



Remapping Southern Literature: Contemporary Southern Writers and the West (Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Ser.)

Robert Brinkmeyer Jr.

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One of the most significant and surprising developments in contemporary southern fiction is that an increasing number of southern writers are writing about the American West. In *Remapping Southern Literature: Contemporary Southern Writers and the West*, Robert H. Brinkmeyer Jr. studies current southern authors of western novels, historical fiction, and contemporary fiction who have been breaking the mold of southern literature by looking westward. Cut loose, in the postmodern age, from the traditional roots in a sense of place, contemporary southern writers have explored an American West shaped by the myths of lawless freedom and disruptive expansion. The rich and diverse fiction of Doris Betts, Barry Hannah, Cormac McCarthy, Madison Smartt Bell, Richard Ford, Rick Bass, Barbara Kingsolver, Chris Offutt, Frederick Barthelme, Dorothy Allison, and Clyde Edgerton, among others, challenges long-standing definitions of southern fiction and regional identity and reconfigures the myths of the West that have long shaped American life.

In *Remapping Southern Literature*, Brinkmeyer proposes that today's southern writers are not by this shift abandoning southern culture but are instead expanding its reach by seeking to balance the ideals of the South and West. This effort points toward a new literary tradition and a new regional and national mythology that blends place and space, settlement and movement, community and individualism, security and freedom.

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