



Thomas Dixon Jr. and the Birth of Modern America (Making the Modern South)

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"A sweeping yet rigorous analysis of Dixon and his work. The collection approaches the southern intellectual through multiple methodologies -- from literary theory and film studies to social history and religious studies. We get an exhaustive yet diverse perspective on Dixon's influence and legacy." -- Journal of American History

Thomas Dixon Jr. (1864--1946), best remembered today as the author of the racist novels that served as the basis for D. W. Griffith's controversial 1915 classic film *The Birth of a Nation*, also enjoyed great renown in his lifetime as a minister, lecturer, lawyer, and actor. Although this native southerner's blatantly racist, chauvinistic, and white supremacist views are abhorrent today, his contemporary audiences responded enthusiastically to Dixon. In *Thomas Dixon Jr. and the Birth of Modern America*, distinguished scholars of religion, film, literature, music, history, and gender studies offer a provocative examination of Dixon's ideas, personal life, and career and in the process illuminate the evolution of white racism in the early twentieth century and its legacy down to the present. The contributors analyze Dixon's sermons, books, plays, and films seeking to understand the appeal of his message within the white culture of the Progressive era. They also explore the critical responses of African Americans contemporary with Dixon. By delving into the context and complexity of Dixon's life, the contributors also raise fascinating questions about the power of popular culture in forming Americans' views in any age.

"An important and valuable addition to the literature on turn-of-the-century white supremacy." -- Journal of Southern History

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