



The Fugitive Race: Minority Writers Resisting Whiteness

Stephen P. Knadler

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Denying its formative dialogues with minorities, the white race, Stephen P. Knadler contends, has been a fugitive race. While the "white question," like the "Negro question," and the "woman question" a century earlier, has garnered considerable critical attention among scholars looking to find new anti-race strategies, these investigations need to highlight not just the exclusion of people of color, but also examine minority writers' resistance to and disruption of this privileged racial category.

"Highly original, wonderfully detailed, and thought provoking," says Professor Candace Waid of Knadler's intellectually challenging book.

Although excluded, people of color looked back in anger, laughter, and wisdom to challenge the unexamined lie of a self-evident whiteness. Looking at fictional and nonfictional texts written between 1850 and 1984, *The Fugitive Race* traces a long cultural and literary history of the ways African Americans, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, Chicanos, gays, and lesbians have challenged the shape and meaning of so-called white identities.

From the antebellum period to the 1980s, the belief in a white racial superiority, or simply a white difference, has denied that people of color might and do have an influence on the supposedly pure or protected character of whiteness. In contrast, this book attempts to define a new way of analyzing minority literature that questions this segregated color line. In addition to creating a new racial awareness, many writers of color tried to interfere in the historical formulation of whiteness. They created unsettling moments when white readers had to see themselves for the first time from the outside-in, or from the critical perspective of non-white writers. These writers--including William Wells Brown, Pauline Hopkins, Abraham Cahan, Young-hill Kang, Zora Neale Hurston, and Arturo Islas--did not simply resist assimilation. They sought to dismantle the white identities that lay as the foundation of the master's house.

Stephen P. Knadler, an assistant professor of English at Spelman College, has been published in *American Literature*, *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, *Minnesota Review*, and *Modern Fiction Studies*.

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