



## Seven Modes of Uncertainty

By C. Namwali Serpell

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

### Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell

Literature is rife with uncertainty. Literature is good for us. These two ideas about reading literature are often taken for granted. But what is the relationship between literature's capacity to unsettle, perplex, and bewilder us, and literature's ethical value? To revive this question, C. Namwali Serpell proposes a return to William Empson's groundbreaking work, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), which contends that literary uncertainty is crucial to ethics because it pushes us beyond the limits of our own experience.

Taking as case studies experimental novels by Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, Bret Easton Ellis, Ian McEwan, Elliot Perlman, Tom McCarthy, and Jonathan Safran Foer, Serpell suggests that literary uncertainty emerges from the reader's shifting responses to structures of conflicting information. A number of these novels employ a structure of mutual exclusion, which presents opposed explanations for the same events. Some use a structure of multiplicity, which presents different perspectives regarding events or characters. The structure of repetition in other texts destabilizes the continuity of events and frustrates our ability to follow the story.

To explain how these structures produce uncertainty, Serpell borrows from cognitive psychology the concept of affordance, which describes an object's or environment's potential uses. Moving through these narrative structures affords various ongoing modes of uncertainty, which in turn afford ethical experiences both positive and negative. At the crossroads of recent critical turns to literary form, reading practices, and ethics, *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* offers a new phenomenology of how we read uncertainty now.

 [Download Seven Modes of Uncertainty ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Seven Modes of Uncertainty ...pdf](#)

# Seven Modes of Uncertainty

By C. Namwali Serpell

## Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell

Literature is rife with uncertainty. Literature is good for us. These two ideas about reading literature are often taken for granted. But what is the relationship between literature's capacity to unsettle, perplex, and bewilder us, and literature's ethical value? To revive this question, C. Namwali Serpell proposes a return to William Empson's groundbreaking work, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), which contends that literary uncertainty is crucial to ethics because it pushes us beyond the limits of our own experience.

Taking as case studies experimental novels by Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, Bret Easton Ellis, Ian McEwan, Elliot Perlman, Tom McCarthy, and Jonathan Safran Foer, Serpell suggests that literary uncertainty emerges from the reader's shifting responses to structures of conflicting information. A number of these novels employ a structure of mutual exclusion, which presents opposed explanations for the same events. Some use a structure of multiplicity, which presents different perspectives regarding events or characters. The structure of repetition in other texts destabilizes the continuity of events and frustrates our ability to follow the story.

To explain how these structures produce uncertainty, Serpell borrows from cognitive psychology the concept of affordance, which describes an object's or environment's potential uses. Moving through these narrative structures affords various ongoing modes of uncertainty, which in turn afford ethical experiences both positive and negative. At the crossroads of recent critical turns to literary form, reading practices, and ethics, *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* offers a new phenomenology of how we read uncertainty now.

## Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2151685 in Books
- Published on: 2014-04-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 6.50" w x 1.30" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 408 pages

 [Download Seven Modes of Uncertainty ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Seven Modes of Uncertainty ...pdf](#)

## Download and Read Free Online Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell

---

### Editorial Review

#### Review

*Seven Modes of Uncertainty* makes major contributions to our understanding of the ethics of the novel and of the eight novels it analyzes. **Serpell** is not only well-informed about the relevant scholarship, but she also treats it with impressive intelligence as she carves out her own fresh and appealing approach to narrative ethics. She proves herself, again and again, to be a marvelously insightful reader and an engaging and accomplished writer. (James Phelan, The Ohio State University)

*Seven Modes of Uncertainty* is quite an extraordinary accomplishment. **Serpell** is impressively learned and original; she writes with conspicuous ease, wit, elegance, and force. She brilliantly presents detailed readings of a series of novels and stories?from Nabokov's *Lolita* to Pynchon's *Crying of Lot 49* to Ellis's *American Psycho*?as well as amazingly comprehensive accounts of the previous essays and reviews on those works. This book is consistently fascinating, page after page. (J. Hillis Miller, University of California, Irvine)

#### About the Author

C. Namwali Serpell is Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley.

### Users Review

#### From reader reviews:

##### Terry Carr:

What do you consider book? It is just for students since they're still students or this for all people in the world, what best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has diverse personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be forced someone or something that they don't desire do that. You must know how great along with important the book *Seven Modes of Uncertainty*. All type of book could you see on many methods. You can look for the internet options or other social media.

##### Randolph Dilworth:

Reading a guide can be one of a lot of activity that everyone in the world really likes. Do you like reading book and so. There are a lot of reasons why people love it. First reading a reserve will give you a lot of new info. When you read a book you will get new information mainly because book is one of various ways to share the information or perhaps their idea. Second, looking at a book will make you actually more imaginative. When you reading a book especially fiction book the author will bring that you imagine the story how the people do it anything. Third, you may share your knowledge to other people. When you read this *Seven Modes of Uncertainty*, you can tells your family, friends as well as soon about yours publication. Your knowledge can inspire different ones, make them reading a e-book.

##### Ramon Hudson:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the free time or they will

get lot of stress from both everyday life and work. So , once we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not a robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read will be Seven Modes of Uncertainty.

**Dawn Fernandez:**

Beside this specific Seven Modes of Uncertainty in your phone, it can give you a way to get more close to the new knowledge or info. The information and the knowledge you will got here is fresh in the oven so don't possibly be worry if you feel like an outdated people live in narrow village. It is good thing to have Seven Modes of Uncertainty because this book offers for you readable information. Do you at times have book but you don't get what it's facts concerning. Oh come on, that would not happen if you have this inside your hand. The Enjoyable option here cannot be questionable, just like treasuring beautiful island. Techniques you still want to miss it? Find this book and also read it from at this point!

**Download and Read Online Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell #OTZRIJV6W2F**

# **Read Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell for online ebook**

Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell books to read online.

## **Online Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell ebook PDF download**

**Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell Doc**

**Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell Mobipocket**

**Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell EPub**

**OTZRIJV6W2F: Seven Modes of Uncertainty By C. Namwali Serpell**