

The White Image in the Black Mind: A Study of African American Literature (Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies)

Jane Davis

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African American writers have created a rich literature that reflects their experiences and achievements. In many instances, whites figure prominently in these works, frequently portrayed as oppressors. Through a careful examination of works by black writers, Davis constructs a typology of white images in the African American imagination. The book argues that these images repeatedly occur in works by black writers. Some of these stereotypes include the overt bigot, the hypocrite, the liberal, and the good-hearted weakling.

While black writers are often explicit in representing the racism of the overt bigot, Davis notes that African American literary works are much more complex in their exposition of the hidden forms of bigotry manifested by covert white racists. The volume suggests that black authors believe that racism is not merely a form of thought or behavior, but a manifestation of identity. While Davis gives detailed attention to the works of Charles Chesnutt, James Baldwin, and Richard Wright, she also looks at several other black writers and examines discussions of whites in contemporary critiques of race by such authors as Derrick Bell and Ellis Cose.



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