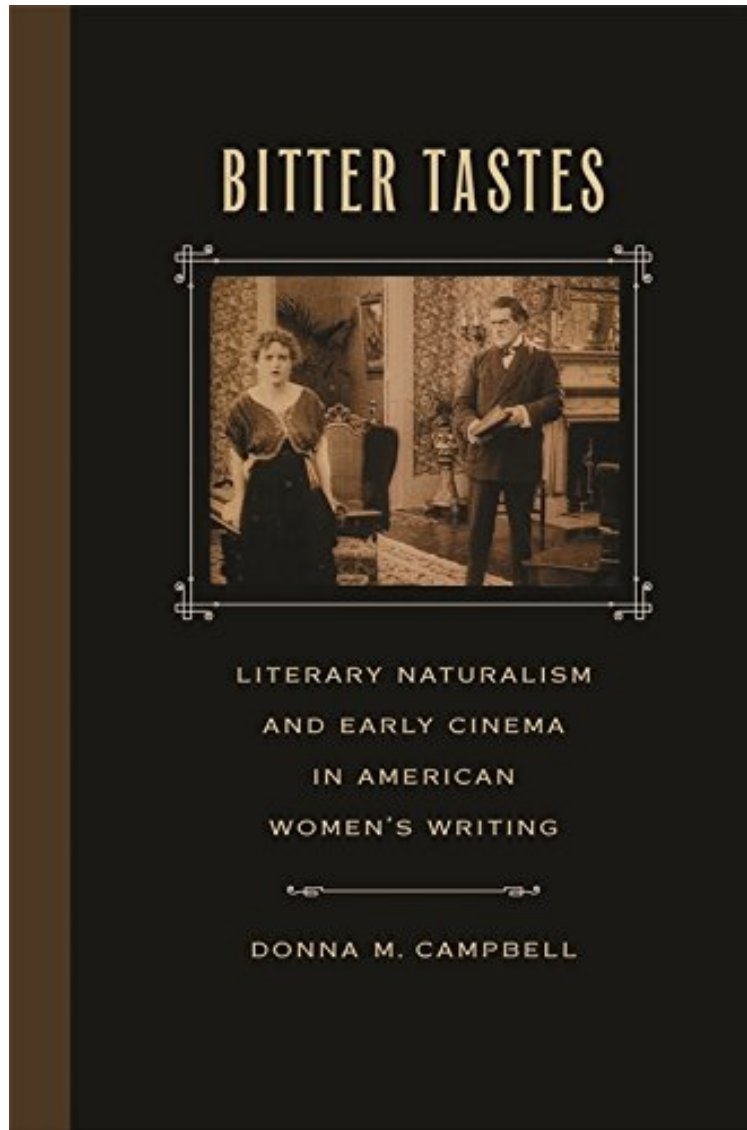


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Bitter Tastes: Literary Naturalism and Early Cinema in American Women's Writing

Donna M. Campbell

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Donna M. Campbell : Bitter Tastes: Literary Naturalism and Early Cinema in American Women's Writing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bitter Tastes: Literary Naturalism and Early Cinema in American Women's Writing:

Challenging the conventional understandings of literary naturalism defined primarily through its male writers, Donna M. Campbell examines the ways in which American women writers wrote naturalistic fiction and redefined its principles for their own purposes. *Bitter Tastes* looks at examples from Edith Wharton, Kate Chopin, Willa Cather, Ellen Glasgow, and others and positions their work within the naturalistic canon that arose near the turn of the twentieth century. Campbell further places these women writers in a broader context by tracing their relationship to early film, which, like naturalism, claimed the ability to represent elemental social truths through a documentary method. Women had a significant presence in early film and constituted 40 percent of scenario writers in many cases they also served as directors and producers. Campbell explores the features of naturalism that assumed special prominence in women's writing and early film and how the work of these early naturalists diverged from that of their male counterparts in important ways.

No work that I know of explores in such detail and within the context of a shared literary/aesthetic tradition the incredible number of women writers Campbell's study covers and, at times, uncovers, resurrecting writers once considered important but then shunted aside by ideologically prescribed recanonicalizations. The book is important, then, not only for uncovering an extended line of women writers who constitute a tradition but for modeling the type of cultural study, grounded in an appreciation of all forms of American artistic expression, that is inclusive and therefore representative of American literary production. (Mary E. Papke editor of *Twisted from the Ordinary: Essays on American Literary Naturalism*) About the Author Donna M. Campbell is a professor of English at Washington State University.