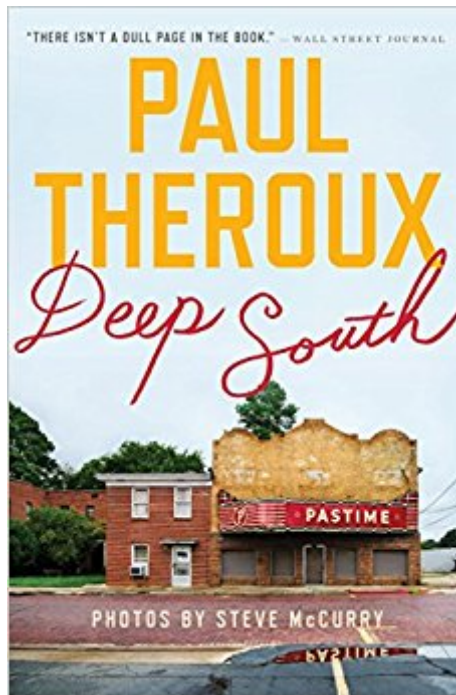




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Deep South: Four Seasons On Back Roads



Synopsis

“Theroux’s eye for landscape remains as sharp as ever . . . It’s remarkable gift for getting strangers to reveal themselves that makes going along for this ride worthwhile.” • New York Times Book Review

Paul Theroux has spent the past fifty years roaming the globe, describing his encounters with remote people and far-flung places in ten best-selling travel books. Now, for the first time, he explores a part of the Deep South. Setting out on a winding road trip, Theroux discovers a region of architectural and artistic wonders, incomparable music, mouth-watering cuisine and also some of the worst schools, medical care, housing, and unemployment rates in the nation.

Yet, no matter where he goes, Theroux meets the unsung heroes of the South, the people who, despite it all, never left, and also those who found their way home and devoted their lives to rebuilding a place they could never live without.

“Paul Theroux’s latest travel memoir had me at hello . . . Theroux pulls no punches in his quest to understand this overlooked margin of American life.” • Boston Globe

“A vivid contemporary portrait of rural life . . . a deeply affecting personal account.” • Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Customer Reviews

Publisher’s description. For the first time, renowned travel writer Paul Theroux turns his penetrating gaze homeward, exploring the extraordinary places and peoples of the American Deep South. From soul food and wide open roads to endemic poverty and simmering racial tension, he journeys to the

heart of a vivid and mesmerising world. * Penguin * His ability to sum up a people or a city in a few lines is undiminished * Daily Telegraph * Theroux's work remains the standard by which other travel writing must be judged * Observer * The world's most perceptive travel writer * Daily Mail * [Theroux] has the power to transport us and get under the skin of a place... the stories in Deep South make for a compelling listen -- Duncan Minshull, BBC Radio 4 This engrossing book reminds us that despite the poverty, maybe because of it, everyone has a story to tell and it's the writer's job to bear such testimony * Financial Times * --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Theroux's eye for landscape remains as sharp as ever . . . It's Theroux's remarkable gift for getting strangers to reveal themselves that makes going along for this ride worthwhile. New York Times Book Review Paul Theroux has spent the past fifty years roaming the globe, describing his encounters with remote people and far-flung places in ten best-selling travel books. Now, for the first time, he explores a part of America the Deep South. Setting out on a winding road trip, Theroux discovers a region of architectural and artistic wonders, incomparable music, mouth-watering cuisine and also some of the worst schools, medical care, housing, and unemployment rates in the nation. Yet, no matter where he goes, Theroux meets the unsung heroes of the South, the people who, despite it all, never left, and also those who found their way home and devoted their lives to rebuilding a place they could never live without. Paul Theroux's latest travel memoir had me at hello . . . Theroux pulls no punches in his quest to understand this overlooked margin of American life. Boston Globe A vivid contemporary portrait of rural life . . . a deeply affecting personal account. Atlanta Journal-Constitution Paul Theroux is the author of many highly acclaimed books. His novels include The Lower River and The Mosquito Coast, and his renowned travel books include Ghost Train to the Eastern Star and Dark Star Safari. He lives in Hawaii and on Cape Cod. "

Take him or leave him, Paul Theroux always brings out a lot of interesting emotions in his readers. With Deep South this is no different. In fact, it is probably even more evident. I would assume that most of his readers are American. This being a very "American" book, it is perhaps too close to home for some. I can see many Americans not liking this even if they have liked Theroux's previous works. After all, it is easy to read about the negative aspects of a far away land. It is far harder to read about the issues that face locations closer to home. I remember reading The Kingdom by the Sea, which chronicles Theroux's journey around Great Britain. In the first few pages he details his observations about this island. I was living in England while I read this and I thought it was the funniest, most accurate description of the British I had ever read. The insanity of a TV license, the

general tone of the people, etc. I cannot remember everything. But I felt it was totally accurate. I read these pages to several of my English friends and they got extremely upset. They thought it was total hogwash. I think Deep South might elicit a similar response from American readers. I've read nearly every non-fiction book Theroux has ever written. I've seen him speak in London and I feel I know the man pretty well. As well as you can know an author. He is constantly getting nailed for being misanthropic. However, I don't believe that's him at all. Quite the contrary. After all, why would someone spend this much time traveling and meeting new people? Surely you don't do this if you hate humanity. I don't even like to talk to people when I'm on a long flight! What Theroux is good at is simply observing what is what and writing it down. That's all. If you're offended by the way Theroux nails the Southerners for not having a great vocabulary, or being poverty stricken... well, that's how he saw it. Take it or leave it. I know of many South Africans that didn't like Dark Star Safari and thought he was full of himself and didn't do the country any justice. Perhaps that's true. I don't know. But what I do know is that I love how Theroux tells the story of the Deep South through the people he meets. This is true in all of his books. He meets quite a few people along the way and he tells their story with a keen eye for detail. He then passes this detail on to us, the reader. He's the best in the business at doing this. I for one am a fan of Deep South. I think it tells a very accurate story of what the place is like and what its people are like. I hope Mr. Theroux writes more books about America.

Fascinating but slightly flawed, as are other Theroux books. I haven't read them all, and I don't object to a grumpy tone now and then. In this case, I've lived in Massachusetts for 53 years after growing up in central Missouri (Little Dixie) and my husband grew up in Medford, MA a few years behind "Mr. Thorax", so I assumed some similarity in points of view and prejudices. I share with Mr. Thorax the outrage at the neglect of homegrown problems by the big philanthropists, namely Clinton and Gates, if that is indeed the case. The illiteracy rates alone are unforgivable in this country. Then there are the unintended consequences of the immigration act of 1965 and of NAFTA. A travel book is not an analysis of historical political events, but glances at the apparent results, I'll grant. And yet, the up close and personal glances are like photos in that they may be more revealing than mere statistics. So I found this a disturbing book, not that I didn't already know that Clinton is a cheezy opportunistic weazel, or that NAFTA has been disastrous for so many, or that immigration creates cultural clashes and social disorganization, or that agricultural mechanization and corporatization, and banking practices victimize farmers, but Mr. T's tales bring it all home. So this is not really a travel book, it's more about travelling in circles, on the roads and economically and socially. It isn't a

tourist book since it's more than a view from a passing train; it isn't a guide book either. It's itself and different and hard to categorize.. I would have given it a five except that it is repetitious, seemingly unwittingly so, in places and perhaps needed a closer editing. All in all, a read to recommend to anyone who can bear to know some more- painful truths about the beloved country. Thanks, Mr. Paul.

One the best books I've read this year and one of Theroux's best, in my humble opinion, and I'm a fan of his writing. Because of his experiences in Africa and elsewhere around the globe he was able to compare and contrast what he saw in the South with what he had seen overseas and it's very enlightening. There are scores of interesting tidbit throughout the book and one that surprised me was the overwhelming number of non-chain motels owned by Indians, dot not feather indians, and they were mostly named Patel or Desais and from the same province, Gujarat, and many form the same town. The other interesting thing about Indians in the South is if it weren't for Indian doctors there would be virtually no health care in the poor areas, particularly in the Black Belt and the Delta. There's a reason for it, but I'll let you read the book to find it out. I think this book further cements his reputation as one of the preeminent travel writers in this, or any other, age. As always, finishing one of his books leaves me wanting to read more of his work and reread those I've read and read the other writers he references in his books. He's always entertaining, educational, and insightful. You won't be sorry for reading this one.

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