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The Contemporary American Comic Epic: The Novels of Barth, Pynchon, Gaddis, and Kesey Contemporary American Comic Epic: The Novels of Barth, Pynchon, Gaddis, and Kesey (Humor in Life and Letters Series) Hardcover – November 1, 1989. by Elaine Safer (Author) Be the first to review this item. See all 4 formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. Price ...Introduction: An overview --Twentieth-century comic epic novels and Cotton Mather's Magnalia --Whitman's Leaves of grass and the twentieth-century comic epic --Comic retrospection in John Barth's The sot-weed factor and Giles goat-boy --The tall tale, the absurd, and Black humor in Thomas Pynchon's V and Gravity's rainbow --Ironic allusiveness and satire in William Gaddis's The recognitions --The absurd quest and Black humor in Ken Kesey's Sometimes a great notion.The Contemporary American Comic Epic: The Novels of Barth, Pynchon, Gaddis, and Kesey. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988. Searles, George J., ed. A Casebook on Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.