



## The Future of Southern Letters

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The New South--replete with shopping malls, hub airports, educated African Americans, and immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Haiti--is still haunted by the Gothic ghosts of its past. Does the collision between past and present account for the continued preeminence of Southern writers in America's literary culture? Bobbie Ann Mason, Ernest Gaines, Rita Mae Brown, Robert Olen Butler, Cormac McCarthy, Dorothy Allison, and Allan Gurganus are just a few of the writers who draw on a new kind of Southern background while reaching out to a broad American readership. Yet many of these writers have been accused of catering to the stereotypes they think a national audience requires. It would seem that questions of Southern identity continue to be bound up with rage against attacks on Southern culture.

Jefferson Humphries and John Lowe have assembled a remarkable team of scholars and writers to examine aspects of the contemporary literature of the South. From Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Fred Hobson to esteemed scholar James Olney to poets Kate Daniels and Brenda Marie Osbey, the contributors try to define Southern culture today and ask who will be writing Southern literature tomorrow. Addressing topics such as humor, the *past*, black autobiography, ethnicity, and female oral traditions, the essays form a volume that is of interest to readers of Southern literature and history, creative writers, and scholars and students of Southern culture.

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