New Formalism: a Paradigm for 21st Century Criticism?

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Abstract: *This essay takes a close look at 'New Formalism' as one possible paradigm for 21st century literary criticism, following Marjorie Levinson's overview of the most significant contributions to redefining form-concerned literary approaches, which announced a 'resurgence of the aesthetic' in the last two decades (1995-2007). My premise, which I share with Levinson is that, what she calls New Formalism, in order to distinguish it from the 'traditional formalism' associated with a certain version of New Criticism, is not a monolithic movement. Instead, approaches gathered under this name range from* normative *to* activist *formalism, veering closer to or keeping their distance from Adorno, Benjamin and the Frankfurt School, from New Historicism and Cultural Criticism. My essay seeks to push Levinson's conclusion a step further and inquires into the possible dialogue among all these not-so-long-ago irreconcilable theories of interpretation, based on the premise acknowledged by many of those reviewed by Levinson, that they share multiple points of contingency. To prove my point I summon Michael Berube, Rita Felski, John Frow, from the camp of the Cultural critics, but also Gaytri Chakravorty Spivak, who also engages with the possibility of re-readings and productive dialogue.*

Keywords: *New Formalism, Activist Formalism, aesthetics, Cultural Criticism, New Historicism*

> *'The power of the aesthetic to complicate…is also a power to undermine' and that is the aesthetic's 'revenge upon ideology'* (Clark 11).

In an interview published in the PMLA 2010, shortly before her most recent book outlining *An Aesthetic Education in an Era of Globalization* (2012) came out, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak memorably defined aesthetic education as 'training the imagination for epistemological performance' (1023). The skills to be thus acquired are crucial not only for the individual, but for the social project of democracy. To judiciously assess issues and problems in a democracy, and thus the exercise one's agency as a free individual in society, one needs to know her/his objects/subjects of study, claims Spivak. Yet, in order to *know* them, one has to be 'trained to construct an object of knowledge' (1020). Such training can be best achieved through aesthetic education because engaging

in aesthetic reasoning allows for the accidental in thinking to emerge. Spivak spells out the logic of this process by observing that: 'The important thing is to learn to welcome the loss of control. In literary criticism we learn how to learn from the singular and the unverifiable. […] It is in the aesthetic that one can judge because there's no guarantee anywhere. The unexpected, the something that will have happened as a result of what we're doing, this thing that can't be caught by even the most insistent and imaginative of programming, that which is unprogrammable, that's what we have lost, haven't we? The future as the contingency of history.' (1021)

Granting that Spivak's plea might sound a bit overzealous, few can suspect her of advocating for abstract formalism, devoid of social relevance. Moreover, an increasing number of scholars in the Humanities today decry a loss of faith in the 'democratic and radical potential of the aesthetic' (Armstrong 5) so far exercised through 'the conceptual agency of form' (Wolfson). Their hope, in line with Spivak's, is 'to revive what they take to be a marginalized or vilified formal sensitivity to literature' (Levinson 568) and thus reinstate a way of thinking that privileges contradiction and complexity, and most of all, the creative agency of dialectical contradictions, as outlined by Adorno, Benjamin and by the thinkers of the Frankfurt School.

Such projects come as responses to the on-going crisis in the Humanities, the significant loss of funding and student participation in such programs, issues which have intermittently plagued the field since the end of the so-called 'culture wars' in the 90s. Scrutinizing the future, the 2010 issue of the *PMLA* dedicated to the topic of literary criticism for the 21st century, re-launches the question of what may happen to the institutions of criticism and, by extension, to literature in the century that just started. Jonathan Culler, who coordinated the issue, notes that 'the future of literary criticism will doubtless depend, in part of what happens to literature' and wonders if 'the move from a print-based to an electronic-based culture will have repercussions for the concept of literature and hence for criticism' (907).

The question remains open, though specialists in the rapidly raising field of Digital Humanities, like Katherine Hayles note that 'while literature has always functioned as a technology designed to change the reader's cognition, in electronic systems feedback loops will enable different levels of interaction between text and reader to continuously inform and mutually determine one another, transforming texts as readers perform them.' (907) The potential for increased social visibility and agency promised by the digital age may generate the kind of audience Spivak was hoping for in order to advertise and maybe implement her project of aesthetic education. The internet may also provide the type of media that various schools of literary criticism have been looking for in order to disseminate their findings and test their appeal on a wider public who now can join the polemics and engage (or not) in a dialogue. It seems that we are faced with another revolution similar to the one that made Marshall McLuhan utter his (in)famous: 'the medium is the message' in 1964.

The issues that such maximalist prophecies about digital culture seek to tease out are, in a sense, old as time – though the need for fast answers has increased, now that the technologies that mediate most discourses, including literature, promise instant response

and gratification. Considering these circumstances, literary scholars could legitimately wonder whether literature/form/the aesthetic is still capable of making a difference in the world. Is the reading of literature – and if so, what kinds of *reading* and what kinds of *literature* – going to mediate our engagement with the world? Will aesthetic reading (of the type that Spivak mentioned) still 'train the imagination for epistemological performance' – especially now that the paradigm of in-depth, *close reading* seems to fade away in the background? Will the new models of interpretation that might emerge be able to perform similar functions? What will be lost while gaining instantaneous access to information? Will literature and criticism persist in the wide public conscience as discourses that foster nuanced critical judgment within an individual and social level?

To answer some of these questions, pertaining mainly to current directions in literary criticism, I will turn to a series of debates focused on emerging dialogic models of interpretation between what Marjorie Levinson calls 'New Formalism' and versions of New Historicism and Cultural Criticism.

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In the October 2007 issue of *PMLA*, Marjorie Levinson published a well-informed overview of what she calls New Formalism, an emerging movement, without an explicit manifesto, united by and indicative of 'a general resurgence of formalist interests' in an era of radical transformation of literary studies by New Historicism, Cultural Studies, Ideology Critique, Foucaldian analysis, and many other schools of interpretation.

In what tends to look like an *avant la lettre* contribution to the October 2010 issue of *PMLA* about tendencies in the literary criticism for the 21st century, Levinson points out that what many call formalist approaches and others identify as aesthetic readings have staged a strong comeback since 2000 (the time limit of her overview). This conclusion had been supported by the impressive number of studies either published in the special issues of journals such as the March 2000 volume of the *Modern Language Quarterly* (61:1, Mar. 2000) or in book-length essays which attempted to resituate formalist approaches with in the rapidly evolving field of literary studies[1].

As Sianne Ngai claims three years later, in the above-mentioned 2010 issue of *PMLA*, the (re)turn to aesthetics analyzed by Levinson and noticed by many others 'has been embraced by some of its advocates as a polemical riposte to critique: a practice increasingly attacked […] for doing artworks the disservice of reducing them to encryptions of history and ideology' (948).

Be that as it may, Levinson does not make any absolutist claims in favor of New Formalism though she offers useful elements for a taxonomy. She begins by distinguishing between two strains within the impromptu movement:

(a) those who want to restore to today's reductive re-inscription of historical reading its original focus on form (traced by these critics to sources foundational for materialist critique – *e.g.*, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Adorno, Althusser, Jameson) and

(b) those who campaign to bring back a sharp demarcation between history and art, discourse and literature, in which form (regarded as the condition of aesthetic

> experience as traced to Kant, *i.e.* disinterested, autotelic, playful, pleasurable, consensus generating, and therefore both individually liberating and conducive to affective social cohesion) is the prerogative of art.

The first kind which Levinson calls *activist formalism*[2] is similar to Frederic Jameson's *dynamic form*, which is 'productive rather than reflective' (Cohen 23); the second she labels *normative formalism* because it 'assigns norm-setting work of a cognitive and affective, and therefore also of a cultural-political kind, to the aesthetic' (559).

Moreover, while *activist formalism* as practiced and understood by authors such as Heather Dubrow, Susan Wolfson, Isobel Armstrong, Jonathan Loesberg, Robert Kaufmann, Ellen Rooney, William Keach, James Breslin, George Levine, Michael Clark, and others adheres to the project of cultivating 'an historically informed formalist criticism' (Breslin xiv), one that would lead to 'an adequate materialist understanding of formal values' (Keach 221) and can be seen as forming a continuum with New Historicism, *normative formalism* is a kind of 'backlash formalism.'

This latter kind assigns to literature a concept of form 'that is responsible for its accession to literary status in the first place and that remains an integral property of the work' (Rooney 25) confirming the suspicion that critics belonging to this camp see artworks as autotelic and autonomous objects, which exist independently from the social contexts in which they were produced and later consumed. Moreover, by siding with what George Levine in The *Ideology of the Aesthetic* calls the desire to 'bring back pleasure as what hooks us and rewards us for reading' (7), *normative formalism* seems to maintain that, according to Levinson's reading, 'to contextualize aesthetic experience is to expose its hedonistic dimension as an illusion, distraction and trap' (563). In Levinson's opinion, critics like Charles Altieri, Denis Donoghue, Vigil Nemoianu, Ihab Hassan belong to this group. Yet, the distinctions between the two formalisms aren't always as sharp as they seem, especially since, as Levinson herself notes, many maintain that even the sharp antithesis between New Criticism and New Historicism falsifies them both (563). The implicit irony does not escape Levinson who notes that:

> with remarkable regularity, one reads that New Criticism was more historical and more activist in its notions of form than reputation has it and that new historicism's notion of form was both more formalist and more agential in its working ideas of form than current practice suggests.[…] Theodor Adorno surfaces over and over again in these essays as the lost leader of new historicism linked variously with Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey, Fredric Jameson, and T. J. Clark and as the bridge to a new (activist) formalism (563).

Methodological pluralism seems to characterize New Formalism of any kind, as its proponents embrace a variety of critical methods, from those practiced by New Criticism to Burkean performativity, Frankfurt School dialectics, and Crocean appreciation (561). Despite obvious similarities underlying New Formalist ontology and epistemology, which drives both its *activist* and *normative* strains to reassert the critical and self-critical agency of the artworks and the need for those to be reinstated if our democratic

institutions are to 'recover the aesthetic element in ethical subject formation,' the two disagree about how that might be best accomplished. *Normative* critics claim that such potentiality can be reinstated if artworks are restored to their original, compositional complexity because they inherently possess qualities capable to 'solicit a set of responses that work to enhance and sustain our humanness, […] equated with our susceptibility to pleasure, our somatic self-awareness, our sense of shared humanness, our sense of wonder' (560). Conversely, *activist* formalists assert that such a restoration would happen when artworks 'are released from the closures they have suffered through a combination of their own idealizing impulses, their official receptions, and general processes of cultural absorption' (560).

Both camps seek to 'generate commitment to and community around the idea of form' so as to 'recover values forgotten, rejected, or vulgarized,' though as Levinson notes, none proceeds to redefine this crucial concept, as the authors prefer approximate synonyms for *form* ranging from 'genre,' 'style,' 'the aesthetic,' 'literature,' and 'autonomy.' Also, none of the studies analyzed by Levinson 'develops a critique of the premises or the defining practices of historical reading' (560) and virtually none re-read and/or re-discuss either Kant or Schiller, as figureheads that first defined aesthetic experience and the need for aesthetic education.

The way out of this game of never-ending distinctions that lead to more mis-readings and mis-understandings seems to be proposed by Michael Clark who suggests to 'stop defining form as inherently totalizing' and to see it rather as 'a power to complicate that is also a power to undermine'(11). A similar take has W.J. T Mitchell, who refers to Adorno's dialectical critique as a model for an awareness of 'difference–in –identity.' Such a model preserves Adorno's distinction between 'committed' (or 'tendency') artworks and autonomous artworks. Contrary to what many might assume, based on the traditional, Kantian definition of the 'autonomous object of art,' the artworks which Adorno puts into this category, *instantiate and effectuate commitment* rather by 'regrouping' the elements of empirical reality according to its own laws. Such a commitment is not to an agenda but 'to the project of radically reorganizing perception, propaedeutic to social change' (Mitchell 322; Levine 567). By the same token, the autonomous work of criticism 'instead of encouraging or even permitting commitment to an agenda or ideal, seeks to 'activate thought' by the very form of the critical reflection'' (322; 567).

This dialectical model of form, whereas the text is always, already engaged with the world, espoused by W.J. T. Mitchell, Robert Kaufman, and Ellen Rooney in Michael Clark's collection *Revenge of the Aesthetic* (2000) comes closest to Levinson's own epistemological preferences. As such, Levinson follows its ramifications in the essays of Regina Gagnier, Geoffrey Galt Harpham, Peter Brooks and William Keach published in George Levine's 1994 *Aesthetics and Ideology*. In the end, 'all the above,' notes Levinson, citing Clark 'insist on some form of dialectical relation between the work and the world…that contests the facile elevation of either…as the determining factor of literary experience…' (Clark 10-11) Thus, 'the power of the aesthetic to complicate…

is also a power to undermine' and that is the aesthetic's 'revenge upon ideology' (Clark 11).

This power to complicate acknowledged by activist formalists emerges when the creative agency of contradiction is welcomed by the critics. In the activist formalist readings of literature, according to Levinson, 'contradiction arises from the dialectical situation of the work both 'in itself' or regarded as gesturally and institutionally integral structure, and as it exists in dynamic exchange with its diverse environments. Far from discrediting the artwork as an instance of false consciousness, contradiction authenticates it' (Levinson 26).

Robert Kaufman cites Walter Benjamin and Adorno as exponents of such a theoretical position, which equates 'formal Kantian aesthetics … [with] an anti-essentialist, active process of construction' whereby formal and material elements emerge through a process of reciprocal negation (133). As a later instantiation of this type of Kantian aesthetics, in his analysis of Alan Ginsberg's 'Sunflower Sutra' in reference to Laura Moriarty's *Symmetry* and Blake's 'Ah, Sunflower,' Kaufman detects a 'critically visionary [and] dynamic formalism which raises engagements between form and material to the second or third power, to theorizations in which *form and its histories become the material* [my emphasis], the objects of analysis or refashioning' (Kaufman 136; Levinson 27).

Levinson, who is herself a specialist in Romantic poetry welcomes Kaufman's re-reading of Blake in as much as this analysis shows how 'the formal, engaged as such, flips into the material, the content, the thematic dimension' (28) thus making explicit Adorno's thesis that the *formal means in an artwork generate 'vision'* [my emphasis] (Levinson 28). Adorno and the Frankfurt School seem to loom large in all the critical readings that Levinson gathers under the denomination of activist formalism and which single themselves out as engaging and spelling out the complex relationship between form and material, in response to the questions about the aesthetic raised by New Historicists.

Either seeking to re-ground the aesthetic by redefining its categorical status, beginning with Kant and leading to Foucault and Bourdieu, like Jonathan Loesberg does in his book-length study, *A Return to Aesthetics*, or by closely discussing its *content* 'by pushing Schiller's notion of play in a cognitive direction,', as Isobel Armstrong does in *The Radical Aesthetic*, activist formalism comes close to Gyorgy Lukacs's formula that 'the truly social element in literature is the form' (Levinson 34). Susan Wolfson, whose *Formal Changes* (1997) is, in Levinson's estimation, along with Heather Dubrow's *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* the founding document of New Formalism, claims along the same lines that ' to read for form [by the New Historicists and activist formalists alike] was to read against formalism' (3).

Such a presentation ultimately posits a dialogue, an affinity, if not a continuum between the two seemingly irreconcilable approaches of formalism and New Historicism, and I think I am not wrong to say that one of the implicit goals of Levinson's extensive overview is to signal the renewal of formalism itself during the past decades. Inasmuch as form-attentive New Historicism cannot be equated with the 19th century version of historicism, New Formalism is not identical to New Criticism, and most importantly

should not be regarded as a monolithic movement, devoted to abstract formalism at any cost.

Rita Felski espouses a similar dialogic position in 'The Role of Aesthetics in Cultural Studies' an essay included in Michael Berube's 2005 collection, poignantly entitled *The Aesthetics of Cultural Studies*. Her argument is that despite similarities, we need to carefully distinguish Cultural Studies from literary criticism because the former is not the 'politicized wing' of the latter. In Felski's view, Cultural Studies 'draws upon an anthropological as well as an aesthetic idea of culture, seeking to make sense of the full range of images, texts, stories, and symbolic practices. Such an approach does not exclude the analysis of literature and high art, but it does require an awareness of the relations and flows of interchange between different cultural spheres' (39). Furthermore, she elaborates on the interdisciplinarity of the field and makes explicit a claim about its particular relationship with literary studies, shared by many other cultural critics.

> The forced marriage of literary and Cultural Studies is not good for either side; it will diminish the study of literature and blunt the cutting edge of Cultural Studies. […] Those who claim that literature is defunct, that literary studies should give way to Cultural Studies, are engaged in the worst kind of disciplinary imperialism. (40-41)
>
> Felski's pronouncement hides a cautionary tale, which will be echoed in 2009 by Michael Berube, who synthesizes the predicament of Cultural Studies and, I would say, of literary criticism as well, by using a paradox[3].
>
> […] if you compare the institutional achievements of Cultural Studies with its initial hopes, I don't see how you can't be disappointed. In most universities, Cultural Studies has no home at all […]. The good news on that front is that you can now find Cultural Studies scholars working in anthropology, in critical geography, even in kinesiology […] The bad news is that the place where Cultural Studies has arguably had the greatest impact is in English departments. And though people in English departments habitually forget this, English departments are just a tiny part of the university ('What's the Matter with Cultural Studies?').

Moreover, despite the fact that 'Cultural Studies may find some sympathetic receptions in some wings of some departments of modern languages, in communications, in education, in history, or anthropology, [it] hasn't had much of an impact on sociology, at least not compared with Cultural Studies in Britain, where Cultural Studies engaged critically (and often caustically) with sociology from the outset.' ('What's the Matter?')

In short, Berube's disappointment stems from the fact that the radical renewal of the critical discourse in the direction of a deeper engagement of the academic culture with current social matters and the self-reflective analysis promised by Cultural Studies, hasn't really materialized. However, Berube acknowledges the existence of robust Cultural Studies Programs such as those from George Mason University, Kansas State University, University of Pittsburgh and others. In most universities, Cultural Studies do not have a 'home at all', which means (among other things) that graduate students doing work in Cultural Studies have to hope they'll be hired in some congenial department that has a Cultural Studies component.' (What's the Matter?')

Considering that such harsh assessment comes from a strong proponent of the field, a scholar who in 2005 edited the collection *The Aesthetics of Cultural Studies* with the hope of strengthening the case for the latter, one needs to look further than the beginning of his essay to fully gauge his opinion about the evolution of the field.

Though he no longer expects Cultural Studies to transform the disciplines, he thinks that

> Cultural Studies can do a better job of complicating the political-economy model in media theory, a better job of complicating our accounts of neoliberalism, and a better job of convincing people inside and outside the university that Cultural Studies' understanding of hegemony is a form of understanding with great explanatory power—that is to say, a form of understanding that actually works. ('What's the Matter with Cultural Studies?')

Conversely, many proponents of Cultural Studies insist that one should not attempt to conflate the former with aesthetics, because they only overlap partially. Despite the fact that both aesthetics and Cultural Studies engage the concept of 'form' the latter applies it to a new province of cultural phenomena, and thus expands its meaning. According to Rita Felski, Richard Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, which is one of the stepping stones of Cultural Studies proves that 'form was not incidental [in Cultural Studies], but essential. To confuse an interest in popular culture with a sociological stress on content, is to mistake the essence of the Cultural Studies project' (33). Further down, in her essay 'The Role of Aesthetics in Cultural Studies,' Felski invokes Peter Brooks as a precursor who defended the continuing relevance of poetics coextensive to the interpretation of meaning processes within Cultural Studies as well.

> It is precisely the curiosity about how things mean that lies at the heart of Cultural Studies. By training their eye on works once dismissed as aesthetically unworthy, cultural critics challenged the opposition between formally sophisticated high art and content-driven mass culture. It now seems obvious that many popular forms, from rap music to sitcoms, from science fiction novels to slasher movies, rely on a sophisticated manipulation of stylistic conventions (33).

This argument rebuts the lack of complexity vilifying mass culture, and implicitly points out the methodological subtlety underlying Cultural Studies' analyses, which seem to have more social consequences than aesthetics, if only because they address a larger audience. Moreover, as Simon Frith points out in his classic *Performing Rites. On the Value of Popular Music* (1996), 'people bring similar questions to high and low art, […] their pleasures and satisfactions are rooted in similar analytic issues, similar ways of relating what they see or hear to how they think or feel.' In this sense, Firth concludes, 'it is arguable […] that there are a number of aesthetic/functional axes around which all cultural judgments work: believability […] coherence […] familiarity […] usefulness […] or at the most spiritual […]' (19). Along the same lines, Rita Felski notes that not so long ago critics and average readers used to assess novels in terms of 'pleasure, emotion, and excitement,' all criteria which now have been adopted by Cultural Studies.

This observation suggests that the field is by no means prescriptive but salutes the coexistence of sets of parallel aesthetic approaches which would apply both to high and mass and popular culture. By this inclusive move, Cultural Studies, claims Felski, free art from its marginal and marginalized status of province for specialists and reconnects it to life. Despite its increasing interest in formalist analyses, Cultural Studies seems at least as concerned as New Formalism to stay connected with 'life' and the artistic interests of a wide audience.

Because it is invested in the analysis and understanding of contemporary subjectivity, with real opportunities to have an impact beyond academics due to its explicit interest in mass and popular culture, Cultural Studies is not and cannot be only a politicized version of aesthetics. Its role, observes Berube, may be comparable to that played in the previous ages by high art, in as much as 'popular culture provides a greater range of political possibilities for ordinary people than do contemporary forms of government, and […] accordingly the prospects for social change appear better with regard to cultural politics than with regard to public policy' (6-7). A close and rigorous analysis of popular culture, which would seek to 'understand – to discriminate among the varieties of evaluative mechanisms by which people actually participate […] in popular culture' (Berube 7) would allow scholars to identify opinion-forming and agency empowering mechanisms, implicit in pop culture and to steer such impulses toward lofty goals like distributive justice.

Before being interested in direct political action, though, Berube who has been over the years President of the MLA (2012) and Director of the Institute of Arts and Humanities at Pennsylvania State University (from 2010), thus having substantial agency as an administrator and manager, not only as a teacher, believes that Cultural Studies could build social agency by 'evaluating and historicizing complex cultural forms, including literary texts and the idea of the literary' (8).

Though not aesthetic by excellence, but rather sociological, such concerns are shared both by New Historicists and I would claim, by New Formalists. By invoking Jan Mukarovsky and Raymond Williams, Berube outlines modes in which art has already and for a long while participated in life, despite claims that traditional aesthetic theories, allegedly posited a necessary separation of art from the social conditions of its production and the context of its reception. Responding to accusations that aesthetic theory *in corpore* encourages 'separations' and 'evasions' from lie, Berube invokes John Frow's essay in *The Aesthetics of Cultural Studies*, which defines the project of Cultural Studies along the lines of aesthetic analyses as a 'concern with the *social* relations of textuality' (17). Frow argues that the literary regime 'shifts attention from an isolated and autonomous 'reader' and 'text' to the institutional frameworks which govern what counts as the literary and the possible and appropriate manners of its use and valuation' (17) and thus it can lead us to an investigation of the institutionality of literature and further, of other institutions and regimes of power.

By complicating the political and economic model of interpretation in media theories, in the analyses applied to neo-liberalism, and by creating new models for analyzing various hegemonies of power which could explain various social mechanisms (Berube),

cultural criticism can act as a significant social force of change and progress. Yet, the fact that twenty years after these pronouncements the field is far from fulfilling such maximalist expectations and from exporting its model to other Programs except for the English Departments, suggests that such predictions were at best too optimistic and at worst, possibly, misguided.

As recent job market studies suggest, a new orientation seems to have swept thorough Humanities departments lately with promises of abundance, wide audiences and social relevance for literature, history, and all the others. Its name is Digital Humanities and its promise has a lot to do with the visibility and the future of the media in which it operates: the computer and the internet. The question we all need to ask now is how this new media will affect the culture of the book and of literature on which the entire humanistic tradition was predicated thus far.

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Notes

1 Out of these studies Levinson singles out what she calls 'two outstanding monographs, Isobel Armstrong's *The Radical Aesthetic* (2000) and Jonathan Loesberg's *A Return to Aesthetics: Autonomy, Indifference and Postmodernism* (2005)' (*PMLA* 558). Other essays which she discusses in detail were published in the March 2000 issue of the *Modern Language Quarterly* (vol. 61, issue 1) and include: Heather Dubrow, Ellen Rooney, Virgil Nemoianu, Susan Wolfson, Paul J. Hunter, Robert Kaufman, and others.

2 Levinson acknowledges borrowing the term from Heather Dubrow's 'A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium' (in which the first printed use of the term new formalism appears) and from Susan's Wolfson's essay 'Reading for Form,' both published in the 2000 issue of the *Modern Language Quarterly*.

3 Since 2009, when he published this article, Berube has contributed to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* with a host of essays on various academic and administrative issues concerning the Humanities. Pertaining to our concerns are especially "Humanities Unraveled" Feb. 18, 2013 http://chronicle.com/article/Humanities-Unraveled/137291/ and "The Humanities Declining? Not according to the Numbers." July 1, 2013. http://chronicle.com/article/The-Humanities-Declining-Not/140093/

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