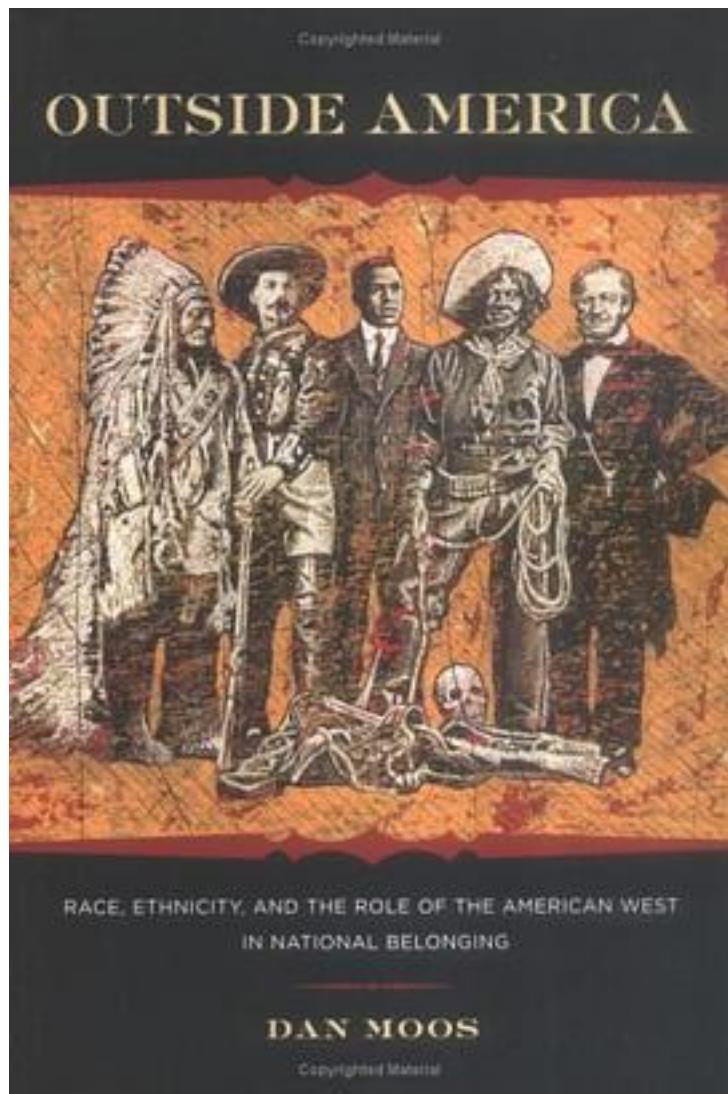


Outside America



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Dan Moos challenges both traditional and revisionist perspectives in his exploration of the role of the mythology of the American West in the creation of a national identity. While Moos concurs with contemporary scholars who note that the myths of the American West depended in part upon the exclusion of certain groups--African Americans, Native Americans, and Mormons--he notes that many scholars, in their eagerness to identify and validate such excluded positions, have given short shrift to the cultural power of the myths they seek to debunk. That cultural power was such, Moos notes, that these disenfranchised groups themselves sought to harness it to their own ends through the active appropriation of the terms of those myths in advocating for their own inclusion in the national narrative. Moos reads a variety of texts by such marginalized westerners and argues that, because the construction of American culture was never designed to accommodate these outsiders, their writings display a division between their imagined place in the narrative of the nation and their effacement within the real West marked by intolerance and inequality.

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目录:

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