Lillian Smith, The Civil Rights Reader: Women of Letters, the Southern Renaissance, and a Literature of Self-definition

Raising Racists

This study considers the fiction and non-fiction of Lillian Smith in an effort to place her in American literary and women's history as well as in the history of southern liberalism, where her reputation mainly lies as an early critic of segregation. The analysis of gender used to distinguish Smith from her contemporaries the southern Agrarians and southern liberals is employed to illuminate the genderization of the South/North cultural conflict itself. While race and region have long been explored in southern studies, gender has not, leaving a white writer like Lillian Smith more "paradoxical" than understood. The discussion follows Smith's career from the magazine South Today she began in 1936 with Paula Snelling, through the success of her popular novel Strange Fruit (1944), to Killers of the Dream, a non-fictional analysis of the South and her most important work. It then analyzes both The Journey (1954), a philosophical essay and her last novel One Hour (1959) in relationship to her break with southern liberals precipitated by Killers of the Dream. The last decade of her life is read for the impasses and frustrations she experienced as a white woman writer conflicted by the convergence of the Civil Rights Movement and the New Criticism, representing important factors she tried to reconcile in her work.

The Civil Rights Reader

This anthology of drama, essays, fiction, and poetry presents a thoughtful, classroom-tested selection of the best literature for learning about the long civil rights movement. Unique in its focus on creative writing, the volume also ranges beyond a familiar 1954-68 chronology to include works from the 1890s to the present. The civil rights movement was a complex, ongoing process of defining national values such as freedom, justice, and equality. In ways that historical documents cannot,
these collected writings show how Americans negotiated this process—politically, philosophically, emotionally, spiritually, and creatively. Gathered here are works by some of the most influential writers to engage issues of race and social justice in America, including James Baldwin, Flannery O’Connor, Amiri Baraka, and Nikki Giovanni. The volume begins with works from the post-Reconstruction period when racial segregation became legally sanctioned and institutionalized. This section, titled "The Rise of Jim Crow," spans the period from Frances E. W. Harper’s Iola Leroy to Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man. In the second section, "The Fall of Jim Crow," Martin Luther King Jr.’s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and a chapter from The Autobiography of Malcolm X appear alongside poems by Robert Hayden, June Jordan, and others who responded to these key figures and to the events of the time. "Reflections and Continuing Struggles," the last section, includes works by such current authors as Rita Dove, Anthony Grooms, and Patricia J. Williams. These diverse perspectives on the struggle for civil rights can promote the kinds of conversations that we, as a nation, still need to initiate.

How Am I to be Heard?

Southern Women at the Millennium

During its heyday in the nineteenth century, the African slave trade was fueled by the close relationship of the United States and Brazil. The Deepest South tells the disturbing story of how U.S. nationals—before and after Emancipation—continued to actively participate in this odious commerce by creating diplomatic, social, and political ties with Brazil, which today has the largest population of African origin outside of Africa itself. Proslavery Americans began to accelerate their presence in Brazil in the 1830s, creating alliances there—sometimes friendly, often contentious—with Portuguese, Spanish, British, and other foreign slave traders to buy, sell, and transport African slaves, particularly from the eastern shores of that beleaguered continent. Spokesmen of the Slave South drew up ambitious plans to seize the Amazon and develop this region by deporting the enslaved African-Americans there to toil. When the South seceded from the Union, it received significant support from Brazil, which correctly assumed that a Confederate defeat would be a mortal blow to slavery south of the border. After the Civil War, many Confederates, with slaves in tow, sought refuge as well as the survival of their peculiar institution in Brazil. Based on extensive research from archives on five continents, Gerald Horne breaks startling new ground in the history of slavery, uncovering its global dimensions and the degrees to which its defenders went to maintain it.

This dissertation provides an intertextual examination of selected nonfiction prose by six women writers of the Southern Renaissance. It situates their self-writing within a context of Southern feminism and the more inclusive discourse of modern American liberalism. Chapter One defines the socio-historical role of the “woman of letters” in the twentieth-century South, while Chapter Two explores the ways in which her work has been marginalized by recent intellectual histories. Chapter Three explains the significance of Lillian Smith’s confessional tract, Killers of the Dream (1949; revised in 1961). Smith represents a sharp disruption of a conservative critical agenda that has dominated most appraisals of twentieth-century Southern writing. Smith’s ethics, her analyses of women and autobiography, racism and sexism, provide useful points of reference for examining the other writers in this study, each of whom speaks with her own voice of dissent regarding gender norms, problems of race, and patriarchal power structures. The remaining chapters focus on connections between specific texts. Chapter Three defines the achievement of Ellen Glasgow’s The Woman Within (1954) and Eudora Welty’s One Writer’s Beginnings (1984), two autobiographies which center on the woman writer’s inner life and which demonstrate the legitimacy of making this life the object of public attention.
Chapter Four explores the ethical and political positions of Lillian Hellman's
Scoundrel Time (1976) and Katherine Anne Porter's The Never-Ending Wrong (1977), two
remarkably similar memoirs that define the individual in conflict with reactionary
forces in modern American history. Chapter Five considers the nexus of gender,
region, nation, and race in Zora Neale Hurston's problematic autobiography, Dust
Tracks on a Road (1942; expanded with previously unpublished chapters in 1984). This
chapter explores the tensions within a text that combines both liberal and
conservative sentiments before showing how this synthesis becomes even more
pronounced in Hurston's subsequent essays. By stressing the significance of a
liberal tradition in Southern women's self-writing, this dissertation supplements
and challenges prevalent attitudes about the Southern Renaissance and the
predominant concerns of its women writers.

Prison of Culture

Carter Heyward is one of the most influential and controversial theologians of our
time. Under headings Speaking Truth to Power, Remembering Who We Are, and
Celebrating Our Friends, she reflects on how movements for gender and sexual justice
reverberate globally. In this volume of occasional pieces, the lesbian feminist
theologian bears witness to the sacred struggles to topple oppressive power. These
pieces illustrate feminist theology's bold and transformative engagement of its
cultural, political, social, and theological contexts.

At the Altar of Lynching

Drawing on two decades of teaching a college-level course on southern history as
viewed through autobiography and memoir, John C. Inscoe has crafted a series of
essays exploring the southern experience as reflected in the life stories of those
who lived it. Constantly attuned to the pedagogical value of these narratives,
Inscoe argues that they offer exceptional means of teaching young people because the
authors focus so fully on their confrontations—as children, adolescents, and young
adults—with aspects of southern life that they found to be troublesome, perplexing,
or challenging. Maya Angelou, Rick Bragg, Jimmy Carter, Bessie and Sadie Delany,
Willie Morris, Pauli Murray, Lillian Smith, and Thomas Wolfe are among the more
prominent of the many writers, both famous and obscure, that Inscoe draws on to
construct a composite portrait of the South at its most complex and diverse. The
power of place; struggles with racial, ethnic, and class identities; the strength
and strains of family; educational opportunities both embraced and thwarted—all of
these are themes that infuse the works in this most intimate and humanistic of
historical genres. Full of powerful and poignant stories, anecdotes, and
testimonials, Writing the South through the Self explores the emotional and
psychological dimensions of what it has meant to be southern and offers us new ways
of understanding the forces that have shaped southern identity in such multifaceted
ways.

Killers of the Dream

The Southern journalist was more likely to be a Romantic and an intellectual. The
region's journalism was personal, colorful, and steeped in the classics. This title
suggests that the South's journalism struck a literary pose closer to the older
English press than to the democratic penny press or bourgeois magazines of the urban
North.

Writing Home, With Love

Denying its formative dialogues with minorities, the white race, Stephen P. Knadler
contends, has been a fugitive race. While the "white question," like the "Negro
question," and the "woman question" a century earlier, has garnered considerable
critical attention among scholars looking to find new anti-race strategies, these
investigations need to highlight not just the exclusion of people of color, but also examine minority writers' resistance to and disruption of this privileged racial category. "Highly original, wonderfully detailed, and thought provoking," says Professor Candace Waid of Knadler's intellectually challenging book. Although excluded, people of color looked back in anger, laughter, and wisdom to challenge the unexamined lie of a self-evident whiteness. Looking at fictional and nonfictional texts written between 1850 and 1984, "The Fugitive Race" traces a long cultural and literary history of the ways African Americans, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, Chicanos, gays, and lesbians have challenged the shape and meaning of so-called white identities. From the antebellum period to the 1980s, the belief in a white racial superiority, or simply a white difference, has denied that people of color might and do have an influence on the supposedly pure or protected character of whiteness. In contrast, this book attempts to define a new way of analyzing minority literature that questions this segregated color line. In addition to creating a new racial awareness, many writers of color tried to interfere in the historical formulation of whiteness. They created unsettling moments when white readers had to see themselves for the first time from the outside-in, or from the critical perspective of non-white writers. These writers--including William Wells Brown, Pauline Hopkins, Abraham Cahan, Young-hill Kang, Zora Neale Hurston, and Arturo Islas--did not simply resist assimilation. They sought to dismantle the white identities that lay as the foundation of the master's house. Stephen P. Knadler, an assistant professor of English at Spelman College, has been published in "American Literature," "American Literary History," "American Quarterly," "Minnesota Review," and "Modern Fiction Studies."

A Lillian Smith Reader

This sweeping work of cultural history explores a time of startling turbulence and change in the South, years that have often been dismissed as placid and dull. In the wake of World War II, southerners anticipated a peaceful and prosperous future, but as Pete Daniel demonstrates, the road into the 1950s took some unexpected turns. Daniel chronicles the myriad forces that turned the world southerners had known upside down in the postwar period. In chapters that explore such subjects as the civil rights movement, segregation, and school integration; the breakdown of traditional agriculture and the ensuing rural-urban migration; gay and lesbian life; and the emergence of rock 'n' roll music and stock car racing, as well as the triumph of working-class culture, he reveals that the 1950s South was a place with the potential for revolutionary change. In the end, however, the chance for significant transformation was squandered, Daniel argues. One can only imagine how different southern history might have been if politicians, the press, the clergy, and local leaders had supported democratic reforms that bestowed full citizenship on African Americans--and how little would have been accomplished if a handful of blacks and whites had not taken risks to bring about the changes that did come.

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Strange Fruit

The Rwandan genocide, the Holocaust, the lynching of African Americans, the colonial slave trade: these are horrific episodes of mass violence spawned from racism and hatred. We like to think that we could never see such evils again—that we would stand up and fight. But something deep in the human psyche—deeper than prejudice itself—leads people to persecute the other: dehumanization, or the human propensity to think of others as less than human. An award-winning author and philosopher, Smith takes an unflinching look at the mechanisms of the mind that encourage us to see someone as less than human. There is something peculiar and horrifying in human psychology that makes us vulnerable to thinking of whole groups of people as subhuman creatures. When governments or other groups stand to gain by exploiting this innate propensity, and know just how to manipulate words and images to trigger it, there is no limit to the violence and hatred that can result. Drawing on numerous historical and contemporary cases and recent psychological research, On Inhumanity is the first accessible guide to the phenomenon of dehumanization. Smith walks readers through the psychology of dehumanization, revealing its underlying role in both notorious and lesser-known episodes of violence from history and current events. In particular, he considers the uncomfortable kinship between racism and dehumanization, where beliefs involving race are so often precursors to dehumanization and the horrors that flow from it. On Inhumanity is bracing and vital reading in a world lurching towards authoritarian political regimes, resurgent white nationalism, refugee crises that breed nativist hostility, and fast-spreading racist rhetoric. The book will open your eyes to the pervasive dangers of dehumanization and the prejudices that can too easily take root within us, and resist them before they spread into the wider world.

Woman Born of the South

Bringing together short stories, lectures, essays, op-ed pieces, interviews, and excerpts from her longer fiction and nonfiction, A Lillian Smith Reader offers the first comprehensive collection of her work.

White Writers, Race Matters

Published in association with Piedmont College and the Estate of Lillian Smith.

On their own premises: Southern Women Writers and the Homeplace

Second editor for v. 2: Kathleen Ann Clark.
Killers of the Dreams

White southerners recognized that the perpetuation of segregation required whites of all ages to uphold a strict social order -- especially the young members of the next generation. White children rested at the core of the system of segregation between 1890 and 1939 because their participation was crucial to ensuring the future of white supremacy. Their socialization in the segregated South offers an examination of white supremacy from the inside, showcasing the culture's efforts to preserve itself by teaching its beliefs to the next generation. In Raising Racists: The Socialization of White Children in the Jim Crow South, author Kristina DuRocher reveals how white adults in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continually reinforced race and gender roles to maintain white supremacy. DuRocher examines the practices, mores, and traditions that trained white children to fear, dehumanize, and disdain their black neighbors. Raising Racists combines an analysis of the remembered experiences of a racist society, how that society influenced children, and, most important, how racial violence and brutality shaped growing up in the early-twentieth-century South.

Writing the South through the Self

Centrat en les obres de Kate Chopin, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Zora Neale Hurston, Lillian Smith, Eudora Welty, Alice Walker, Legix Smith, Jill McCorkle i Bobbie Ann Mason, aquest llibre analitza el retrat ambivalent de l'espai domèstic descrit per les escriptores del sud. Les qüestions més profundes de gènere, raça i classe en una societat tradicional com la del sud americà es manifesten precisament dins l'esfera domèstica, on l'espai és sovint un mitjà crucial de dominació. Les escriptores contemporànies del sud sovint han utilitzat la transformació de la llar i els seus significats com una nova font per a la ficció. Han estat explorant formes noves i antigues d'imaginar el que podria ser una llar i la seva narrativa diu molt de la manera en la qual el treball, els llocs i la família contribueixen a la creació d'un altre en el sud contemporani.

The Oxford Book of the American South

Killer of the Dream

Lost Revolutions

This impassioned plea for tolerance, desegregation, and civil rights advocacy was written by one of the South's leading activists and writers. Originally it was published in 1955, a year after the Supreme Court's landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision outlawing segregation. Reprinted on the fiftieth anniversary of this case, Now Is the Time addresses issues that continue to resonate in today's world. Lillian Smith's writing is at the same time lyrical and deeply infused with polemics. She was no stranger to controversy, for both her nonfiction and her novels were passionately charged. She freely admitted that she used literature as a means for challenging southern cultural norms, particularly in regard to race. She is the author of Killers of the Dream and of two novels, One Hour and the best-selling Strange Fruit, that are thinly veiled autobiography. In Now Is the Time Smith combines the genres of personal essay, confession, propaganda, and documentary to create a moving defense of the inclusive democratic vision she sees as America's true legacy. While broad and visionary in its themes, her book is practical in its approach and its solutions. With wit, intensity, and moral certitude, she answers twenty-five basic questions about race relations, including "Is not education better than legislation?" and "If God wanted the races to mix, why didn't He make us all the same color?" Her commingling of disparate genres makes Now Is the Time more than simply a tract but a document of a nation under the force of tumultuous change. This
new edition, with an afterword by Will Brantley, brings back into print a classic that states America's moral commitment to civil rights. Lillian Smith (1897–1966) lived in north Georgia and is the author of numerous essays and seven books including Strange Fruit and Killers of the Dream. Will Brantley, a professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, is the author of Feminine Sense in Southern Memoir and the editor of Conversations with Pauline Kael, both published by the University Press of Mississippi.

**Killers of the Dream [by] Lillian Smith**

From the seventeenth century Cavaliers and Uncle Tom's Cabin to Civil Rights museums and today's conflicts over the Confederate flag, here is a brilliant portrait of southern identity, served in an engaging blend of history, literature, and popular culture. In this insightful book, written with dry wit and sharp insight, James C. Cobb explains how the South first came to be seen--and then came to see itself--as a region apart from the rest of America. As Cobb demonstrates, the legend of the aristocratic Cavalier origins of southern planter society was nurtured by both northern and southern writers, only to be challenged by abolitionist critics, black and white. After the Civil War, defeated and embittered southern whites incorporated the Cavalier myth into the cult of the "Lost Cause," which supplied the emotional energy for their determined crusade to rejoin the Union on their own terms. After World War I, white writers like Ellen Glasgow, William Faulkner and other key figures of "Southern Renaissance" as well as their African American counterparts in the "Harlem Renaissance"--Cobb is the first to show the strong links between the two movements--challenged the New South creed by asking how the grandiose vision of the South's past could be reconciled with the dismal reality of its present. The Southern self-image underwent another sea change in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, when the end of white supremacy shook the old definition of the "Southern way of life"--but at the same time, African Americans began to examine their southern roots more openly and embrace their regional, as well as racial, identity. As the millennium turned, the South confronted a new identity crisis brought on by global homogenization: if Southern culture is everywhere, has the New South become the No South? Here then is a major work by one of America's finest Southern historians, a magisterial synthesis that combines rich scholarship with provocative new insights into what the South means to southerners and to America as well.

**The Southern Press**

**Georgia Women**

This book brings to life the meaning of the stories of the seven goddesses of Greek mythology. Each goddess represents a “sacred calling,” a way of life whose goal is to live for the sake of something greater than oneself. Athena is the goddess of wisdom and justice; Artemis is the woods woman who protects the natural world; Demeter is the goddess of the fertility of the earth and the birth and nurturing of children; Hera is the wife of Zeus, the king, who dedicates her life to creating a high quality of public life through nurturing various community activities; Aphrodite is the goddess of creativity; Persephone is the victim who was raped by Hades and abducted to the underworld where she punishes those who victimized others while alive; and Hestia is the contemplative, she who reflects upon human affairs and “sees” how all the parts fit a larger whole. The book will allow readers to recognize themselves and their own sacred passions in these stories. Once recognized, women can educate themselves and each other. They can use the wisdom represented in Greek mythology to create meaningful and complete lives in the context of a culture that is still dominated by men and their passions. In this way, women will be liberated to do everything they can to leave a better world behind for their children, grandchildren and future generations.
Now is the Time

Motherhood in Black and White

Offers a new interpretation of the lynching of Sam Hose through the lens of the religious culture in the evangelical American South.

The Fugitive Race

Annotation Contents

Introduction. The Past as Prologue: Perspectives on Southern Women by Joe P. Dunn
Spheres of Economic Activity among Southern Women in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to the Future by Jacqueline Jones
Stealth in the Political Arsenal of Southern Women: A Retrospective for the Millennium by Sarah Wilkerson-Freeman
Working in the Shadows: Southern Women and Civil Rights by Barbara A. Woods
"Separate but Equal" Case Law and the Higher Education of Women in the Twenty-first Century South by Amy Thompson McCandless
The Changing Character of Farm Life: Rural Southern Women by Melissa Walker
Other Southern Women and the Voices of the Fathers: On Twentieth-Century Writing by Women in the U.S. South by Anne Goodwyn Jones
Southern Women and Religion by Nancy Hardesty
Conclusion by Carol Bleser

BAD MOTHERS

Reading Southern Poverty Between the Wars, 1918-1939

What explains the enduring popularity of white-authored protest fiction about racism in America? How have such books spoken to the racial crises of their time, and why do they remain important in our own era? White Writers, Race Matters explores these questions and the controversies they raise by tracking this tradition in American literary history. Dating back to Uncle Tom's Cabin, the genre includes widely-read and taught works such as Huckleberry Finn and To Kill a Mockingbird along with period best-sellers now sometimes forgotten. This history also takes us to Hollywood, which regularly adapted them into blockbusters that spread their cultural influence further as well as incited debates over their politics. These novels strive to move readers emotionally toward ethical transformation and practical action. Their literary forms, styles and plots derive from the cultural work they intend to do in educating the minds and hearts of those who, in James Baldwin's words, "think they are white" - indeed, in making the social construction of that whiteness readable and thus more susceptible to reform. Each chapter provides a case study combining biography, historical analysis, close reading, and literary theory to map the significance of this genre and its ongoing relevance. This tradition remains vital because every generation must relearn the lessons of antiracism and formulate effective cultural narratives for transmitting intellectual and affective tools useful in fighting injustice.

On Inhumanity

For the last two years, acclaimed theologian Amy Laura Hall has written a lively, wide-ranging, opinionated column for her local newspaper. In her column, Hall has sought—without flatly rejecting globalism—to think and act locally. She has also responded to what she sees as a disturbing Christian turn toward asceticism and away from abundance. Drawing from her scholarship, but also from conversations at coffee shops and around the dinner table, Hall's "missives of love" engage topics such as school dress codes, ubiquitous surveillance cameras, LGBTQ dignity, and bullies in the workplace. They draw richly and variously on pop songs, dead saints, young adult literature, and many stories about actual neighbors and family members. Often offbeat and always riveting, they ask how the world around us works and can work much better for the sake of daily truth and flourishing.
Killers of the Dream. Revised and Enlarged

Franklin D. Roosevelt once described the South as "the nation's number one economic problem." These twelve original, interdisciplinary essays on southern indigence between the World Wars share a conviction that poverty is not just a dilemma of the marketplace but also a cultural and political construction. Although previous studies have examined the web of coercive social relations in which sharecroppers, wage laborers, and other poor southerners were held in place, this volume opens up a new perspective. These essays show that professed forces of change and modernization in the South--writers, photographers, activists, social scientists, and policymakers--often subtly upheld the structures by which southern labor was being exploited. Planters, politicians, and others who enforced the southern economic and social status quo not only relied on bigotry but also manipulated deeply held American beliefs about sturdy yeoman nobility and the sanctity of farm and family. Conversely, any threats to the system were tarred with the imagery of big cities, northerners, and organized labor. The essays expose vestiges of these beliefs in sources as varied as photographs from the Farm Security Administration, statistics for incarceration and child labor, and the writings of Grace Lumpkin, Ellen Glasgow, and Erskine Caldwell. This volume shows that those who work to eradicate poverty--and even victims of poverty themselves--can hesitate to cross the line of race, gender, memory, or tradition in pursuit of their goal.

Killers of the Dream

The apron-clad, white, stay-at-home mother. Black bus boycotters in Montgomery, Alabama. Ruth Feldstein explains that these two enduring, yet very different, images of the 1950s did not run parallel merely by ironic coincidence, but were in fact intimately connected. What she calls "gender conservatism" and "racial liberalism" intersected in central, yet overlooked, ways in mid-twentieth-century American liberalism. Motherhood in Black and White analyzes the widespread assumption within liberalism that social problems—ranging from unemployment to racial prejudice—could be traced to bad mothering. This relationship between liberalism and motherhood took shape in the 1930s, expanded in the 1940s and 1950s, and culminated in the 1960s. Even as civil rights moved into the mainstream of an increasingly visible liberal agenda, images of domineering black "matriarchs" and smothering white "moms" proliferated. Feldstein draws on a wide array of cultural and political events that demonstrate how and why mother-blaming furthered a progressive anti-racist agenda. From the New Deal into the Great Society, bad mothers, black or white, were seen as undermining American citizenship and as preventing improved race relations, while good mothers, responsible for raising physically and psychologically fit future citizens, were held up as a precondition to a strong democracy. By showing how ideas about gender roles and race relations intersected in films, welfare policies, and civil rights activism, as well as in the assumptions of classic works of social science, Motherhood in Black and White speaks to questions within women's history, African American history, political history, and cultural history. Ruth Feldstein analyzes representations of black women and white women, as well as the political implications of these representations. She brings together race and gender, culture and policy, vividly illuminating each.

Keep Your Courage

Selected letters reveal the liberal Southern writer's views on race relations, social change, child welfare, and writing

A Lillian Smith Reader
Away Down South

Prelude and aftermath of a lynching in Georgia, depicting the South's unsolved racial problem.

Using the Greek Goddesses to Create a Well-Lived Life for Women

The companion volume to the 50th-anniversary edition of Black Like Me, this book features John Howard Griffin's later writings on racism and spirituality. Conveying a progressive evolution in thinking, it further explores Griffin's ethical stand in the human rights struggle and nonviolent pursuit of equality—a view he shared with greats such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Thomas Merton. Enlightening and forthright, this record also focuses on Griffin's spiritual grounding in the Catholic monastic tradition, discussing the illuminating meditations on suffering and the author's own reflections on communication, justice, and dying.