy
and argumentative essays, 238–9
and assessing students, 236
and close reading, 224, 234–6, 239–40: limitations of New Critical approach, 232, 233; limitations of political readings, 232–3; transformative power of, 229, 234; as transgressive praxis, 224
and cultural relativism, 229
and difficulties in writing about, 223
and formal analysis, 237–8
and meaning-making, 224
and New Criticism: influence of, 223–4: removing the ideal reader, 227–9
and preparatory exercises and assignments, 236–7
and questions at issue, 233–4
and relationship between text and reader, 231
and response writings, 237
and role of argumentation in the classroom, 230–1, 233–4
and teaching a way of thinking, 236
New Historicism
as alternative to New Criticism, ix
and anecdotal illustration (London archeological find), 8–10
and centrality to re-shaping literary-cultural theory, 15
and Cohen’s reformulation of, 14–15
and disillusionment with, 3–4
and early modern literature, 116
and exhaustion of, 12
and *King Lear*, opposition of two world views, 3–4
and limitations of, 11–12
and misreadings of, xiii–xiv
and relationship of form and history, 55
Newman, John Henry, Cardinal, 43
new media, 192
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 204
Olsen, Lance
and *Anxious Pleasures*, 189
and *Fiction’s Present*, 192–3
Ong, Walter J., 34
Owens, Jesse, 82, 93n37
palimpsested time, 63
Panofsky, Erwin, 141
parabasis, 128–30
paradox, 207–8
and creative writing, 208
pedagogy, see classroom teaching, and lyric formalism; creative writing; New Formalist pedagogy
Peirce, C.S., 137n40
Pennanen, Esko, 45
Percy, Thomas, 58
Perloff, Marjorie, 181
Plath, Sylvia, 199
Plato, 120, 122, 204
plot, as structuring operation, 60
Plotkin, David George, 107
poems and poetry
and central role for New Formalists, 91 and classroom approach to, 212–13: prepare for reading in the classroom, 213; prepare students for experience of language, 214; reading the poem, 214–15; reflection on the poem, 215–16; re-reading the poem, 216–17; Wright’s ‘Lying in a Hammock’, 217–19
and composition of, 36–7
and dialogic model, 100
and form and content, 43
and MacLeish on what a poem should be, 39–40
and meaning, 31
and muteness of text, 40–1
and poets’ relationship with
formalism: antipathy towards, 198–200; close ties between, 200–1
and political poetry of 1930s, 100
and reference, 46–7
and Valéry on bad poems, 35
see also Sacco-Vanzetti poetry; Sidney, Sir Philip, and Defence of Poesy; sonnets and the scholar-poet
Poirier, Richard, viii
Pollan, Michael, 59
Poovey, Mary, 48
Pope, Alexander, 42
post-Marxism, and relationship of form and history, 55
post-structuralist theory, 201
Poulet, Georges, 38
Press, Max, 107
Prose, Francine, 183, 194n20
Pryor, Richard, 82, 93n37
publication networks
and cross-reading, 97–8
and shared form, 113
Puttenham, George, 60, 128–30, 133
Pygmalion, 143
Quintilian, 118, 119
race, see sonnets and the scholar-poet
Raitiere, Martin, 127
Rambuss, Richard, 139n68
Randolph, A. Philip, 82, 93n37
Rasmussen, Mark David, ix, 12, 18
reading
and form, 58–9
and genre, 58–9, 65
like a writer, 183, 194n20
and pleasure of, 189
see also close reading
reality, and generation by literary texts, 46–7
reference, 45–7
and back-formation, 45–6
and interpretation, 47
and referentiality, 52n53
Reich, Henry, Jr, 105
Ricks, Christopher, 48
Ridge, Lola, 97, 105
Riffaterre, Michael, 58
Roach, Joseph R., 78
Robinson, William ‘Bojangles’, 82, 83
Rogers, John, 63
Rogers, Paul, 192
romance, and different uses of, 62
Romanticism, 55
Rooney, Ellen, 13, 48, 182
Root, E. Merrill, 97, 107–8
Rorty, James, 97, 101–2
Royle, Nicholas, 4
Russian formalism, xii
Sacco, Ferdinando Nicola, 96
Sacco-Vanzetti case, 96
and cultural responses to, 96
and importance for the Left, 102
Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, 101
Sacco-Vanzetti poetry
and America Arraigned, 102, 103–4, 105, 106
and Burns’ ‘Who are the Criminals?’, 110
and Byrner’s ‘Once More, O Commonwealth’, 105–6
and Carew’s ‘Justice is Dead’, 107
and common critical approach to, 97
and common formal elements, 108–9:
ballet stanza, 110–11; couplets, 109–10; stanzaic form, 109–11
and common imagery and themes, 104: Christian martyrdom, 106–8;
labor, 104–5; Massachusetts, 105–6;
witch-hunting and burning, 105–6
Sacco-Vanzetti poetry – continued
and communal form, 111–13
and cross-reading, 108, 111–12
and Davies’s ‘The Rulers’, 107
and Dos Passos’s ‘They Are Dead
Now’, 102
and Emory’s ‘Another Pilate’, 107
and historical consequences of, 111
and Holmes’s ‘The Ballad of
Charleston Gaol’, 110
and Joughlin and Morgan’s
assessment of, 96–7
and Kernan’s ‘Death Watch’, 107
and literary significance, 112
and Magill’s ‘Murder at Midnight’,
106
and Millay’s ‘Justice Denied in
Massachusetts’, 101
and New Critical approach to, 97
and periodical and anthology
publication, 101–4, 113:
contemporary anthologies, 102–4; Leftist periodicals, 101–2; newspapers, 101
and Plotkin’s ‘Demonstration’, 107
as political intervention, 102, 103–4
and Press’s ‘To Gov. Allan T Fuller’,
107
and Reich’s ‘On the Removal of Sacco
and Vanzetti’, 105
and Root’s ‘Eucharist’, 107–8
and Rorty’s ‘Gentlemen of
Massachusetts’, 101–2
and Sacco-Vanzetti Anthology of Verse,
102–3, 104
and Simmons’s ‘The Way’, 106
and Squires’s ‘Massachusetts
1667–1927’, 106
and Trent’s ‘To Bishop Lawrence’, 106
and Whitaker’s ‘The Culprit’, 111
and Wood’s ‘Golgotha in
Massachusetts’, 106
and Zorn’s ‘The Poets to Sacco and
Vanzetti’, 107
Sadoff, Ira, 73–4
Schlegel, Friedrich, 128
scholar-poets, see sonnets and the
scholar-poet
Scott, James C., 76, 77
Scott, Walter, 58
Semino, Elena, 164
Sexton, Ann, 199
Shahn, Ben, 96
Shakespeare, William, and King Lear,
3–4
Shapiro, Alan, 89
Shklovsky, Victor, 161
Shohet, Lauren, 63
Sidney, Sir Philip, and Defence of Poesy, x
as challenging text, 133–4
and chronology of composition,
126–7
and difficulties in reading, 120
and digression on state of English
poetry, 126, 130–1: arguing with
himself, 131; attack on the English
stage, 131; connections to main
body of the work, 132; digression
into oratory, 128–9; intention,
132–3; introduction to, 132;
limits of the Defence’s argument,
131–2; problematic form of, 126–30;
Sidney’s apologies for, 127–8
and divine poetry, 121: as mimetic
poetry, 123
and early modern formalism, 116–17
and imitation, 120–1
and mimetic poetry, 117, 118, 119,
120, 121, 133: distinguishing
imitative and creative, 123; divine
poetry, 123; emerging form of,
122–3; philosophical poetry, 124;
right poetry, 124–5
and Myrick’s analysis of, 117, 118,
119, 121–2: paradox in, 122, 133
and New Formalist re-reading of, 117–18
and philosophical poetry, 121, 123–4:
as mimetic poetry, 124
and poetry as ideal literary form, 117
and poets as subject of, 120
and right poetry, 120, 124–5: contrast
with divine and philosophical
poetry, 124–5; creativity, 121,
125; focus on, 121–2; as mimetic
practice, 122; possibility-figuring
power of, 125, 126
as seven-part classical oration, 118, 134:
digressio, 126–31; exordium, 118–19;
narratio, 119, 120; partitio, 119–20,
126, 130; peroratio, 126; propositio, 118, 119, 125, 133; refutatio, 126
and taxonomy of poetry, 119–20, 122
Simmons, Laura, 106
Smethurst, James, 71
Snodgrass, W.D., 199
sonnets and the scholar-poet
and African American poets, 71–2: community building, 91; history, 88–9; racial tensions, 89–90
and cultural memory, 72
and double-voiced nature of poems, 72, 75, 90–1
and Dove’s Sonata Mulattica, 72, 83–7, 89
and flexibility of sonnet form, 90
and historical settings of poetry, 71
and impulses behind, 71
and Jordan’s M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A, 72, 80–3, 89
and modifications of sonnet form, 74: Kinzie’s blank sonnet, 74–5
and neo-formalist poets of 1970s and 1980s, 72–3: Charles Martin, 73, 75; conservative appeal of, 88; criticism of, 73–4, 89; return to basics, 88
and paradox of the sonnet cycle, 80
and recovering lost or unheard voices, 72, 75, 90, 91
and Tretheway’s Bellocq’s Ophelia, 72, 76–80, 89: structure, 77
Sörbom, Göran, 122
Spivak, Gayatri, 15, 98
Squires, Edith Lombard, 106
Stallybrass, Peter, xiii
Stephens, Peter N., 83
Stephenson, Roy, 9–10
Stevens, Wallace, 46–7
Stewart, Susan, 88
Stillman, Robert, 117
Stockwell, Peter, 162, 163
storyworlds, 173n2
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 186
Strier, Richard, ix, x, 13
Stuart, Garrett, 48
stylistics, and double pattern of, 161
Summers, Claude J., 231–3
Swardson, H.R., 225
symbols, and role in production of knowledge, 35, 36
Tate, Allen, 200
technology, and new literary forms, 181, 192–3
Temple, Shirley, 83
text
and autonomy of, 121, 123
and close reading, 33–5
and generation of reality, 46–7
and impact of choice of critical method, 32
and independent identity, 36
and intention, 44–5
and interpretation of, 38, 39
as language, 33–7
as linguistic object, 33
and literary texts, 36
and the mute text, 38–41
and recovering verbal specificity of, 33–4, 38
and reference, 45–7
and text-object model of New Criticism, 39
Thayer, Webster, 96, 101, 102, 105, 107
Theile, Verena, vii
Todorov, Tzvetan, 65
Tolkien, J.R.R., 46
Tompkins, Jane, 186
Trent, Lucia, 105, 106
Tretheway, Natasha, and Bellocq’s Ophelia, 72, 76–80, 89
Tsur, Reuven, 162, 163, 167
Tucker, Herbert, 13, 16
turn, and concept of, vii
Turner, Henry, 124
Turner, Mark, 167
Tuve, Rosemond, xii
Valéry, Paul, 35, 43
van Leeuwen, Theo, 164
Vanzetti, Bartolomeo, 96
Vasari, Giorgio, and Lives
and Gombrich’s reading of, 141–2, 146, 147
and homosocial vision of art practice and progress, 153
Vasari, Giorgio, and *Lives – continued* and improvements in graphic technology of representation, 141 and Leonardo: as charismatic figure, 150, 155; contradictory characteristics, 150–1; contrast with Michelangelo, 146, 155–6; dark side of, 146–7; description of Mona Lisa, 144–5; eulogizing conclusion, 150; figure of Medusa, 152, 153–4; hubris, 147; hyperbole of opening sentence, 156–7; impatience with, 152–3; indirect discourse, 148, 149, 154; painting terrifying monster on buckler, 151–2; parody of narrator's ideals, 154–5; rationalization of unfinished work, 154; relationship with Verrocchio, 146–7; sarcastic about, 149–50; status of Vasari's relation with, 155; as uncanny, 157; unfinished works, 147–9, 152 and life-cycle metaphor, 145–6 and metaphors of rebirth or resurrection, 145–6 and Michelangelo, 145, 155–6: unfinished works, 148 and mimetic idealism, 142: analysis in terms of myths, 143–4; fearful desire, 153–4; necessity of violence, 146; role of patrons in emergence of, 142 and misogynistic theory of art history, 145 and narrative scheme of art development, 140–1: idealization, 141; mimesis, 141 and naturalism, criticism of, 141 and tension between mimesis and idealization, 141 and Verrocchio, 146–7

Vendler, Helen, viii
Verrocchio, Andrea del, 146–7

Waller, Thomas ‘Fats’, 82
Warner, Susan, 186
Warren, Austin, 41
Warren, Robert Penn, 200
Weinsheimer, Joel, 50n28
Wellek, René, 41
Wenger, Deidre, 211
Whitaker, Robert, 111
Wilde, Oscar, 110
Wilson, Thomas, 118
Wimsatt, W.K., 44
Wölflin, Heinrich, 141
Wolfson, Susan J., ix, 13, 48 and formal elements of a poem, 75 and form and history, 98

Wolosky, Shira, 90
Womack, Kenneth, 202
Wood, Clement, 106
Woolf, Virginia, and *Mrs Dalloway*, 180–1

Wordsworth, William, and ‘Resolution and Independence’, 46, 47

Wright, James, 213 and ‘Lying in a Hammock’, classroom approach to, 217–19

writers and critics, relationship between, xvi

Yates, Julian, 59
Yeats, W.B., 39

Zeuxis, 143–4, 152
Zorn, Gremin, 107