

The New Criterion

Notes & Comments

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Harvard's latest PC travesty

We admit, however, to experiencing a brief flash of empathy with Headmaster Tracy when a 1,095-page tome entitled *A New Literary History of America* plopped heavily on our desk. Edited by Greil Marcus (“notable for producing scholarly and literary essays that place rock music in a much broader framework of culture and politics than is customary”) and Werner Sollors (a Professor of English and African American Studies at Harvard), this curious waste of wood pulp is published by Harvard University Press.

It is difficult to communicate the global awfulness of the book, the pretension mixed with smarmy demotic knowingness, the preposterous glorification of pop culture, the constant deflation of serious cultural achievement by means of sociological analysis. Perhaps the first thing that should be understood is that, despite its title, *A New Literary History of America* is only incidentally concerned with literature ...

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