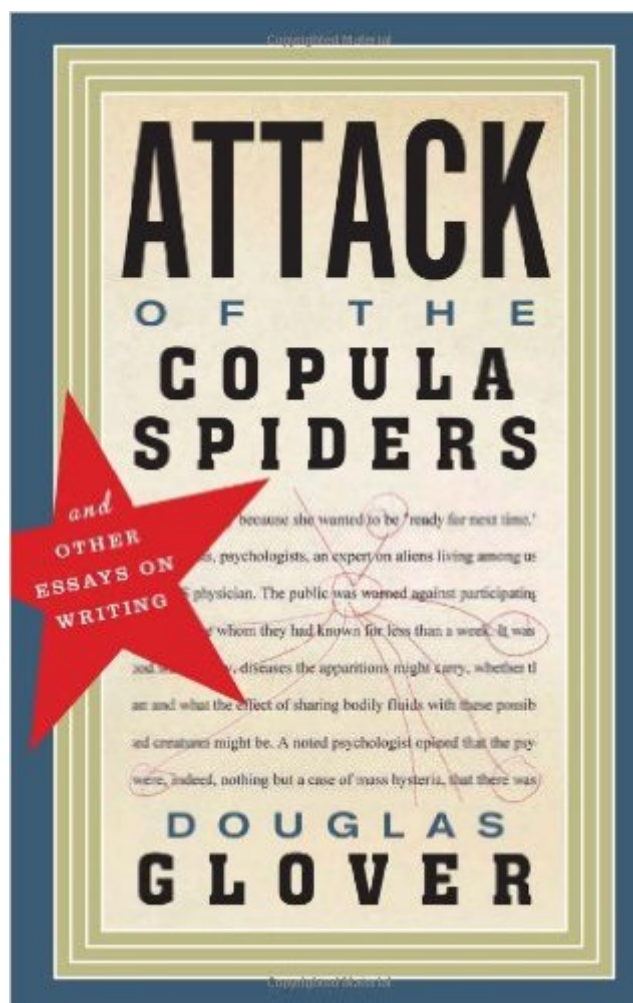


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Attack Of The Copula Spiders: Essays On Writing



Synopsis

A GLOBE & MAIL BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR FOR 2012; Glover is a master of narrative structure. •Wall Street JournalIn the tradition of E.M. Forster, John Gardner, and James Wood, Douglas Glover has produced a book on writing at once erudite, anecdotal, instructive, and amusing. Attack of the Copula Spiders represents the accumulated wisdom of a remarkable literary career: novelist, short story writer, essayist, teacher and mentor, Glover has for decades been asking the vital questions. How does the way we read influence the way we write? What do craft books fail to teach aspiring writers about theme, about plot and subplot, about constructing point of view? How can we maintain drama on the level of the sentence; and explain drama in the sentences of others? What is the relationship of form and art? How do you make words live?Whether his subject is Alice Munro, Cervantes, or the creative writing classroom, Glover's take is frank and fresh, demonstrating again and again that graceful writers must first be strong readers. This collection is a call-to-arms for all lovers of English, and Attack of the Copula Spiders our best defense against the assaults of a post-literate age. Douglas Glover is the award-winning author of five story collections, four novels, and two works of non-fiction. He is currently on the faculty of the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Writing program. Praise for Douglas Glover "A master of narrative structure." - Darin Strauss, author of Half a Life, Wall Street Journal "So sharp, so evocative, that the reader sees well beyond the tissue of words into ... the author's poetic grace." - The New Yorker "Glover invents his own assembly of critical approaches and theories that is eclectic, personal, scholarly, and smart ... a direction for future literary criticism to take." - The Denver Quarterly "A ribald, raunchy wit with a talent for searing self-investigation." - The Globe and Mail "Knotty, intelligent, often raucously funny." - Maclean's "Passionately intricate." - The Chicago Tribune "Darkly humorous, simultaneously restless and relentless." - Kirkus Reviews

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Customer Reviews

For writers attempting to craft a novel, *Attack of the Copula Spiders* is a must! Douglas Glover sets a new high bar for craft writing books by demystifying the novel's narrative structure. Glover explains the elements and patterns necessary for creating an engaging, thoughtful plot. *Attack of the Copula Spiders* isn't a book for beginning writers. Glover assumes the reader already understands the basics of fiction writing, and tackles the more elusive elements that elevate a novel to art, such as image patterning, novel thought, and plot development at the sentence level. Having achieved many awards for his own fiction, Glover is also a master of literary criticism. In *Attack of the Copula Spiders*, he analyzes the works of Alice Munro, Mark Anthony Jarman and others to illustrate solid narrative elements. He also provides his academic and philosophical insights into the post-literate age and the history of the book. *Attack of the Copula Spiders* should have a place alongside Forester and Gardner on all writer's bookshelves! The Wall Street Journal calls Glover, "...a master of narrative structure."

A terrific collection of essays on writing and reading. Glover outlines why and how good writing works at the atomic level - at the level of the sentence and phrase. Glover - referencing Hegel, Wittgenstein, Kant, and Canadian neuroscientist Merlin Donald - deftly handles how writing and story-telling shape our communal and individual realities. Standouts in my opinion are "The Mind of Alice Munro," "A Scrupulous Fidelity (on Thomas Bernhard's *The Loser*)" and "Before/After History and the Novel." Highly recommended.

I wanted to like this book. Glover obviously loves writing and has thought about it a great deal. He also has a few excellent observations; I know I will never look at my own writing again without a check for the "copula spiders" of the title. The rest of the book, unfortunately, suffers from the kind of writing style that is endemic to academia, and if you don't enjoy English-department essays you won't like this. It's an example of the fact that you can be excellent at fiction writing and not very good at nonfiction; it's full of sentences like "In a sense, every novel, at its thematic base, is the story of a human infant encountering the grim reality of other wills, scarcity, work, choice, loss and evil." Well, okay, but I was looking for interesting thoughts on how to make writing better, not tips on

the kinds of arguments I should be using to impress my English Lit TA. While it doesn't detract from the value of his advice per se, Glover also spends a wince-inducing amount of ink ranting about our "post-literate" society. By "post-literate" he means that people nowadays (i.e., his students) don't think, don't read any Important Literature....you've heard this before and so have your grandparents when they were your age, I doubt I need to repeat it. Particularly hilarious is his tantrum in the title essay where he asks how long it's been since the reader "note[d] the elaborations of image patterns on a single page" or "forced yourself through a difficult work" and then flounces "Don't answer." (Well, Professor, I was going to say "last Thursday actually", but far be it from me to interrupt your mic-drop.) It's an annoying and distracting verbal tic that pops up throughout the book. If a fiction writer were inserting his pet peeves so clumsily throughout a novel or short story, I doubt Glover would hesitate to call it out. Worth a skim, but there are many better books on both writing and reading out there.

This is one of the most useful books I have come across for a novice writer. I plan to try and get Glover as an adviser next semester at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Recommend to anyone interested in literature.

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