The Troubled Union

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Published by The Ohio State University Press

Gonzalez, John Moran.
The Troubled Union: Expansionist Imperatives in Post-Reconstruction American Novels.
The Ohio State University Press, 2010.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/24308.
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In The Troubled Union: Expansionist Imperatives in Post-Reconstruction American Novels, John Morán González traces the imperialist imaginings behind literary efforts to reunite the United States after the trauma of the Civil War and Reconstruction. This innovative study explores how the U.S. historical romance attempted to rebuild a national identity by renovating Manifest Destiny for the twentieth-century imperialist future through courtship and marriage plots. Yet even as these literary romances promised expansive national futures, the racial and gender contradictions of U.S. democracy threatened to result in troubled unions at home and fractious ventures abroad. Canonical authors such as Henry James, popular authors such as Helen Hunt Jackson, and rediscovered authors such as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton provide the dramatic narratives examined in this book.

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John Morán González is associate professor of English at The University of Texas at Austin.

"In The Troubled Union: Expansionist Imperatives in Post-Reconstruction American Novels, John Morán González presents insightful and persuasive new readings of widely read and much studied novels, links aesthetic choice to political and ideological issues in generative ways, and advances our understanding of the importance of thinking about the nation in the world and the world in the nation effectively. This work is, without a doubt, relevant to the study of national allegory, the culture of empire, and the social construction of realism."

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