



New Body Politics: Narrating Arab and Black Identity in the Contemporary United States (Routledge Series on Identity Politics)

Therí A. Pickens

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In the increasingly multi-racial and multi-ethnic American landscape of the present, understanding and bridging dynamic cross-cultural conversations about social and political concerns becomes a complicated humanistic project. How do everyday embodied experiences transform from being anecdotal to having social and political significance? What can the experience of corporeality offer social and political discourse? And, how does that discourse change when those bodies belong to Arab Americans and African Americans?

Therí A. Pickens discusses a range of literary, cultural, and archival material where narratives emphasize embodied experience to examine how these experiences constitute Arab Americans and African Americans as social and political subjects. Pickens argues that Arab American and African American narratives rely on the body's fragility, rather than its exceptional strength or emotion, to create urgent social and political critiques. The creators of these narratives find potential in mundane experiences such as breathing, touch, illness, pain, and death. Each chapter in this book focuses on one of these everyday embodied experiences and examines how authors mobilize that fragility to create social and political commentary. Pickens discusses how the authors' focus on quotidian experiences complicates their critiques of the nation state, domestic and international politics, exile, cultural mores, and the medical establishment.

New Body Politics participates in a vibrant interdisciplinary conversation about cross-ethnic studies, American literature, and Arab American literature. Using intercultural analysis, Pickens explores issues of the body and representation that will be relevant to fields as varied as Political Science, African American Studies, Arab American Studies, and Disability Studies.

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