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Truth's Ragged Edge: The Rise of the American Novel

By Gura, Philip F.

FSG. 1 Cloth(s), 2013. hard. Book Condition: New. The author of the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award finalist *American Transcendentalism: A History*, cultural historian Philip Gura here presents an original and illuminating survey of the American novel's first century. Beginning with William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy*, from 1789, and best-selling morality tales of seduction and betrayal like Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, Gura goes on to recover such long-neglected but influential writers as escaped slave Harriet Jacobs and the irrepressible John Neal. By the mid-19th century, writers like Hawthorne and Melville had introduced interiority and doubt, reflecting a broader shift from general social concern to individualism. Rich in subplots and detail, Gura's narrative also discusses the technologies that modernized publishing and allowed for the printing of novels on a mass scale, and of lively and influential cultural journals and literary salons in New York and Boston. "Those who agree with Hemingway's claim that *Huckleberry Finn* created all modern American fiction will find this study of our pre-Twain literary tradition illuminating. Gura tempers this book's thrill of discovery over forgotten voices and stories with a still-relevant warning that the fearless individualism of American fiction can come dangerously close to..."



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