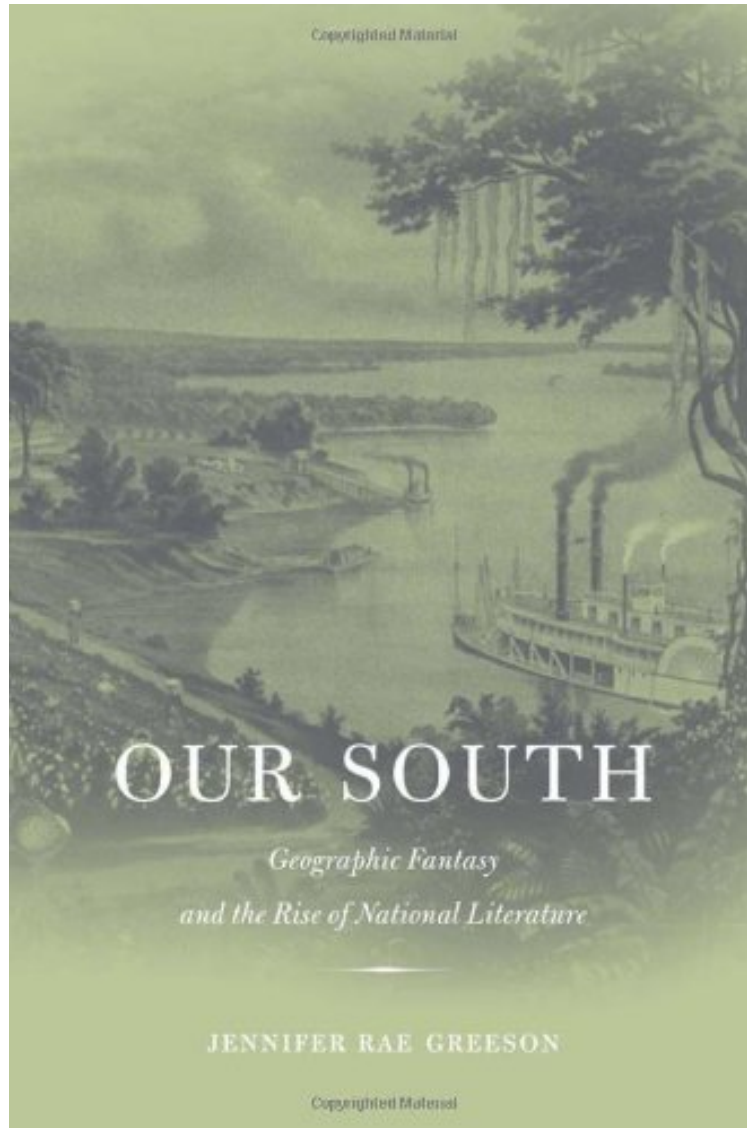


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Jennifer Rae Greeson

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0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This book traces ideas about the U. S. ...By CustomerThis book traces ideas about the U.S. South as those ideas appeared in national discussion from the earliest days of the United States until the twentieth century. It primarily concerns the writings of non-Southerners about the South. It is for careful, attentive readers who want to know how notions about the South first appeared, and how these notions have

been used. It is not light reading, but it is very enlightening.

Since the birth of the nation, we have turned to stories about the American South to narrate the rapid ascendancy of the United States on the world stage. The idea of a cohesive South, different from yet integral to the United States, arose with the very formation of the nation itself. Its semitropical climate, plantation production, and heterogeneous population once defined the New World from the perspective of Europe. By founding U.S. literature through opposition to the South, writers boldly asserted their nation to stand apart from the imperial world order. Our South tracks the nation/South juxtaposition in U.S. literature from the founding to the turn of the twentieth century, through genres including travel writing, gothic and romance novels, geography textbooks, transcendentalist prose, and abolitionist address. Even as the southern states became peripheral to U.S. politics and economy, Jennifer Rae Greeson demonstrates that in literature the South remained central to the expanding and evolving idea of the nation. Claiming the South as our deviant and recalcitrant other, Americans have projected an anti-imperial imperative of domesticating and civilizing, administering and integrating underdeveloped regions both within our borders and beyond. Our South has been a primal site for thinking about geography and power in the United States.

A major achievement With a rich archive extending from the eighteenth century to the twentieth-- at once regional, national, and global-- this is cultural history at its most capacious and compelling. (Wai Chee Dimock, author of *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*) This is one of the most insightful works of Southern literary and intellectual history of the past two decades-- and its significance transcends the U.S. South. (Fred Hobson, Professor of English and Lineberger Professor of Humanities, University of North Carolina) Impressive in its scope, scale, and originality of construction, *Our South* offers a new interpretation of the literature of the South within the literary and political history of the United States. A major work. (Jonathan Arac, author of *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative, 1820-1860*) Wonderfully provocative, very original, deeply learned, [this] book could well change the way scholars approach US culture in the nineteenth century. (John Stauffer, author of *The Black Hearts of Men*) About the Author Jennifer Rae Greeson is Assistant Professor of American Literature at the University of Virginia.