

Black British Literature



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In this fascinating book, Mark Stein examines "black British literature," centering on a body of work created by British-based writers with African, South Asian, or Caribbean cultural backgrounds. Linking black British literature to the bildungsroman genre, this study examines the transformative potential inscribed in and induced by a heterogeneous body of texts. Capitalizing on their plural cultural attachments, these texts portray and purvey the transformation of post-imperial Britain. Stein locates his wide-ranging analysis in both a historical and a literary context. He argues that a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approach is essential to understanding post-colonial culture and society. The book relates black British literature to ongoing debates about cultural diversity, and thereby offers a way of reading a highly popular but as yet relatively uncharted field of cultural production. With the collapse of its empire, with large-scale immigration from former colonies, and with ever-increasing cultural diversity, Britain underwent a fundamental makeover in the second half of the twentieth century. This volume cogently argues that black British literature is not only a commentator on and a reflector of this makeover, but that it is simultaneously an agent that is integral to the processes of cultural and social change. Conceptualizing the novel of transformation, this comprehensive study of British black literature provides a compelling analytic framework for charting these processes.

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