

# Liminal Fictions in Postmodern Culture



Liminal Fictions in  
Postmodern Culture  
*The Politics of Self-Development*

Thomas Phillips

palgrave  
macmillan



LIMINAL FICTIONS IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

Copyright © Thomas Phillips, 2015.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978-1-137-55081-1

All rights reserved.

First published in 2015 by PALGRAVE MACMILLAN® in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-56505-4 ISBN 978-1-137-54877-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137548771

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Phillips, Thomas, 1969–

Liminal fictions in postmodern culture : the politics of self-development / Thomas Phillips.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Self-culture  
in literature. 2. Liminality in literature. 3. Critical thinking.  
4. Transformative learning. 5. Thought and thinking in literature.  
I. Title.

PN56.S46P477 2015

809'.93353—dc23

2015010481

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Scribe Inc.

First edition: September 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*Dedicated to my brother, J. Winston Phillips*

*Special thanks to Stephen O'Malley and Runhild Gammelsater*



# Contents

Introduction	1
1 The Decline of the West	9
2 “A Warning to the Curious”: Jackson, Lovecraft, DeLillo	35
3 Becoming-Woman: Salinger, Redonnet, Darrieussecq	65
4 Becoming-Liminal: Augé, Deck, Gailly	97
5 “Constant Craving Has Always Been”: Liminal Love in Sarah Kane’s <i>Crave</i>	123
6 Becoming-Heavy: Sunn O))) and Runhild Gammelsæter	145
7 On Love and Shadows	167
Notes	185
Bibliography	195
Index	199