



Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature

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Probing essays that examine critical issues surrounding the United States's ever-expanding international cultural identity in the postcolonial era

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At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we may be in a "transnational" moment, increasingly aware of the ways in which local and national narratives, in literature and elsewhere, cannot be conceived apart from a radically new sense of shared human histories and global interdependence. To think transnationally about literature, history, and culture requires a study of the evolution of hybrid identities within nation-states and diasporic identities across national boundaries.

Studies addressing issues of race, ethnicity, and empire in U.S. culture have provided some of the most innovative and controversial contributions to recent scholarship. *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* represents a new chapter in the emerging dialogues about the importance of borders on a global scale.

This book collects nineteen essays written in the 1990s in this emergent field by both well established and up-and-coming scholars. Almost all the essays have been either especially written for this volume or revised for inclusion here.

These essays are accessible, well-focused resources for college and university students and their teachers, displaying both historical depth and theoretical finesse as they attempt close and lively readings. The anthology includes more than one discussion of each literary tradition associated with major racial or ethnic communities. Such a gathering of diverse, complementary, and often competing viewpoints provides a good introduction to the cultural differences and commonalities that comprise the United States today.

The volume opens with two essays by the editors: first, a survey of the ideas in the individual pieces, and, second, a long essay that places current debates in U.S. ethnicity and race studies within both the history of American studies as a whole and recent developments in postcolonial theory.

Amritjit Singh, a professor of English and African American studies at Rhode Island College, is coeditor of *Conversations with Ralph Ellison* and *Conversations with Ishmael Reed* (both from University Press of Mississippi). Peter Schmidt, a professor of English at Swarthmore College, is the author of *The Heart of the Story: Eudora Welty's Short Fiction* (University Press of Mississippi).

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