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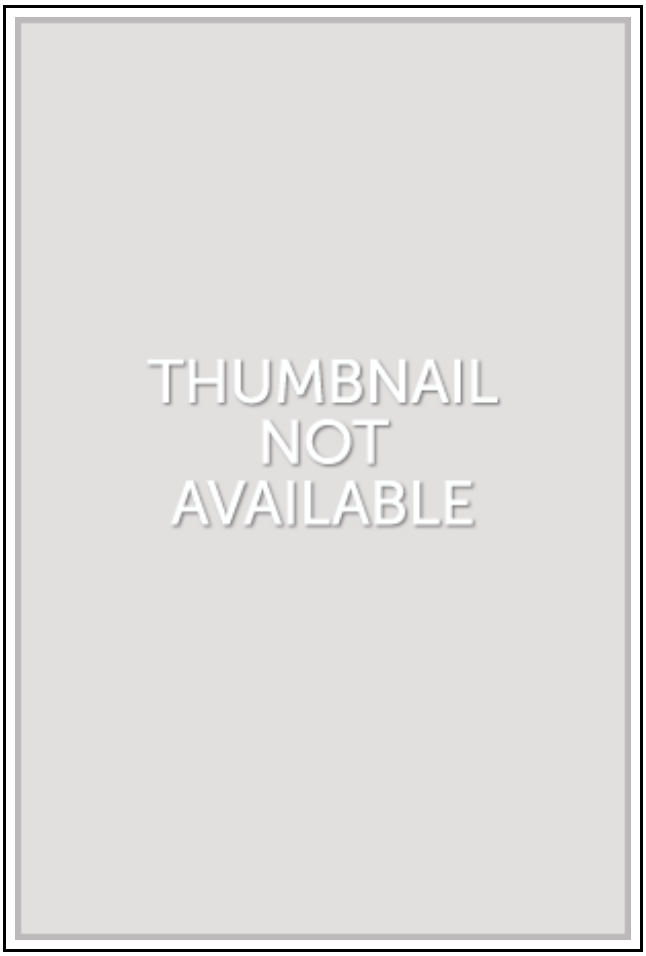

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University of Iowa Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Sum of the Parts: The Mathematics and Politics of Region Place and Writing, Kent C. Ryden, Proponents of the new regional history understand that regional identities are constructed and contested, multifarious and not monolithic, that they involve questions of dominance and power, and that their nature is inherently political. In this lively new book, writing in the spirit of these understandings, Kent Ryden engagingly examines works of American regional writing to show us how literary partisans of place create and recreate, attack and defend, argue over and dramatize the meaning and identity of their regions in the pages of their books.Cleverly drawing upon mathematical models that complement his ideas and focusing on both classic and contemporary literary regionalists, Ryden demonstrates that regionalism, in the cultural sense, retains a great deal of power as a framework for literary interpretation. For New England he examines such writers as Robert Frost and Hayden Carruth, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and Edith Wharton, and Carolyn Chute and Russell Banks to demonstrate that today s regionalists inspire closer, more democratic readings of life and landscape. For the West and South, he describes Wallace Stegner s and William Faulkner s use of region to, respectively, exclude and evade or confront and indict. For the Midwest, he focuses on C. J. Hribal, William Least Heat-Moon, Paul Gruchow, and others to demonstrate that midwesterners continually construct the past anew from the materials at hand, filling the seemingly empty midlands with history and significance.Ryden reveals that there are many Wests, many New Englands, many Souths, and many Midwests, all raising similar issues about the cultural politics of region and place. Writing with appealing freshness and a sense of adventure, he shows us that place, and the stories that emerge from...

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