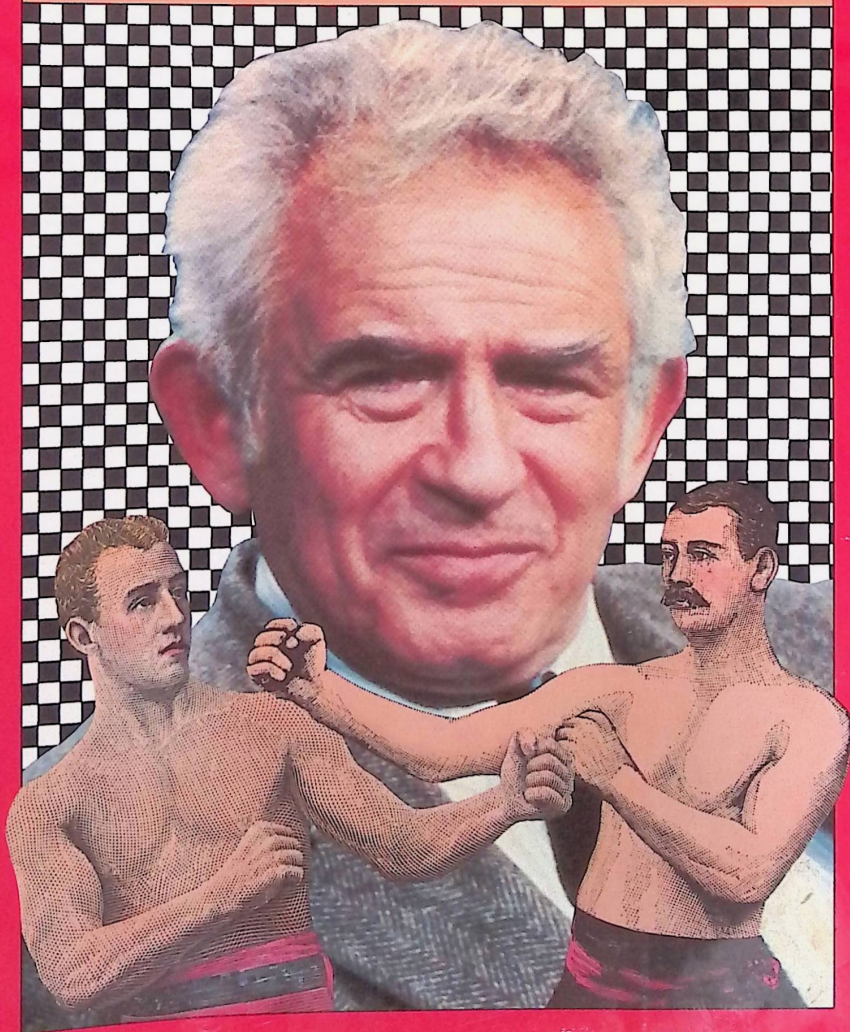


Modern Critical Views

NORMAN MAILER

Edited and with an introduction by
HAROLD BLOOM



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CHELSEA HOUSE

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NORMAN MAILER

Mailer, now celebrated, doubtless will vanish into neglect, and yet always will return, as a historian of the moral consciousness of his era, and as the representative writer of his generation.

—HAROLD BLOOM

As long as Mailer sees his spirit as a triumvirate of phallus, ego and talent he cannot discern the fantasy nature of his conquests . . .

—GERMAINE GREER

Mailer is a Bolingbroke, a born usurper. He will raise an army anywhere, live off the country as best he can, helped by a devoted underground, even assisted at brief moments by rival claimants like myself.

—GORE VIDAL

Modern Critical Views is an impressive gathering of thought-provoking contemporary criticism on those poets, novelists and playwrights of the English language who are most widely appreciated and studied by readers everywhere. This series of over 200 volumes contains the best essays from every major school of criticism and extends from the English medievalists to such modern and contemporary authors as Flannery O'Connor and Tom Stoppard. The *World Masters* series, as part of *Modern Critical Views*, is dedicated to critical commentaries on the ageless figures of world literature, including Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Freud, Tolstoi and Proust, among others.

Each volume in the series opens with an introductory essay by Harold Bloom which offers his own insights into the author and prefaces the individual commentaries that follow. Also included are bibliographies for each author, brief notes on the contributors and useful chronologies of the authors' lives. The literary periods covered are the Medieval and Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Romantic, the Victorian and American Renaissance, Modern American, Modern and Contemporary British, and Contemporary American.

This series is a critical presentation of those men and women who, from medieval times to the present, have shaped the Western tradition. *Modern Critical Views* depicts both the evolution of literary styles and ideas in Western culture and the present standing of the authors represented in all of today's major critical schools.

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Norman Mailer is one of more than 200 volumes in the series entitled *Modern Critical Views*, edited by Harold Bloom and published by Chelsea House. These volumes represent a comprehensive collection of the best contemporary criticism on the most widely read poets, playwrights and novelists of the Western world.

At the age of twenty-five, Norman Mailer embarked on his literary career with *The Naked and the Dead*, a novel about World War II, which quickly won widespread critical and popular acclaim. He went on to write essays, novels and reportage which sought to explore the forces that shape contemporary America, from Hollywood to the Vietnam war. His concerns have included the philosophy of "hipdom" to the realities and metaphors of crime, disease, violence, sex and fascism in the American experience. His fiction is often a battleground where mechanistic conformity and mystical animalistic forces oppose one another. Mailer's turbulent and notorious lifestyle marked him as the *enfant terrible* of American literature in his early years, and his public persona continues to be as controversial as his art. He has been called a flaccid moralist, a glorifier of criminality and a propagandist for the cult of machismo and apocalyptic sexuality. As Harold Bloom comments in this volume, "When I think of him, *Advertisements for Myself* comes into my memory more readily than any other work, perhaps because truly he is his own supreme fiction."

As a complete critical portrait this volume contains essays by such highly respected writers and scholars as Germaine Greer, Tony Tanner and Joyce Carol Oates. Reprinted in the order of their publication, they provide an absorbing chronicle of modern critical responses to the works of Norman Mailer.

CHELSEA HOUSE PUBLISHERS
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New York, NY 10014



Harold Bloom, General Editor, is Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale University. Widely recognized as one of America's leading literary critics, he is the author of sixteen books, editor of more than thirty anthologies, and general editor of *The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism*.

The Anxiety of Influence (1973) sets forth his provocative theory of the literary relationships between the great writers and their predecessors, and has increased his notoriety in literary and academic circles. His other works include *Shelley's Mythmaking* (1959), *The Visionary Company* (1961), *Blake's Apocalypse* (1963), *Yeats* (1970), *A Map of Misreading* (1975), *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975), *Poetry and Repression* (1976), *The Flight to Lucifer* (1979), and *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (1982).

Professor Bloom earned his Ph.D. in Literature from Yale University in 1955 and has been on the Yale faculty ever since. He holds honorary degrees from Boston College and Yeshiva University, and has received numerous awards for his work in literary theory and criticism, most recently the 1981 Zabel Award at the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the 1985 MacArthur Foundation Award. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is currently writing *Freud: Transference and Authority*, and serving as general editor of four major Chelsea House series: *The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism* (37 volumes), *The Art of the Critic* (11 volumes), *Modern Critical Interpretations* (150 volumes), and *The Critical Cosmos* (60 volumes).

THE COVER: Norman Mailer, descendant of Hemingway, is shown in the aura of an American boxing match, his own trope for his agon with Hemingway (and all others). —H.B.

Cover by Robin Peterson