

Repression and Realism in Post-War American Literature (American Literature Readings in the 21st Century)

By E. Mercer

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This study of fiction produced in America in the decade following 1945 examines literature by writers such as Kerouac and Bellow. It examines how, though such fiction seemed to resolutely avoid the events and implications of World War II, it was still suffused with dread and suggestions of war in imagery and language.

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Review

"This book is ambitious in the scope of its argument, supported by careful reading in the appropriate critical theory, interpretively strong, and written with clarity and authority. The argument is convincing; the readings are exact; the knowledge behind the work is extensive; the conclusion is eloquent. Critical intelligence and careful research are everywhere on display. Mercer moves from the literary to the historical, psychoanalytical and social, and from literary to popular fiction with assurance, making an original contribution to familiar literary terrain." - Mark Williams, Associate Professor, Victoria University of Wellington

"Repression and Realism in Post-War American Literature is a substantial, well organized, and lucidly written contribution to the field of early post-war American literature and culture. Its argument that unconscious conflict generated by the World War II is most accurately perceived in the realist novel and not, as has been more commonly claimed, in post-war popular culture is original, insightful and convincingly supported." - Eluned Summers-Bremner, Senior Lecturer, University of Auckland

"Reading post-war American literature through the lens of the Freudian uncanny, Repression and Realism in Post-War American Literature intriguingly and persuasively demonstrates how the period s most representative realist texts are haunted by the gothic memories of World War II. Thanks to Mercer s fresh and unique viewpoint, this book makes one of the most effective contributions to problematizing the long-standing binary oppositions between realism and gothicism and between psychoanalysis and contextual criticism." - Ki Yoon Jang, Assistant Professor of English, Sogang University

About the Author
ERIN MERCER is Teaching Fellow in the School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

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