

## Delta Wedding Eudora Welty

This novel of a Mississippi family in the 1920s “presents the essence of the Deep South and does it with infinite finesse” (The Christian Science Monitor). From one of the most treasured American writers, winner of a National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize, comes Delta Wedding, a vivid and charming portrait of Southern life. Set in 1923, the story is centered on the Fairchilds, a big and clamorous family, who live on a plantation in the Mississippi delta. They are in the midst of planning their daughter’s wedding when a nine-year-old relative, Laura McRaven, whose mother has just died, comes to visit. Drama leads to drama, revelation to revelation, in a novel that is “nothing short of wonderful” (The New Yorker). The result is a sometimes-riotous view of a Southern family, and the parentless child who learns to become one of them.

The Late Novels of Eudora Welty offers readings of two of the works considered to be Welty's most exciting both in innovative technique and postmodern existential statement. Fourteen new essays by internationally distinguished critics of Southern literature provide focused appraisals of Welty's last two novels: *Losing Battles* (1970), a provocative experiment in narration, and Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972), a profound comment on our time.

A study linking the novels of Eudora Welty to a tradition of Southern romance writers. Beginning with the Civil War diarists, the author isolates and defines the components of the Southern romance, tracing Welty's adaptation of each component within the novels themselves and revealing a twofold importance: it connects the literature of the Civil War diarists to the work of Eudora Welty in a meaningful way while illuminating her work in the light of a Southern Romance tradition.

Marking the fiftieth anniversary of Eudora Welty's first important publication, this special collection of critical essays celebrates her achievement as an incomparable literary artist. Since 1936, when "Death of a Traveling Salesman" was published, the excellence of her stories, novels, essays and collections has been giving unceasing acclaim, and she has become one of the most honored and most esteemed of American writers. The essays in this collection convey the scholarly pleasure one finds in studying the works of Eudora Welty. Although they employ varying critical methodologies, pleasure is at the source of the examinations published in this book. In these essays, formal, mythic, and thematic criticism from a variety of scholars offers fresh access to *A Curtain of Green*, *The Wide Net*, *The Golden Apples*, and *Delta Wedding*. One bibliographical study included shows Welty to be keenly attuned to the nuances of meaning during the writing and revising of *The Optimist's Daughter*, deepening, clarifying, making more precise a novel of inestimable personal feeling. In another essay, Welty's close attention to the world is examined in relation to an early story "At the Landing," to the remarkable photography of *One Time, One Place*, and to her recent memoir, *One Writer's Beginnings*. Also included is a study of Eudora Welty in relation to Elizabeth Bowen, the Anglo-Irish writer. A new interview with Miss Welty, which unifies this collection, and a checklist of Welty materials that updates Welty scholarship enhance this volume and bring further scholarly acknowledgement to this celebrated author's significant artistic stature and preeminent literary worth.

One of the most influential writers of the twentieth century, Eudora Welty’s novels and stories blend the storytelling tradition of the South with a modernist sensibility attuned to the mysteries and ambiguities of experience. In this Library of America volume and its companion, Welty explores the complex abundance of southern, and particularly Southern women’s, lives with an artistry that Salman Rushdie has called “impossible to overpraise.” In a career spanning five decades, she chronicled her own Mississippi

with a depth and intensity matched only by William Faulkner. Complete Novels gathers all of Welty's longer fiction in one volume for the first time. In *The Robber Bridegroom* (1942), based on a Grimm fairy tale, legendary figures from Mississippi's past, such as the keel-boat captain Mike Fink and the savage outlaws the Harp Brothers, mingle with Welty's own imaginings in a free-ranging and boisterous fantasy set along the Natchez Trace. The richly textured *Delta Wedding* (1946), set against a backdrop of rural Mississippi in the 1920s, vividly portrays the intricacies of family relationships in its account of the sprawling Fairchild clan—with their “family trait of quick, upturning smiles, instant comprehension of the smallest eddy of life in the current of the day, which would surely be entered in a kind of reckless pleasure”—and their Delta plantation Shellmound. Edna Earle Ponder's unrestrained and delightfully absurd monologue, superb in its capturing of the rhythms of country speech, shows Welty's humor at its idiomatic best in *The Ponder Heart* (1954), a flight of invention culminating in a murder trial that becomes an occasion for exuberant comedy. The monumental *Losing Battles* (1970), composed over fifteen years, brings Welty's imaginative gifts to the largest canvass of her career, rendering a Depression-era family reunion with mythic scope and ebullient comic vigor. The volume concludes with *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972), a taut and moving story of a woman rediscovering the world of her childhood as she comes to terms with her father's death. Often considered her masterpiece, it won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1972. LIBRARY OF AMERICA is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation's literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, America's best and most significant writing. The Library of America series includes more than 300 volumes to date, authoritative editions that average 1,000 pages in length, feature cloth covers, sewn bindings, and ribbon markers, and are printed on premium acid-free paper that will last for centuries.

Author's abstract: This thesis discusses the effects of war on the southern plantation lifestyle depicted in Eudora Welty's *Delta Wedding*. This thesis focuses on the female characters who adapt to the absence of the husbands during wartime. Wars are the catalyst for societal change in the novel, and the women must adapt to the new social changes that are encroaching upon the plantation. The chapters explore each individual reaction of female characters in the novel. The female characters in *Delta Wedding* represent varying wars of reacting to shifting social norms brought about by war. Kreyling instead reveals the dynamic growth in the depth and complexity of Welty's vision and literary technique over the course of her career."--BOOK JACKET.

During an interview, Eudora Welty described her inability to write directly about World War II: "I couldn't write about it, not at the time, it was too personal. I could write or translate things into domestic or other dimensions in my writing, with the same things in mind" (qtd. in Ruas 66). The purpose of this paper is to examine Welty's 1946 novel *Delta Wedding* as a translation of, or response to, the war. Welty goes out of her way to avoid any association with the war; she conspicuously places the novel in the year 1923 because it was not a "war year." She retreats from the epic violence of war into the seemingly peaceful, pastoral delta country of Mississippi. Yet, by its avoidance of war, *Delta Wedding* paradoxically depicts the war by providing a negative image of the war. With the mobilization of men to the front lines during the masculine event of war, the feminized homefront left behind became another negative image of war. During

World War II, traditional patriarchies were transformed into practical matriarchies. Women entered the workforce to help fill the labor shortage left by men, often taking jobs traditionally thought of as "men's only." This proved to be a turning point for women in American history. In *Delta Wedding*, Welty's portrayal of a matriarchal family on a patriarchal plantation mirrors the 1940s society. She depicts women in various stages of life, which reflect the stages in Susan Lichtman's cycle of the female hero. They include the virgin, mother and crone stages. Through such characters, Welty celebrates the female journey toward self-actualization, helping the reader to value such a journey as heroic. In doing so, she gives an alternate view of the hero: not typical war hero of the time, but instead the hero of the everyday, not limited by gender.

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Eudora Welty's characterization of George Fairchild (*Delta Wedding*) queers the heroic masculine ideal, St George, whose legendary exploits have been popularized in narrative literature, Catholic iconography, and children's fairy tale. Lauded by the Fairchild women for his "difference" George's sexuality offers him an identity apart from the suffocating Fairchild family myth. George Fairchild's queer sexuality and homoeroticism augments our critical understanding of *Delta Wedding*, the character, as well as other characters. The author's subtly politicized construction of the novel's ostensible hero subverts literary tradition, the gender binary, and patriarchal myth.

Set in 1923, *Delta Wedding* is an exquisitely woven story of southern family life, centered around the Fairchild family's preparations for a wedding at their Mississippi plantation. In *The Ponder Heart*, a comic masterpiece, Miss Edna Earle Ponder, one of the few living members of a once prominent family, tells a traveling salesman the history of her family and fellow townsfolk. This edition brings together two fine works from one of the most beloved writers of the American south.

Presenting the first full-length collection of essays on Eudora Welty's novel, *Delta Wedding* (1946), this volume is the fourth book in Rodopi Press's Dialogue Series. Within these pages, emerging and experienced literary critics engage in an exciting dialogue about Welty's noted novel, presenting a wide range of scholarship that focuses on feminist concerns, pays tribute to the rhetoric of exclusion and empowerment, examines the role of outsider and boundaries, explores meaning-making, and highlights the novel's humor and musicality. This volume will no doubt be of interest to Welty aficionados as well as southern studies and feminist scholars and to those who are interested in the craft of writing fiction.

Faced with Eudora Welty's preference for the oblique in literary performances, some have assumed that Welty was not concerned with issues of race, or even that she was perhaps ambivalent toward racism. This collection counters those assumptions as it examines Welty's handling of race, the color line, and Jim Crow segregation and sheds new light on her views about the patterns, insensitivities, blindness, and atrocities of whiteness. Contributors to this volume show that Welty addressed whiteness and race in her earliest stories, her photography, and her first novel, *Delta Wedding*. In subsequent work, including *The Golden Apples*, *The Optimist's Daughter*, and her memoir, *One Writer's Beginnings*, she made the color line and white privilege visible, revealing the gaping distances between lives lived in shared space but separated by social hierarchy and segregation. Even when black characters hover in the margins of her fiction, they point readers toward complex lives, and the black body is itself full of meaning in her work. Several essays suggest that Welty represented race, like gender and power, as a performance scripted by whiteness. Her black characters in particular recognize whiteface and blackface as performances, especially comical when white characters are unaware of their role play. *Eudora Welty, Whiteness, and Race* also makes clear that Welty recognized white material advantage and black economic deprivation as part of a cycle of race

and poverty in America and that she connected this history to lives on either side of the color line, to relationships across it, and to an uneasy hierarchy of white classes within the presumed monolith of whiteness. Contributors: Mae Miller Claxton, Susan V. Donaldson, Julia Eichelberger, Sarah Ford, Jean C. Griffith, Rebecca Mark, Suzanne Marrs, Donnie McMahan, David McWhirter, Harriet Pollack, Keri Watson, Patricia Yaeger.

*Eudora Welty and Surrealism* surveys Welty's fiction during the most productive period of her long writing life. The study shows how the 1930s witnessed surrealism's arrival in the United States largely through the products of its visual artists. Welty, a frequent traveler to New York City where the surrealists exhibited and a keen reader of magazines and newspapers that disseminated their work, absorbed and unconsciously appropriated surrealism's perspective in her writing. In fact, Welty's first solo exhibition of her photographs in 1936 took place next door to New York's premier venue for surrealist art. In a series of readings that collectively examine *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories*, *The Wide Net and Other Stories*, *Delta Wedding*, *The Golden Apples*, and *The Bride of the Innisfallen and Other Stories*, the book reveals how surrealism profoundly shaped Welty's striking figurative literature. Yet the influence of the surrealist movement extends beyond questions of style. The study's interpretations also foreground how her writing refracted surrealism as a historical phenomena. Scattered throughout her stories are allusions to personalities allied with the movement in the United States, including figures such as Salvador Dalí, Elsa Schiaparelli, Caresse Crosby, Wallace Simpson, Cecil Beaton, Helena Rubinstein, Elizabeth Arden, Joseph Cornell, and Charles Henri Ford. Individuals such as these and others whom surrealism seduced often lead unorthodox and controversial lives that made them natural targets for moral opprobrium. Eschewing such parochialism, Welty borrowed the idiom of surrealism to develop modernized depictions of the South, a literary strategy that revealed not only cultural farsightedness but great artistic daring.

Keywords: pastoral, World War II literature, heroism.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Eudora Welty's writing and photography were the subject of more than one thousand reviews, of which over two hundred are collected here. From the first, reviewers loved Welty's language and disparaged her lack of plot. Their eager anticipation for the next book is rarely diminished by the shock of reading entirely different styles of writing. Her work was admired even as it challenged its readers. The reviews selected for reprinting here represent the diversity of Welty's reception and assessment. Reviews from small towns, urban centers, noted fiction writers, professional reviewers, academics, and everyday readers are included. The comments of reviewing rivals such as the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, *Nation* and *New Yorker*, when read side by side, reveal the nuances both of the reviewers and of the work of this important Southern writer.

Meatloaf, fried chicken, Jell-O, cake—because foods are so very common, we rarely think about them much in depth. The authors of *Cooking Lessons* however, believe that food is deserving of our critical scrutiny and that such analysis yields many important lessons about American society and its values. This book explores the relationship between food and gender. Contributors draw from diverse sources, both contemporary and historical, and look at women from various cultural backgrounds, including Hispanic, traditional southern White, and African American. Each chapter focuses on a certain food, teasing out its cultural meanings and showing its effect on women's identity and lives.

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