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Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now

By Delbanco, Andrew

Farrar Straus & Giroux (T), 1997. Book Condition: New. Brand New, Unread Copy in Perfect Condition. A+ Customer Service! Summary: In his deeply felt new book, Andrew Delbanco -- author of the much praised *Death of Satan* (FSG, 1996) -- shows why these classic American writers remain indispensable in our age of uncertainty over what constitutes our common heritage. *Required Reading* is a work of gratitude and urgency, for, as Delbanco says, "I have no doubt that the world is better for these books having been written, and I believe it is the responsibility of the critic to incite others to read them". In superb chapters touching on Thoreau, Melville, Wharton, Richard Wright, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Abraham Lincoln, and others, he shows how each writer enlarged the expressive range of the American language, as well as our imagined sense of American possibilities. From Theodore Dreiser and Kate Chopin to Henry Adams and Zora Neale Hurston, these artists celebrate the ideal of the free individual while conveying with searing honesty the struggle to defend this ideal against hostile conditions and ideas. A belief that individuals, whether born as servants or masters, can break out of the confines of history and achieve lives...



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