



Fictions Inc.: The Corporation in Postmodern Fiction, Film, and Popular Culture (American Literatures Initiative)

Ralph Clare

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Fictions Inc. explores how depictions of the corporation in American literature, film, and popular culture have changed over time. Beginning with perhaps the most famous depiction of a corporation—Frank Norris’s *The Octopus*—Ralph Clare traces this figure as it shifts from monster to man, from force to “individual,” and from American industry to multinational “Other.” Clare examines a variety of texts that span the second half of the twentieth century and beyond, including novels by Thomas Pynchon, William Gaddis, Don DeLillo, Richard Powers, and Joshua Ferris; films such as *Network*, *Ghostbusters*, *Gung Ho*, *Office Space*, and *Michael Clayton*; and assorted artifacts of contemporary media such as television’s *The Office* and the comic strips *Life Is Hell* and *Dilbert*.

Paying particular attention to the rise of neoliberalism, the emergence of biopolitics, and the legal status of “corporate bodies,” *Fictions Inc.* shows that representations of corporations have come to serve, whether directly or indirectly, as symbols for larger economic concerns often too vast or complex to comprehend. Whether demonized or lionized, the corporation embodies American anxieties about these current conditions and ongoing fears about the viability of a capitalist system.

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