Warren was one of the great chief justices, White maintains, "because of the intangible but undeniable impact of his presence on the Court." The statement is undoubtedly true. Unfortunately Warren's "presence" also has an impact on the book. An ex-law clerk and fervent admirer of the chief justice, White too readily accepts Warren's views at face value, agreeing, for example, with Warren's claims that he did not harbor strong political ambitions or carefully calculate his steady political rise. Warren, in fact, strove to protect his public image. He demanded total loyalty from his staff, pruned his papers carefully, and left only a bland and external testimony in his autobiography and oral recollections. The paucity of revealing personal records, which White readily acknowledges, prevents a detailed analysis of the ways in which Warren's "presence" guided the Court.

The book, however, is not wholly uncritical. White suggests a darker side to the chief justice, a man possessed of "a well-developed capacity to hate." He focuses, too, on Warren's vulnerabilities as a judge, from his selective applications of the first and fifth amendments to his failure to generate any rationally coherent theory of constitutional adjudication. The author probes Warren's jurisprudence to its core values, defending it in social and historical terms but pronouncing it inadequate in terms of professional craft values.

Earl Warren is solid, informative, and perceptive. It provides an excellent introduction to a major figure in twentieth-century American history.

NEW YORK CITY

EDWARD A. PURCELL, JR.


Stephen B. Oates has clearly succeeded in writing the kind of biography he intended. Rejecting abstract analysis—"an author-dominated lecture"—in favor of "literature which conveys the warmth and immediacy of a life being lived," he has written a vivid, emotionally engrossing account of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life. Oates carefully, though not always subtly, embeds his interpretation in a portrait that reveals the contrasting facets of King's character. Oates's King is first of all a preacher with deep roots in the emotion-filled, male-dominated world of the southern black church, a world where King's sense of divinely inspired mission and his charismatic leadership style were born. Yet King is also portrayed as a scholar seeking an intellectually consistent philosophy of life and an activist firmly attached to a set of coherent, yet eclectic, radical beliefs.

Rather than depicting King merely as a well-meaning advocate of racial brotherhood with an ardent faith in the effectiveness of nonviolent reform tactics, Oates shows that King was willing to provoke racist violence in order to force federal intervention and to challenge liberal leaders even while seeking their support. King is revealed as a persistent critic of capitalism and Western imperialism who resisted President John F. Kennedy's request that he end his relationship with an adviser accused of being a Communist and who angered President Lyndon B. Johnson through militant public statements against American intervention in Vietnam. Like Oates's previous works on John
Brown, Nat Turner, and Abraham Lincoln, this biography resuscitates the image of a historical figure whose martyrdom had become embalmed in innocuous myth.

Oates's biography, hardly an exercise in deification, is nevertheless weakened by a subjective approach that prevents adequate discussion of King's limitations as a leader. Indeed, David L. Lewis's King: A Biography [1970, 1978], though not as well grounded in primary sources, remains a more balanced and objective account of King's relationship to the southern struggle. Oates never seriously addresses the criticism offered by other civil rights activists that King's reliance on dramatic appeals for federal intervention undermined the development of self-reliant local leadership and durable organizations. While suggesting that his critics were motivated by jealousy, Oates calls upon King's supporters to offer concluding judgments about debates within the civil rights movement. Thus, on the controversial decision to use children as protesters in the Birmingham campaign, Oates quotes Southern Christian Leadership Conference official David Abernathy (who once introduced King as a leader "conceived by God") as saying it "was an act of wisdom, divinely inspired."

Although Oates does not ignore King's political limitations or personal weaknesses, he does not separate himself enough from King's perspective to indicate the contradictions and ironies that King did not see. Instead, Oates offers restatements of King's world view and, at times, even retrospectively provides King with a defense against those who would criticize him. In handling the troublesome question of the extent of King's use of ghostwriters, for example, Oates facilely asserts that one editor's changes were "corrections King himself would have made had he had the time." Noting King's extramarital affairs, Oates again offers the defense King might have used: "Lonely and troubled, gone from home so much of the time, he surrendered himself to his passionate nature and sought intimacy and reassurance in the arms of other women." King himself could not have said it better.

Stanford University

Clayborne Carson


In the mid-1960s no single event of the civil rights movement received more contemporaneous attention than the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. The decision by several hundred white northern college students to devote a few months of their time to "the movement" captured the attention of the national press in a way that the lengthier and more intense commitments by southern black grass-roots movement workers never did.

Mary Aickin Rothschild has written a valuable and informative study of the volunteers who went south both that summer and the next. Relying on her own interviews with former volunteers, letters the volunteers wrote at the time, and the initial applications many of them submitted to the sponsoring organizations, Rothschild presents a comprehensive and empathic account of who the volunteers were, what motivated them to go south, and what they did and experienced once they were there.