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Literature and The Contemporary: Fictions and Theories of the Present (Longman Studies In Twentieth Century Literature)

Roger Luckhurst, Peter Marks

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At the end of the century, much criticism has become devoted to `last things': the end of history, the end of the subject, the end of the novel, the end, even, of the end. *Literature and the Contemporary*, in contrast, aims to provide through twelve essays evidence of the way in which the literature of the 1990s is constantly engaging in questions of memory and history and the representation of time in the present day.

The essays in the book survey theories of temporality from various cultural and philosophical standpoints, and represent critics writing from feminist, postcolonial and `queer' perspectives discussing literature in `our time'. The collection addresses such central issues as the politics of memory, colonial legacies, women's time, racial and sexual identities in the 1990s, and covers a wide range of contemporary authors, works and issues, some of which are treated for the first time. Among the contemporary works discussed are the prize-winning books Graham Swift's *Last Orders*, Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*, and Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*.

While discussing some of the most significant novels of the 1990s, this collection also offers a diverse yet cohesive critique of the millennial leanings of much `postmodernist' criticism, which it argues should be replaced by more variously nuanced engagements with literature and the contemporary.

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