

Multiethnic Literature and Canon Debates



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Examines the making of multiethnic literature and its place both in the classroom and in popular culture.

This groundbreaking collection reinvigorates the debate over the inclusion of multiethnic literature in the American literary canon. While multiethnic literature has earned a place in the curriculum on many large campuses, it is still a controversial topic at many others, as recent campus and corporate revivals of The Great Books attest. Many still perceive multiethnic literature as being governed by ideological and political issues, perpetuating a false distinction between highbrow "literary" texts and multiethnic works.

Through historical overviews and textual analyses, the contributors not only argue for the aesthetic validity of multiethnic literature, but also examine the innovative ways in which multiethnic literature is taught and critiqued. The following questions are also addressed: Who and what determines literary value? What role do scholars, students, the reading public, book awards, and/or publishers play in affirming literary value? Taken together, these essays underscore the necessity for maintaining vibrant conversations about the place of multiethnic literature both inside and outside the academy.

Mary Jo Bona is Associate Professor of Italian American Studies and English at Stony Brook University, State University of New York. She is the editor of several books and the author of Claiming a Tradition: Italian American Women Writers.

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