



# **Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.**

*Ivy G. Wilson*

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**Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.** Ivy G. Wilson  
*Specters of Democracy* examines how figurations of blackness were used to illuminate the fraught relationship between citizenship, equality, and democracy in the antebellum U.S. Through close readings of Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Walt Whitman (on aurality), and Herman Melville, William J. Wilson, and a host of genre painters (on visuality), the book reveals how the difficult tasks of representing African Americans-both enslaved and free-in imaginative expression was part of a larger dilemma concerning representative democracy itself.

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