



On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection

By Susan Stewart

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Miniature books, eighteenth-century novels, Tom Thumb weddings, tall tales, and objects of tourism and nostalgia: this diverse group of cultural forms is the subject of *On Longing*, a fascinating analysis of the ways in which everyday objects are narrated to animate or realize certain versions of the world. Originally published in 1984 (Johns Hopkins University Press), and now available in paperback for the first time, this highly original book draws on insights from semiotics and from psychoanalytic, feminist, and Marxist criticism. Addressing the relations of language to experience, the body to scale, and narratives to objects, Susan Stewart looks at the "miniature" as a metaphor for interiority and at the "gigantic" as an exaggeration of aspects of the exterior. In the final part of her essay Stewart examines the ways in which the "souvenir" and the "collection" are objects mediating experience in time and space.

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Review

"Stewart's work provides an oasis in contemporary criticism, a place where theory and poetry, systematic reflection and the essayistic plunge into particular cases, come together in a refreshing synthesis."—W. J. T. Mitchell

"The historical richness, psychological insight and sociological subtlety of the analyses Stewart develops in *On Longing* are exemplary for cultural studies."—Barbara Herrnstein Smith

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About the Author

Susan Stewart, Professor of English at Temple University, is the author of *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* and *Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature*.

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