



On the Turn: The Ethics of Fiction in Contemporary Narrative in English

Bárbara Arizti and Silvia Martínez-Falquina

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On the Turn: The Ethics of Fiction in Contemporary Narrative in English is an attempt to listen to the various voices that participate in the current dialogue on the relationship between fiction and ethics. The editors introduction investigates the current state of affairs on the return to ethics in critical and literary consideration, and it opens up the way for the variety of approaches that follows. Participants include internationally recognized scholars like Andrew Gibson, Patricia Waugh, or Native American fiction writer and poet Gordon Henry, winner of the American Book Award in 1995. All in all, contributors cover a significant geographical diversity, and their approaches also vary from general theory to particular examples, from traditional interpretations to post-deconstruction ethics. Authors analyze texts both mainstream and marginal, colonial and postcolonial; they examine the ethics of race, gender and sexuality; the ethics of self-positioning and orientation; the ethics of style; the ethics of reception; the ethics of mode and genre; the ethics of extreme situations of evil, disease and fascism. In its search for a better understanding of the global/nationalistic world of today, On the Turn therefore moves beyond the scope of literary criticism into issues of wider, more urgent relevance. What should I, ought I, may I, must I, do, if anything, on the basis of reading, when I have read a literary work? What does reading a literary work authorize, or even command, me to do? Writing an essay about the work would be one response. On the Turn is a wonderfully diverse, learned, challenging, provocative, even sometimes controversial, collection of essays on the ethical dimensions of literature. This book is testimony to the continued lively interest in the ethical turn in literary studies. The authors are, for the most part, concerned with ethical theory and with ethically charged situations in postmodern novels in English, as they shape readers values and judgments. Poetry and non-print media are, however, also discussed. J. Hillis Miller UCI Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature and English, University of California at Irvine The Ethics of Fiction is an important and exciting volume that explores with energy and rigour the connections between ethics and literature. Relating literature to philosophy, neurobiology, politics, religion, deconstruction and psychoanalysis, the twenty two contributors richly advance the ethical turn recently embraced by many critics. Works by authors such as Ian McEwan, A.S.Byatt, Charles Palliser, Hanif Kureishi, J.M. Coetzee, David Malouf, George Orwell, E.L. Doctorow, Flannery O Connor, Toni Morrison and Paul Auster are presented in a new light and complex topics such as territoriality, the nature of love, Islamophobia and the politics of representation are tackled with imagination and intellectual integrity. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the dialogue between ethics and literature. Avril Horner, Professor of English, Kingston University

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