



Journal

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more on

Religion & American Literature

*There before Us: Religion, Literature, and Culture from Emerson to Wendell Berry**, edited by Roger Lundin, is published by Eerdmans. Other contributors include John Gatta, Michael Colacurcio, Barbara Packer, Katherine Clay Bassard, M. D. Walhout, Gail McDonald, and Andrew Delbanco. Alfred Kazin's *God and the American Writer** (1997) is in paperback from Random House. Kazin's 1942 *On Native Grounds** has been hailed as one of the best works in American literary history. Kazin's *An American Procession: Major American Writers, 1830-1930** (Harvard, 1996) includes essays about Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman, Melville, James, Dreiser, Adams, Crane, Eliot, Pound, Faulkner, and Hemingway. When Kazin died in 1998, Richard Pells noted in the *International Herald Tribune*, that many contemporary critics regarded Kazin as a relic, more interested in literature than literary theory. Roger Lundin mentioned F. O. Matthiessen during our interview; Matthiessen's major work (in print since 1941) was *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman** (Oxford). Perry Miller was also mentioned; while best-known for his historical and biographical studies, his works on literary subjects include *The Raven and the Whale: Poe, Melville, and the New York Literary Scene* (Harcourt Brace 1956). Ken Myers mentioned William Barrett's *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (Doubleday, 1986). This is not a book about literature, but it does describe the way in which indifference to religion became plausible in modern experience. It is principally a survey of how modern philosophy deconstructed the soul. The book is reminiscent of C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*, in that Barrett is concerned that the quest for power over nature (sustained by modern philosophy in league with science) has led to skepticism about the nature of Man. The final sentence of the book reads: "What shall it profit a whole civilization, or culture, if it gains knowledge and power over the material world, but loses any adequate idea of the conscious mind, the human self, at the center of all that power?" James Turner's *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Johns Hopkins, 1985) is a book much admired by both Lundin and Myers in describing the way in which atheism became an imaginable option in the 19th century. Lawrence Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination**

Part 1

- 1 **Introduction**
- 2 **Roger Lundin**, on why, after Vietnam, American literary critics forgot about American religion
- 3 **Lawrence Buell**, on diverse visions of America and Nature
- 4 **Harold K. Bush, Jr.**, on the glorification of the American way as a civil religion
- 5 **Roger Lundin**, on the transformation of the nature of belief in the late 19th century

Part 2

- 1 **Katherine Shaw Spaht**, on radical autonomy, marriage, divorce, and law
- 2 **Steven Nock**, on how broadly shared cultural assumptions affect laws regulating marriage and divorce
- 3 **Norman Klassen & Jens Zimmermann**, on how various dualisms affect our assumptions about faith, knowledge, and higher education
- 4 **Norman Klassen & Jens Zimmermann**, on the Incarnation and humanism

*An asterisk means that the book is in print; if you wish to purchase it from our friends at Splintered Light Books call 1.800.979.3310.

(2005) is published by Blackwell. His book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture** (1996) was published by Harvard University Press. Harold K. Bush, Jr.'s *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of His Age* (2007) was published by the University of Alabama Press. Bush mentioned Andrew Delbanco's *The Real American Dream; A Meditation on Hope* (Harvard, 1999) and Louis Manand's *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999)

Other Books Mentioned

Katherine Shaw Spaht's essay "The Modern American Covenant Marriage Movement: Its Origins and Future" and Steven Nock's "What Does Covenant Mean for Relationships?" (co-written with Margaret F. Brinig) is in the anthology *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective** (Eerdmans), edited by John Witte, Jr., and Eliza Ellison. *The Passionate Intellect: Incarnational Humanism and the Future of University Education**, by Norman Klassen and Jens Zimmermann, is published by Baker Academic (2006).

About Our Music

Our theme music is the "Cantabile" from the "Quartet after Abel," by Roy Whelden, from his CD *Galax*, on New Albion Records. For information about their recordings, call 518.398.6264, or see their on-line catalog (www.newalbion.com).



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