



Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912-2002

By Melanie R. Benson

University of Georgia Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912-2002, Melanie R. Benson, This title reveals affinities between antebellum southern and modern American capitalist psychology. In "Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward, Angel", Margaret Leonard says, "Never mind about algebra here. That's for poor folks. There's no need for algebra where two and two make five." Moments of mathematical reckoning like this pervade twentieth-century southern literature, says Melanie R. Benson. In fiction by a large, diverse group of authors, including William Faulkner, Anita Loos, William Attaway, Dorothy Allison, and Lan Cao, Benson identifies a calculation-obsessed, anxiety-ridden discourse in which numbers are employed to determine social and racial hierarchies and establish individual worth and identity. This "narcissistic fetish of number" speaks to a tangle of desires and denials rooted in the history of the South, capitalism, and colonialism. No one evades participation in these "disturbing equations," says Benson, wherein longing for increase, accumulation, and superiority collides with repudiation of the means by which material wealth is attained. Writers from marginalized groups - including African Americans, Native Americans, women, immigrants, and the poor - have deeply internalized and co-opted methods and tropes of the master...



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