PEDAGOGIES OF U.S. IMPERIALISM: RACIAL EDUCATION FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO THE PROGRESSIVE ERA


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Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism: Racial Education from Reconstruction to the Progressive Era constructs a genealogy of racial education through pedagogies developed at manual training and industrial institutes, settlement schools, and in philosophies of racial liberal education that were founded in contexts of slavery and its aftermath, settler colonialism, and imperial war. By focusing on pedagogies of reading and writing developed at educational sites not usually examined together, the dissertation departs from much of the scholarship on education and assimilation to argue that racial education attempted to transform students deemed racially "primitive" into U.S. imperial subjects. It demonstrates how on one hand such pedagogies compelled students to adopt, perform, and desire the embodiment of dominant civilizational norms required for citizenship. On the other hand, it details how racial education simultaneously sought to hold students perpetually at a distance from civilizational embodiment by producing images of intellectual inferiority that were anchored in representations of their racial, gendered, and sexual non-normativity. Indeed, racial education's images of students' intellectual limits, which were codified in policies, curricula, and founding documents and represented in school newspapers, photography, and fiction, made an imperial national order appear "rational" while also producing racial knowledge as "rationality." Investigating the often ad hoc pedagogies of reading and writing developed at a variety of educational sites, the dissertation expands scholarship on literature and empire beyond literary canon formation and in so doing creates new frameworks for approaching how written, visual, and performance texts created by teachers and students intervened in racial education's attempt to produce imperial subjects. It uses this approach to attend to the ways in which these often overlooked texts represent the limits of racial education while also referencing epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling with the capacity to rupture imperial rationality.