



Longer Views: Extended Essays

Samuel R. Delany

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342 pages

Présentation de l'éditeur

Reading is a many-layered process -- like writing," observes Samuel R. Delany, a Nebula and Hugo award-winning author and a major commentator on American literature and culture. In this collection of six extended essays, Delany challenges what he calls "the hard-edged boundaries of meaning" by going beyond the customary limits of the genre in which he's writing. By radically reworking the essay form, Delany can explore and express the many layers of his thinking about the nature of art, the workings of language, and the injustices and ironies of social, political, and sexual marginalization. Thus Delany connects, in sometimes unexpected ways, topics as diverse as the origins of modern theater, the context of lesbian and gay scholarship, the theories of cyborgs, how metaphors mean, and the narrative structures in the Star Wars trilogy. "Over the course of his career," Kenneth James writes in his extensive introduction, "Delany has again and again thrown into question the world-models that all too many of us unknowingly live by." Indeed, Delany challenges an impressive list of world-models here, including High and Low Art, sanity and madness, mathematical logic and the mechanics of mythmaking, the distribution of wealth in our society, and the limitations of our sexual vocabulary. Also included are two essays that illustrate Delany's unique chrestomathic technique, the grouping of textual fragments whose associative interrelationships a reader must actively trace to read them as a resonant argument. Whether writing about Wagner or Hart Crane, Foucault or Robert Mapplethorpe, Delany combines a fierce and often piercing vision with a powerful honesty that beckons us to share in the perspective of these Longer Views.

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