

Contents

Preface ix

Introduction: “There Is Much to Be Gained by Our Reading” i

1. America Reads: Literacy and Cold War Nationalism 10

2. Reading for Character, Community, and Country: J. D. Salinger’s
The Catcher in the Rye 32

3. Reading to Outmaneuver: Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and African
American Literacy in Cold War America 53

4. Reading against the Machine: Oedipa Maas and the Quest for
Democracy in Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49* 80

5. Metafiction and Radical Democracy: Getting at the Heart of John
Barth’s *Lost in the Funhouse* 106

6. Confronting Difference, Confronting Difficulty: Culture Wars,
Canon Wars, and Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* 131

Conclusion: “Reading Makes a Country Great” 154

Notes 161

Index 197