

# American Nineteenth Century Literature

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## Midwestern American Literature

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around for two hundred years in America. Peart's book and its emphasis on the art of lobbying should point historians towards new avenues of inquiry. Since lobbyists exerted so much influence over tariffs, one can only ponder how much influence they had in other areas of nineteenth-century public policy.

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settlers can portray Native Americans both as embodying Anglo-Saxon freedoms and natural law, on the one hand, and on the other, as a tool by which those settlers can co-opt those virtues and eliminate the Natives themselves. In this case, Richards sees the rhetoric of white purity, including Natty Bumppo's, undermined by repeated suggestions of questionable ancestry and possible miscegenation. A similar kind of reversal takes place in the reading of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, where Richards sees Stowe's well-known use of blackface tropes accompanied by instances of whiteface imitation such as Tom's portrait of a blackface George Washington: "Ironically, whereas whites imitated blacks by wearing blackface, Tom is imitating white culture by blackening George Washington" (p. 121). This kind of black resistance to the literal and figurative violence of minstrelsy, in turn, becomes central to the book's final chapter, which takes up a series of nineteenth-century novels by black Americans that counter the exaggerations of blackface caricature "with their own avenging distortions," including Martin Delany's *Blake*, which answers *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by relocating black nationalism from Liberia to the United States (p. 164).

Richards's method sometimes relies on an expansive sense of "performance." He writes, for example, that "by writing the black body [Washington] Irving engages in a blackface performance, replete with the desires, fears, disguises, and racial burlesque that crystallize in minstrelsy"