



Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region, and Literature (New Directions in Southern Studies)

Thadious M. Davis

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In this innovative approach to southern literary cultures, Thadious Davis analyzes how black southern writers use their spatial location to articulate the vexed connections between society and environment, particularly under segregation and its legacies.

Basing her analysis on texts by Ernest Gaines, Richard Wright, Alice Walker, Natasha Trethewey, Olympia Vernon, Brenda Marie Osbey, Sybil Kein, and others, Davis reveals how these writers reconstitute racial exclusion as creative black space, rather than a site of trauma and resistance. Utilizing the social and political separation epitomized by segregation to forge a spatial and racial vantage point, Davis argues, allows these writers to imagine and represent their own subject matter and aesthetic concerns.

Focusing particularly on Louisiana and Mississippi, Davis deploys new geographical discourses of space to expand analyses of black writers' relationship to the South and to consider the informing aspects of spatial narratives on their literary production. She argues that African American writers not only are central to the production of southern literature and new southern studies, but also are crucial to understanding the shift from modernism to postmodernism in southern letters. A paradigm-shifting work, *Southscapes* restores African American writers to their rightful place in the regional imagination, while calling for a more inclusive conception of region.

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