

ENGLISH PROFESSOR RELEASES NEW BOOK

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A soon-to-be-released book by Rivier College Assistant Professor of English and Communications **Sally Hirsh-Dickinson** offers literary criticism of a highly popular novel set in New Hampshire that provided insight on race and gender relations in the 1950's.

Hirsh-Dickinson's *Dirty Whites and Dark Secrets: Sex and Race in "Peyton Place"* is a literary analysis of Grace Metalious's novel *Peyton Place*, which critiques America's relationship with race and gender at the time. Released in 1956, it remained on the New York Times bestseller list for 59 straight weeks.

"It would be a terrible mistake to disregard a work like *Peyton Place* that had a significant impact on American culture and caused such a stir when it was released," said Hirsh-Dickinson.

Hirsh-Dickinson's book is published by University Press New England (UPNE) and will be available on Nov. 8, 2011 through UPNE and a number of online booksellers. It will also soon be on display at Rivier College's Regina Library.

She will participate in a book-signing on Nov. 16, 2011 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Geisel Library at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H.

The event is sponsored by the Franco-American Centre and is open to the public.

In *Dirty Whites and Dark Secrets*, Hirsh-Dickinson argues that both sex and race account for the outrage that accompanied the release of *Peyton Place*.

Hirsh-Dickinson's book was reviewed in the Oct. 2, 2011 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. To read the review, click [here](#).

Although *Peyton Place* is a fictional setting, inspiration for the town came from several real New Hampshire municipalities including Gilmanton, Laconia, Gilford, and Manchester. Hirsh-Dickinson said *Peyton Place* exposes the anxiety and tensions in the area and around the country at the time.

Hirsh-Dickinson became intrigued by novel's popularity yet scandalous reputation as a graduate student, and scholarship for her book evolved from her doctoral dissertation which she began eight years ago.

"I knew about how the book created such a controversy at that time because of the sexuality it depicted, but I soon discovered there was also a story about race relations within the novel," Hirsh-Dickinson said.

She saw that existing scholarship on this aspect of the novel was scant, and wanted to expand its depth. ■

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