



Blood Work: Imagining Race in American Literature, 1890--1940

Shawn Salvant

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The invocation of blood-as both an image and a concept-has long been critical in the formation of American racism. In *Blood Work*, Shawn Salvant mines works from the American literary canon to explore the multitude of associations that race and blood held in the consciousness of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Americans.

Drawing upon race and metaphor theory, Salvant provides readings of four classic novels featuring themes of racial identity: Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894); Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood* (1902); Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy* (1892); and William Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932). His expansive analysis of blood imagery uncovers far more than the merely biological connotations that dominate many studies of blood rhetoric: the racial discourses of blood in these novels encompass the anthropological and the legal, the violent and the religious. Penetrating and insightful, *Blood Work* illuminates the broad-ranging power of the blood metaphor to script distinctly American plots-real and literary-of racial identity.

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