

Book Reviews

- Female Piety in Puritan New England: The Emergence of Religious Humanism.*
By Amanda Porterfield. Reviewed by Bryan F. Le Beau 127
- Dark Eden: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture.* By David C. Miller. Reviewed by John R. Stilgoe 128
- Emerson's Emergence: Self and Society in the Transformation of New England, 1800-1845.* By Mary Kupiec Cayton. Reviewed by Theodore R. Hovet 128
- The American Epic: Transforming a Genre, 1770-1860.* By John P. McWilliams, Jr.. Reviewed by Philip Barnard 129
- America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink.* By Kenneth M. Stampp. Reviewed by John David Smith 130
- Fictions of Capital: The American Novel from James to Mailer.* By Richard Godden. Reviewed by Theodore R. Hovet 130
- Halfway to Revolution: Investigation and Crisis in the Work of Henry Adams, William James and Gertrude Stein.* By Clive Bush. Reviewed by George Cotkin 131
- Medicine in America: A Short History.* By James H. Cassedy. Reviewed by Alan I Marcus 132
- The Savage Eye: Melville and the Visual Arts.* By Christopher Sten. Reviewed by Elizabeth Schultz 133
- Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry.* By Charles Altieri. Reviewed by Michael J. Hoffman 133
- Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition.* By Joanne M. Braxton. Reviewed by Elizabeth Schultz 134
- Down from the Mountaintop: Black Women's Novels in the Wake of the Civil Rights Movement, 1966-1989.* By Melissa Walker. Reviewed by Elizabeth Schultz 135
- Toni Morrison.* By Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems. Reviewed by Elizabeth Schultz 135
- Images of a Free Press* By Lee C. Bollinger. Reviewed by Del Brinkman 136
- American Fiction in the Cold War.* By Thomas Hill Schaub. Reviewed by Charles J. Gaspar 136

Reviews

FEMALE PIETY IN PURITAN NEW ENGLAND: The Emergence of Religious Humanism. By Amanda Porterfield. New York: Oxford University Press. 1992.

This is an excellent brief (156 pages of text) interdisciplinary study of female piety in seventeenth-century New England. Porterfield combines analysis of theological writing, interpretations of literature, examinations of the historical period, and sociological models of the relationship between social and religious experiences in primitive and modern societies to show that images of female piety provided both a means of self-expression and cultural stability in Puritan society. *Female Piety in Puritan New England* complements the work of Sacvan Bercovitch and others on the self-denying, self-sacrificing person as a model of the Puritan self.

Men and women alike adopted ideals of selfhood, especially the values of humility and self-control, from an image of women as devoted, submissive and suffering wives. Men appropriated that image to temper their own tendencies toward aggression and ambition. Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepherd and John Cotton, Porterfield points out, did this not only out of fear of the wrath of God, but also in order to obtain the gentle temper and self-control they needed to exercise authority.

Women, in contrast, seized upon the greater proficiency for piety with which they were associated to mediate the exercise of male authority over them. Anne Hutchinson's influence as spiritual leader, Porterfield argues, grew out of her conventionally defined roles as nurse and midwife. Anne Bradstreet gained influence through her literary self-portrait as loving wife and mother. In sum, if the self-realization of female piety relieved men of their suffering, it provided women with redemptive meaning.

By the end of the seventeenth century, Porterfield finds, the preponderance of female church communicants lent reality to the image of the church as the bride of Christ as well as to the image of the Bible Commonwealth as a devoted suffering woman. The Salem witch trials of 1692, she points out, reflected the prominence women had assumed, but it also revealed the perversity that had come to mark Puritan devotion to suffering, thereby signaling its abandonment. The modernization of New England, Porterfield explains, led to the loss of collective solidarity and the factionalization of the image of female piety.

The eighteenth-century romantic development of religious humanism, which accompanied the rise of urban capitalism, offered a new image of women as the opposite of men, as inherently vulnerable to sentiment and incapable of reason. Manhood, at the same time, was redefined as an overcoming of the debility and dependence associated with female piety and as the assuming of the virtues of independence and self-confidence.

Creighton University

Bryan F. Le Beau

DARK EDEN: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture. By David C. Miller. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1989.

An important milestone in American cultural, geographical and visual history, *Dark Eden* meticulously analyzes not only an evolving scientific understanding of swamps, but the use of swamps as symbols of female nature and of social crises, especially slavery, in the work of Stowe, Simms, Church, Heade, Strother, Tuckerman, Lanier, Hearn and others fascinated with swamps as places beyond mainstream landscape aesthetics, often as cultural deserts. Impeccably illustrated with half-tone and full-color images, Miller's book makes clear the extraordinary links between American wilderness and national, not regional, cultural bias, and thrusts deeply into twentieth-century attitudes. While perhaps slighting early nineteenth-century northern distinctions between swamps and marshes, *Dark Eden* is a breathtakingly incisive book of extremely wide importance.

Harvard University

John R. Stilgoe

EMERSON'S EMERGENCE: Self and Society in the Transformation of New England, 1800-1845. By Mary Kupiec Cayton. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1989.

Cayton's lucid and informative history of Ralph Waldo Emerson's intellectual development continues recent scholarly efforts to shift attention from his ideas in the abstract to the effect on his thought and literary style of contemporary events in the United States. Cayton depicts Emerson as struggling to find a philosophic and artistic position that would allow him to overcome personal feelings of alienation induced by "the emerging urban, capitalist order" in New England (ix). She argues that his career as lyceum speaker and man of literature was an effort "to build a vocation apart from the established institutions that, in buying out a man's labor, led him to fragmentation of self, paralysis and inefficacy, and moral blindness" (149). This emphasis on alienation alters the traditional picture of Emerson as the Transcendental visionary alone in nature to that of the prototypic modern individual struggling to find meaning in an increasingly commodified social environment. Most strikingly, it reveals how much the question of career shaped Emerson's ideas and literary style.

In tracing Emerson's struggle with alienation, Cayton gives us informative accounts of how contemporary events shaped Emerson's thinking—the breakdown of Federalism, the rise of Jacksonian democracy, the impact of Evangelicalism, and utopian experimentation. Also, like Carolyn Porter in *Seeing and Being*, she demonstrates the inadequacy of Emerson's concept of spiritual vision as a means of overcoming alienation. Finally, Cayton has some very interesting things to say about Emerson's responses to personal relationships, particularly the way he distanced himself from Lydian and Margaret Fuller. While Cayton does not bring any surprising new information or ideas to these matters, her

carefully constructed narrative establishes a developmental sequence that brings into sharper focus Emerson's intellectual development and his relationship to his culture.

University of Northern Iowa

Theodore R. Hovet

THE AMERICAN EPIC: Transforming a Genre, 1770-1860. By John P. McWilliams, Jr. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1989.

McWilliams provides a thorough study of the epic genre in American literature from the Revolution to the Civil War, along with a highly speculative discussion of "epic" references in antebellum historiography (Irving, Prescott, Parkman), novels (Cooper, Simms, Melville), and poetry (Whitman). The book's strengths and weaknesses correspond to its two-fold effort to offer an account of the epic genre as such on the one hand, and of its "transformation" into non-epic forms on the other.

The book's strength lies in its well-researched, informative discussion of the Augustan aesthetics, republican-nationalist motivation, and unremitting artistic nullity of epic poetry in the early republic. The genre is traced in detail from the "rising glory" type exemplified by Dwight's 1785 *Conquest of Canaan* and Barlow's 1804 *Columbiad* through mock-epic and burlesque variations to Western-expansion epics such as Paulding's 1822 *Backwoodsman*. Most interestingly, McWilliams demonstrates that there was a consistent cultural-ideological valorization of the concept of epic throughout the antebellum period, despite the increasingly obvious obsolescence of actual epic forms. Although this insight's implications are not fully developed, it is apparent that this valorization of epic as cultural capital was largely due to epic's usefulness in lending high-cultural legitimacy to particular concerns like expansionism, for example, or more general ones such as the privileging of traditional, hierarchical cultural categories over those of democratic and commercial modernity. The book also demonstrates that this valorization of epic played a significant role in the thinking of more influential, non-epic writers such as Cooper, Simms and Prescott, affecting their ideas about literature's function in the social realm and their practice of history and the novel.

Primarily because of its fundamentally ahistorical assumptions about genre, however, the book is less successful in its claims for the overall significance of epic in this period. The book's organizing thesis postulates the continuity of an essentialist notion of epic as "heroic narrative," claiming that the failure of epic as such is overcome in its transformation, via the category of "romance," into quasi-epic histories, novels and poems. McWilliams, that is, relies on a notion of generic continuity that assumes the ahistorical identity of genres rather than their variable construction as cultural artifacts. Consequently, rather than developing the insights produced in the first section on epic proper, the book's later chapters lean increasingly on the pseudo-theorizing of Joseph Campbell as they claim to follow an archetypal essence of "heroic literature" through its generic transformations. This approach produces implausible arguments for the importance of epic in *Moby Dick* or Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, for example, and unconvincing interpretations of the non-epic works discussed.

Although its approach to genre and commentary on non-epic works is unpersuasive, the study remains valuable as an excellent account of the antebellum history of the epic genre proper.

University of Kansas

Philip Barnard

AMERICA IN 1857: A Nation on the Brink. By Kenneth M. Stampp. New York: Oxford University Press. 1990.

In *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink* historian Kenneth M. Stampp argues that by December 1857, sectional discord “had gathered so much momentum that the peacemakers could find no way to stop it from running its course” (322). In other words, the disintegration of the Democratic Party over the establishment of a government for Kansas so weakened the party that it stood divided, leaving the government rudderless, and allowing the emerging Republican Party to capture the presidency in 1860. According to Stampp, “1857 was probably the year when the North and South reached the political point of no return—when it became well nigh impossible to head off a violent resolution of the differences between them” (viii).

Though Stampp surveys the broad range of events that occurred in 1857—*Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Panic of 1857, conflict between the Mormons and the federal government, William Walker’s invasions of Nicaragua, and the prevalence of crime—Kansas Territory holds the focus of his well-written narrative.

During 1856 a bitter and violent struggle had erupted between proslavery and free-state parties for control of Kansas. The new president, Democrat James Buchanan, elected in November, 1856, promised a resolution of “Bleeding Kansas.” In June and October 1857, respectively, his administration supervised elections in Kansas for a constitutional convention and a territorial legislature. In both campaigns the proslavery minority committed voter fraud against the antislavery majority. The resulting Lecompton constitution became so controversial an issue that Senator Stephen A. Douglas, “quite willing to see any territory become a slave state if the majority wished” (322), broke with Buchanan and sided with Senator William H. Seward and other “Black” Republicans. Stampp argues that the battle over Lecompton “marked the point where discussion and negotiation gave way to accusations and inflexible demands, and where concession was equated with humiliating defeat” (322). Ultimately, in August 1858, Kansans defeated the Lecompton constitution and, according to Stampp, dealt the Democrats a blow from which the demoralized and divided party would not recover until long after the Civil War.

Stampp’s minute examination of 1857 is a welcome addition to the historical literature on the coming of the Civil War. It offers important insights into the dilemmas faced by the national Democratic party to placate its northern and southern rank-and-file. Nevertheless, Stampp’s thesis, like other forms of historical determinism, closes the door to alternative human actions and decisions. As the author himself notes, “Historical events overlap, interrelate, and are invariably complex, and those who experience them rarely understood their consequences” (295). This certainly was as true in 1857 as it was, say, in 1860, or is in 1992.

North Carolina State University

John David Smith

FICTIONS OF CAPITAL: The American Novel from James to Mailer. By Richard Godden. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1990.

In this often difficult but always stimulating study, Godden has put together what he characterizes as “loosely organized efforts to understand how different fictions take their forms from the economic history that is their finally determining context” (11). For him, economic history consists of “two of capital’s deeper narratives: the plot to accumulate and expand resource” (1880 to the First World War) and the plot “to ensure the

reproduction"—what he calls "Fordism"—"of the expanded resource" (WWI to the 1960s). He also makes it clear that these narratives contain villains, namely the "historical subjects" who steal the wealth at the expense of the laborers (3). Unfortunately, these stories contain no heroes, not even the novelists. The writers—Henry James and Ernest Hemingway (first plot), F. Scott Fitzgerald (bridging figure), Norman Mailer (second plot)—merely reflect in their work the economic narratives and they all suffer "amnesia," i.e., the convenient forgetting of the exploited workers who produce the consumer goods. He also has a chapter on the Southern Agrarians as representatives of regional writers who resisted, albeit in a naive way, "consumerism and its attendant forms of labor" (11).

Godden's approach leads to some striking readings. For example, he sees Hemingway's Nick watching a trout as an example of "an eye conditioned by consumption. He is like any window shopper" (45). He reads Fitzgerald's Nicole and Rosemary in *Tender is the Night* as reflections of the "density" and "transparency" that mark the shift from accumulation to reproduction (121). He shows how Mailer's narrative voice can be read as a verification that "individualism has lost its authority" and reflects a person "who experiences dramatic problems holding himself together" (226) because of contradictions surfacing in bourgeois ideology.

Such readings are, of course, seriously reductionist. Rosemary may display the transparency of the commodified entertainer, but she also reflects, as a psychoanalytic reading would reveal, the gendered transparency created by the male gaze. Godden has not convinced this reader that the Marxian interpretation is more revealing or fundamental than some other critical approach.

University of Northern Iowa

Theodore R. Hovet

HALFWAY TO REVOLUTION: Investigation and Crisis in the Work of Henry Adams, William James and Gertrude Stein. By Clive Bush. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1991.

Readers will find this book sometimes brilliant, often erratic, and generally contentious; they will encounter it as a roller coaster ride: some will feel sickened, others excited, few will be blasé. Bush's work is intended to be read at a variety of levels. It is, in part, an analysis of the work of Adams, James and Stein, but without any pretensions to complete coverage. It intends to bring Adams, James and Stein into a dialogue with contemporary theorists while also attempting to place these turn-of-the-century thinkers within their own intellectual contexts. Hence the roller coaster ride effect, for, not atypically, in the space of one brief paragraph, Bush manages to invoke the names of Henry Adams, Stephen Toulmin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Zukofsky and Ezra Pound! Yet Bush does often succeed in his contextual/postmodernist blending approach. No small task.

Bush's interpretations are borrowed in their broad outlines from Sartre on consciousness, from Hannah Arendt on the public realm, and from C. Wright Mills on power. Thus, not surprisingly, Bush feels most comfortable with Adams because of his unerring attention to the production and insinuation of power into modern life, strongly antagonistic to much of James, for his dualisms, moralisms, and therapeutic, and open to Stein's valorization of language so long as it functions as a mode for the critique of modern society. There is no substantial or sustained thesis that holds the work together, although the author does indicate how certain discourses—"history for Adams, psychology for James, and language of common sense and narrative structure for Stein" (12)—were all in a state of demise and thus opened to new perspectives and experiments. But the book is marked less

by this ultimate interpretive angle than by an avalanche of mini-theses, some quite illuminating. The title is somewhat deceptive or at least confusing. To this reader, exactly how Adams, James and Stein were "halfway to revolution" remains obscure. Is the revolution they stand in relation to that of a post-modernist understanding of language and society? Perhaps, but Bush would have been well served to have discussed fully how these thinkers might first have been fitted into a modernist perspective, a more appropriate starting point.

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

George Cotkin

MEDICINE IN AMERICA: A Short History. By James H. Cassedy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1991.

James H. Cassedy's *Medicine in America: A Short History* joins a growing number of short histories of the American medical past or some aspects of that past. This list includes John Duffy's *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health* and *The Healers: The Rise of the Medical Establishment*, John S. Haller's *American Medicine in Transition, 1840-1910*, William G. Rothstein's *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century* and Paul Starr's *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. Cassedy's contribution is chatty, not in writing style but in what it covers. Like the general practitioner of yore, Cassedy's volume is calming and reassuring. It is also broad and rather superficial. Like the good modern specialist, Cassedy is sensitive to the pain of individuals in the past but never seems to be able to fathom it. *Medicine in America* treats the past as a way station on the road to the present. The book is littered with statements such as success could only occur when the scientific infrastructure was "much further advanced," "as the century went on," "despite the best efforts of health reformers" and "such provisions were notoriously too little and too late throughout the period." My personal favorite was the congratulatory tone of the author as he asserted that late-nineteenth-century pathology "was not divided or seriously diverted by essentially social or popular considerations."

The book's presentation is essentially sterile. It venerates science, medicine and medical men (and woman too because Cassedy recounts the old chestnut about Elizabeth Blackwell and her 1849 M.D. degree). Disease and doctors impact on people as if people were amoebae, experiencing pain and anguish but incapable of interpreting that pain and anguish. It divides the past into chunks, some nearly a century in length, and then treats the events within that period as if they occurred simultaneously. The present medical "reality" infuses virtually every observation of the past.

None of this is to say that the book is without merit. Intriguing is Cassedy's use of the concept of health/disease habitats. These are/were circumscribed environments, each with its own social organization and situation and each with its own unique health questions. *American Studies* readers are likely to find this configuration useful and will likely benefit from the book's encyclopedic character. But they will need to look elsewhere for an understanding of America's medical past on the past's terms.

Iowa State University

Alan I Marcus

THE SAVAGE EYE: Melville and the Visual Arts. Edited by Christopher Sten. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press. 1991.

Given the frequency and diversity of his allusions to the visual arts in his writings, scholars have long been conscious of Melville's interest in the painting, sculpture and architecture of the past as well as of his own day. However, unlike the extensive studies that have been done on Melville's contemporaries Hawthorne and James, until this collection of essays edited by Christopher Sten, only slight attention has been directed toward an examination of the relationship between Melville and the visual arts. The collection opens with Sten's own very useful essay, which relates Melville's expanding knowledge of the visual arts and nineteenth-century art criticism to the chronology of his writing. The essays that follow are arranged along these chronological lines. With the exception of Robert Wallace's provocative and persuasive consideration of the impact of J.M.W. Turner upon *Moby-Dick*, these essays focus upon Melville's later work, reflecting his developing interest in the visual arts. They not only confirm the importance of his journey to the Near East in 1856-57, but they also elucidate and enrich our understanding of the fiction and the too-often neglected poetry written after *Moby-Dick*. Collectively, the essays reveal both the range of Melville's aesthetic knowledge—from the picturesque to the sublime, from Dutch genre painting to classical iconography—and the range of his application of this knowledge—from visual representation to visionary evocation, from the realistic to the abstract—in his own writings. Gail Coffer's essay, which concludes *The Savage Eye* and which explores the implications of the allusions to classical art in *Billy Budd, Sailor*, provides us with a stunning new reading of this well-known work, and demonstrates the value of this important interdisciplinary study.

University of Kansas

Elizabeth Schultz

PAINTERLY ABSTRACTION IN MODERNIST AMERICAN POETRY. By Charles Altieri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989.

The discussion of modernism has become a scholarly growth industry. Much of that discussion has focused on fascinating literary personalities, relating poetry to philosophy, and relating modernism to previous or literary traditions. Although scholars have tied individual authors to developments in painting (e.g. Gertrude Stein and Cubism), Charles Altieri's *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry* reflects systematically on the relationships among literature, philosophy and painting. It is therefore an important book for students of modern American culture, as well as those interested in theory.

For Altieri the cultural shift that encompasses philosophy, the plastic arts and the verbal arts is thrust upon the artist by history. He describes it gnominically as "the opposition between incantation and empirical description" (7). For Altieri cultural forces demanded that art be abstract, that it displace "the Romantic lyric sensibility" and its "dramatic and melodramatic theaters," and that readers "must learn to read *through*" texts and paintings in order to discover "the infinite incantations of ourselves that [they] offer . . ." (6-7).

The book's many lines of discussion are too complex to summarize in a brief space, and so the following will stand as an example. In his discussions of an early abstract painting by Marcel Duchamp, called *Game of Chess*, Altieri describes how this effort does not simply represent a field as in traditional Renaissance perspective, but rather "pursues two interrelated features . . . : First, it carves a space for abstract analogies between the physical and spiritual orders that parallel those opened by traditional allegory; second, it

charges that space with metamorphic energy, by having the compositional act serve as a vehicle extending and testing the models of agency that we can attribute both to chess and to art" (16). Representation is thus no longer central to this representational art, because artists are increasingly conscious that it is only through action that the work of art can overcome the incoherence of re-presentation.

Altieri uses painting as a model of abstraction not only because painters understood the problematic nature of representation sooner, but because paintings, though abstract, are tangible presences. Altieri avoids the traps of the *ut pictoria poesis* tradition by not insisting on exact correspondences between pictorial and verbal forms of expression. Rather he shows how the new way of conceiving the scene of the work of art was also analogous to contemporary philosophical discussions, particularly those in the Kantian tradition, in Hegel and Nietzsche, and in such philosophical poets as Stéphane Mallarmé.

The book contains good extended readings of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, although Altieri's hero is Wallace Stevens, that most philosophical of all American modernist poets. The book itself is almost fiercely abstract, its argument paradoxically both discursive and tightly presented. Altieri's theory that abstractionism is a "constructivist" enterprise is best expressed in an appendix, "A Conceptual Grammar for Constructivist Abstraction," to which the theoretically inclined reader should go directly. Readers looking for close readings of modernist poems will not find them here, except as they go to support Altieri's thesis.

Altieri is equally and impressively comfortable discussing literary theory, poetry, philosophy and painting, and in making connections among them. His erudition is striking and fitting to the task. The major problem I had with the book lies in its dense language and argument. Altieri is so anxious to get all his ideas on paper and persuade us of their validity that he frequently chews more than he bites off (to quote Mrs. Henry Adams on Mr. Henry James). In addition to the text's verbosity, this book contains the longest, most discursive footnotes I have seen since Kenneth Burke. Still, as a complex interdisciplinary discussion of modernism, this is a book readers will want to consult.

University of California, Davis

Michael J. Hoffman

BLACK WOMEN WRITING AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A Tradition Within a Tradition. By Joanne M. Braxton. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1990.

Braxton's study of African-American women's autobiography emanates from the paradoxical position that while black women from colonial times to the present have created a tradition of telling their stories, this tradition can only be defined by changing and diverse stories. Based on an examination of documents—autobiographies, memoirs, journals, diaries, letters—Braxton describes the various verbal strategies, both written and oral, that black women autobiographers have used to shape their lives. Her discussion of the "sass" and of the dream visions characterizing several of these writers' representation of their lives is especially valuable. She contends that African-American women have often conceptualized themselves historically either as mothers—"outraged" by the adversities imposed on their children by slavery, racism and sexism—or in response to the adversities imposed on their own mothers. Although she explicitly contrasts the black woman's means of self-definition with the more public and violent means used by male autobiographers, black and white, she perceives that black women writing of their spiritual conversion or of their attaining self-reliance also follow conventional autobiographical patterns of growth. For early as well as later African-American women autobiographers,

the experience of adolescence is represented as being perilous, with an increasing gender awareness intersecting with their racial awareness at this time. Braxton focuses on several frequently discussed black women autobiographers—Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou—but it is through her discussion of the autobiographies of lesser known writers—Rebecca Cox Jackson, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Era Bell Thompson—that she most fully illuminates the power and diversity of this complex tradition.

University of Kansas

Elizabeth Schultz

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINTOP: Black Women's Novels in the Wake of the Civil Rights Movement, 1966-1989. By Melissa Walker. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1991.

Walker's book insists upon the necessity of reading novels in relation not only to the historical content established by their narratives but also to political events occurring at the time they were written and published. It is in these contexts that she discusses eighteen novels by contemporary black American women. Thus although these novels explore several periods in American history—slavery, reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the Depression—she reads them as metaphorical commentaries regarding the events transpiring during the time of their publication, that is, the time, following 1966, during which the United States struggled to enact Civil Rights legislation and to uphold it. This framework for analysis provides radically new and persuasive insights into several novels such as Margaret Walker's 1966 *Jubilee* which, as a conventional historical novel, has been dismissed by some critics; Alice Childress' 1979 *A Short Walk* and Rosa Guy's 1983 *A Measure of Time*, which have been almost entirely overlooked by critics; and Toni Morrison's 1977 *Song of Solomon* and Alice Walker's 1982 *The Color Purple*, novels which have by now become almost canonical for feminist scholars. Whereas Morrison's novel is interpreted as representing a responsible and dynamic, albeit ambiguous and difficult, debate between the philosophy of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Walker's novel is shown to reflect the capitalistic and self-indulgent attitudes of 1980s Yuppies and Buppies. Despite the feminist slogan that "the personal is political," many contemporary white women novelists have limited their subject to private lives and private fantasies in contrast to the works of black women novelists, who, as Walker demonstrates, continue, with few exceptions, to concern themselves emphatically with the sphere of public action where issues of civil rights must be addressed. The same, of course, can be said of almost all black writers, and if Walker's excellent study has a flaw, it lies, not so much in her neglect to justify her focus on women's writing, as in her neglect to acknowledge the long tradition of black American political writing.

University of Kansas

Elizabeth Schultz

TONI MORRISON. By Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems. Boston: Twayne Publishers. 1990.

Following a sketchy biographical chapter, the authors provide a chapter on each of Morrison's five novels. They draw on interviews with Morrison, the abundant criticism of her novels, as well as African, Afro-American and European folklore and myth and dip into existential philosophy and feminist psychology in order to argue that Morrison's "recurring theme" lies in her characters' "quest for wholeness." The authors recognize that

some characters fail to achieve wholeness not only because of racism, sexism and economic deprivations but also because of their inability "to define and accept [their] own perceptions." Other characters, those who fulfill criteria for the archetypal Great Mother, are described as having transcended the quest. The importance of mysticism and of communities, especially communities of women, is persuasively represented as being critical for Morrison's characters in their search for selfhood.

University of Kansas

Elizabeth Schultz

IMAGES OF A FREE PRESS. By Lee C. Bollinger. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1991.

Lee Bollinger thinks it is time to look at freedom of the press much differently from what the Supreme Court did in *New York Times v. Sullivan* and its progeny. The dean of the University of Michigan Law School provides specific guidelines for improving media law in his book *Images of a Free Press*. He contends that it is time to formulate a more sophisticated vision of the free press and its role in sustaining a free society than the Supreme Court has done since the Sullivan decision in 1964.

Dean Bollinger makes a strong case that the American idea of freedom of the press, both in theory and in practice, must be regarded as significantly more complex than the image portrayed by the courts. He calls the Sullivan image primitive in that its goal of press freedom is viewed as the creation of a vast space for "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open" public discussion. Dean Bollinger feels this posture seems insensitive to problems affecting the quality of public discussion that are posed by a laissez-faire system of modern mass media.

Because of the vastly different First Amendment analyses for the print media and for the electronic media as well as the very different analyses for restrictions on speech and for restrictions on access to information, Dean Bollinger sees freedom of the press approaching a turning point. The image of the press he sees emerging is one that will bring into being a more integrated and complex analysis of the idea of freedom of the press.

In addition to admitting that this book had a long period of gestation, Dean Bollinger also admits that it is an interpretive enterprise, "cast in the mold of a series of reflections." As such it provides a provocative vehicle for legal scholars and journalists to continue the debate over just how free a free press should be.

Dean Bollinger has made a significant contribution with this well-reasoned and thoughtful legal argument. It is one that advocates of the current First Amendment law must be prepared to defend.

University of Kansas

Del Brinkman

AMERICAN FICTION IN THE COLD WAR. By Thomas Hill Schaub. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1991.

In 1977 Frank McConnell, in *Four Postwar American Novelists*, proposed that Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, John Barth and Thomas Pynchon were equally "aesthetic and political writers" (xxix). Although overlapping with McConnell's thesis and focus, Schaub's work differs markedly, being a strongly interdisciplinary examination of how writers and critics alike were "renegotiating" (vii) their political and aesthetic environment.

In Part I Schaub explores the cultural and intellectual genesis of an emerging “centrist liberalism” (9) that answered the radicalism of the 1930’s liberals. Following the paradigms of Reinhold Niebuhr and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., these more conservative liberals admitted greater complexity to their understandings of social history and mass behavior. Analogously, both major schools of literary criticism, the New Critics and the New York intellectuals, developed a similar conservatism. Without conflating these schools or their individual voices, Schaub shows a pervasive consensus, most prominently seen in Lionel Trilling’s seminal *The Liberal Imagination*, that valorized, against the 1930’s naturalism, a new realism founded in a complex psychological and moral vision of man’s political and human condition.

In Part II Schaub examines Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find,” Mailer’s “The White Negro,” and Barth’s *The End of the Road*. Unlike McConnell’s longitudinal study, Schaub’s focus on single works effectively indicates the pervasiveness of conservative liberalism. Schaub’s discussion of issues of Black leadership, Niebuhr’s Christian realism and the problem of human depravity, the hipster as a renegade and potential revolutionary, and the “battle between High Art and Mass Culture” (179) develops the dynamic interaction among writer, text and culture. Schaub expands his argument, drawing on theorists from other fields, such as Adorno and Sartre, and he discusses, briefly, parallels with popular art forms such as Jazz, photography, film and advertising. Although one wishes Schaub had continued his analysis to the era’s true terminus, circa 1990, rather than stopping thirty years earlier, these are wide-ranging and convincing corrective readings of the early Cold War years.

For students of the literature, politics and culture of the formative postwar years, *American Fiction in the Cold War* is a must read. Schaub’s is an important and informed work.

Brenau University

Charles J. Gaspar