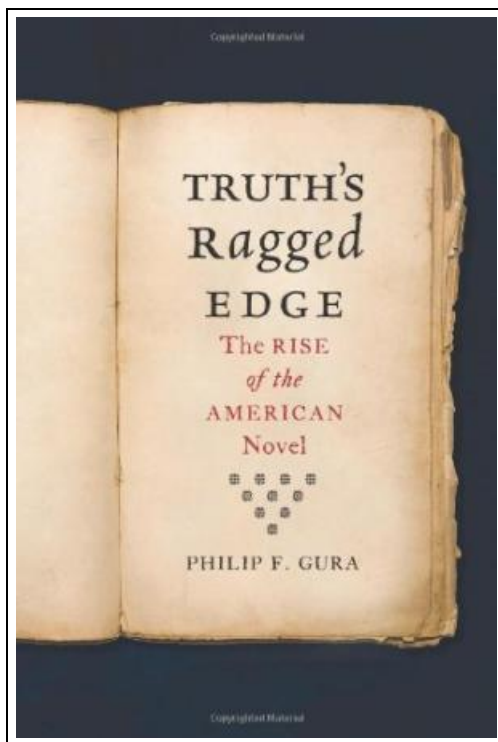


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TRUTH'S RAGGED EDGE: THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL



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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 solipsism." *Publishers Weekly* "This book creatively revives the age of ecstatic religion, the steam locomotive, and the daguerreotype. It charts the steady rise of female authorship and of a book-hungry American middle class. It captures the movement, as one later chapter heading reads, 'from a theology of the feelings to an ethic of love.' And it contrasts with the thoughtless dependence of generations reared on soap operas and video games, recovering the unfamiliar contours of a stricter society that somehow gave birth to a thoughtful individualism." *Advocate* (Baton Rouge) 330.



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