



The Contemporary Novel: Imagining the Twenty- First Century (Novel: A Forum on Fiction)

Timothy Bewes

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This special issue argues that our cultural moment marks a point of crisis and transition in the history of the novel. Discussing mostly twenty-first-century writers, including Michael Chabon, Vikram Chandra, Don DeLillo, Jonathan Safran Foer, Jonathan Franzen, David Lodge, Ian McEwan, Michael Ondaatje, and Orhan Pamuk, the contributors interrogate and revise our ideas of contemporaneity and how it can be studied. Their essays consider how novelists adapt to a global economy in which traditionally local forms of community no longer define human experience. They also examine the emergence of neurology and neuropsychology as popular discourses that have displaced the novel from its centrality as the supreme analyst of the mind. Contributors attempt to address the exasperation of literary critics disenchanted with many dominant reading practices, such as approaching fiction via reader experiences of “affect” and “trauma” or relying on staid period categories like postmodernism. Offering a way forward, this special issue emphasizes a new critical awareness of the singular qualities of the novel, a form whose truths may not be (and may never have been) translatable to other cognitive, scientific, or political vocabularies.

In 2012 individual and student subscriptions to *Novel* will be available exclusively through membership in the newly formed Society for Novel Studies. Committed to furthering the study of the novel and to examining the role of fiction in engaging, formulating, and shaping the world, the society will hold a biennial conference.

Contributors: Timothy Bewes, Thom Dancer, Andrew Gaedtke, Erdag Goknar, Nathan Hensley, Naomi Mandel, Theodore Martin, Clemens Spahr, Aarthi Vadde
Timothy Bewes is Professor of English at Brown University.

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