

'In this provocative study, Pilar Martínez-Benedí and Ralph James Savarese reveal the great anticipator Herman Melville's illumination of the hidden life of the sensory and the neural unconscious. In a work more dialogic than diagnostic, Martínez-Benedí and Savarese explore Melville's advocacy for the perceptual and his ardent overcoming of biased categories and limiting social constructs. They cast wildchild and cosmopolitan Melville as the bard of neuroatypicality.'

PROFESSOR SUZANNE KEEN, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, SCRIPPS COLLEGE, USA

Focusing on the difference between lower-level perceptual processes in the "neural unconscious" and higher-order thought in the frontal lobes, this open access book shows how Herman Melville sought to reclaim the fluid world of the sensory, with its pre-categorical and radically egalitarian impulses. By studying this previously underexamined facet of Melville's work, this book offers an essential corrective to the "pathology paradigm," which demonizes departures from a neurological norm and feasts on pejorative categorization.

The neurodiversity movement arose precisely as a response to how so-called "mental disorders" have been described, understood, and treated. Unlike standard neuroscientific or psychiatric investigation, Melville's work doesn't strive to explain typical functioning through the negative and, in the process, to shore up a regime of normalcy. To the contrary, it exploits the lack of congealed diagnoses in the 19th Century, much more neutrally asking the question: what can an atypical body-mind do?

Steeped in current studies about autism, Alzheimer's, Capgras and Fregoli syndromes, Mirror-touch synesthesia, phantom limb syndrome, stuttering, and tinnitus, and fully conversant with Melville scholarship, this book demonstrates what the humanities can contribute to the sciences and what the sciences can contribute to the humanities.

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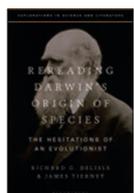
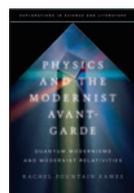
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A PRIMITIVIST  
PHENOMENOLOGY

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