

American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman

By F. O. Matthiessen



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Editorial Review

Review

"[Matthiessen's] exploration of the haunted mind of Hawthorne, of Emerson's integrity, of the mental hell in which Melville lived, of Whitman's schizophrenia, of Thoreau's chosen solitude, [has] produced a book unequalled in American critical writing."--*The New Republic*

"Perhaps the most profound work of literary criticism on historical principles by any modern American."--*Saturday Review*

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"Matthiessen has brought to light a rich and complex period....His comments on language and style, in addition to being discerning as criticism, become finally profound reflections on nineteenth-century American society."--Daniel Aaron, *Kenyon Review*

From the Back Cover

This text has taken its place as the definitive treatment of the most distinguished age of American literature. Centering the discussion around five literary giants of the mid-nineteenth century—Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman. Matthiessen elucidates their conceptions of the nature and function of literature, and the extent to which these were realized in their writings.

About the Author

F. O. Matthiessen was a Californian by birth but grew up in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New York. Educated both here and abroad, he started teaching in 1927, first at Yale and then at Harvard, where he was Professor of History and Literature. He made the field of American poetry one of his major interests and wrote critical estimates of Emerson, Poe, Eliot, and other contemporary poets. He was a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and a Senior Fellow of the Kenyon School of English.

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