

Reviews

Place

VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN WEST. By Gerald F. Kreyche. Louisville: University Press of Kentucky. 1989. \$28.00.

In this history of the trans-Mississippi West, American Romanticism returns with a new vitality. Kreyche describes Western-American development in terms of "visions," one after the other inspired by the American Dream. Heavily influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis," *Visions of the American West* is popular history written by a professor of philosophy who is euphoric over this nineteenth-century quest for the ideal, this evolution of the Western-American myth. Each chapter traces a vision—"Lewis and Clark," "The Mountain Men," "Gold and Silver," "Trails West," and others. Kreyche draws entirely from standard sources, including such trade publications as *American West*, *The Book of the American West*, and *The Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West*. Spot-checking exposes occasional small inaccuracies, e.g., Mari Sandoz becomes "Maria," and John Neihardt becomes "Niehardt." For readers interested more in the polychrome sweep of romantic Western history than in the plainer and often darker truths that it glosses over, this popularized account will likely provide cover-to-cover satisfaction.

Kent State University

Sanford E. Marovitz

HISTORIANS OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIERS: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook. Edited by John R. Wunder. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988. \$75.00.

Gathered here are sketches of the lives and works of fifty-seven historians, all of them deceased, some of them great, others obscure, some highly accomplished, others with a single book to their credit. Each sketch gives a brief biography, identifies major themes in the historians' writing, analyzes his or her achievements, and ends with a bibliography. Many read like laudatory obituaries, but a few (especially those of Malcolm Rohrbaugh on Louis Pelzer, William Unrau on Mari Sandoz, and Richard White on Frederick Jackson Turner) are incisive critical es-

says. Reading the sketches, one feels in touch again with a quiet, generally conservative, largely Midwestern academic world that has disappeared before thunderous global change.

University of Kansas

Donald Worster

BEYOND THE FRONTIER: Writers, Western Regionalism, and a Sense of Place. By Harold P. Simonson. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press. 1989. \$15.95.

This book, a revision and extension of the author's *The Closed Frontier* (1970), is a Neo-orthodox argument for the efficacy of tragic thought in American literature and a vigorous defense of regionalism. Simonson locates the "man of flesh and bone," Unamuno's concrete subject of tragedy, on the home ground of lived experience.

Simonson equates the pre-1890 open frontier with an American optimism unmindful of limits. The announced closing of the frontier constituted a warning, but to Simonson it also provided a tough-minded opportunity for Americans to seek ways to bridge the "tragic contradiction" between dream and reality, opportunity and limitation. Many American writers, however, have tended to focus on one pole, excluding the other. Open frontier thinking—represented by Frederick Jackson Turner's ecstatic metaphors, John Muir's early fervid romanticism, even William Everson's fuzzy archetypal mysticism—prefers optimism over reality. Reality is rather the business of the closed frontier of Twain's Huck Finn, Rolvaag's defeated immigrants, and Nathanael West's victims of New World apocalypse. Simonson concludes that regionalism may provide a life-enhancing tragic response: Montana writers Ivan Doig, James Welch, and Norman Maclean narrow their scene but bridge reality and desire by emphasizing the *felt* experiences of flesh-and-bone protagonists in real places they call home.

This book is comparable to A. Carl Bredahl's *New Ground* (1989), which also seeks relief in western responsibilities: Bredahl values "surfaces," Simonson praises the eschatological thought inherent in Western regionalism. Simonson works his frontier metaphor hard, but his argument is compelling. One wonders, however, how his argument might have been modified by inclusion of women writers as well as men.

Bellevue College

Joseph J. Wydeven

THE FRAGMENTATION OF NEW ENGLAND: Comparative Perspectives on Economic, Political, and Social Divisions in the Eighteenth Century. By Bruce C. Daniels. Contributions in American History, No. 131. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1988. \$39.95.

This book contains a collection of essays that appeared from 1973 to 1988 in such journals as *The William and Mary Quarterly*, *Histoire Sociale*, and *Connecticut History*. While the essays are not substantially revised, as Daniels admits (xxi), publishing them in a single volume has great advantages since it makes the reader realize the connections between seemingly disparate episodes of colonial New England history. Here, in essays treating topics such as poor relief, economic development, long-range trends of wealth distribution, officeholding, and the geo-

graphical origins of students at Yale College, Daniels forces the reader to confront what he terms the "fragmentation" of a previously more stable and homogenous society. Thus, while New England remained the least demographically mixed region in British North America, the maturation of its economy and growth of its population led to profound, and disquieting, change. Perhaps the most provocative part of the book is the Afterword, where Daniels contrasts growing stratification in wealth and "an increasingly oligarchical pattern of officeholding" with the emergence, in the late-eighteenth century, of powerful ideas about equality. Yet rather than sensing some conspiracy of the well-off to take advantage of their poorer neighbors, Daniels sees in this situation an ambiguity, often encountered in American history, between "an ideology of increasing democracy and a reality of increasing class distinctions" (182). While the essays occasionally overlap and the last one, an historiographical essay on recent writings about the Revolution in Massachusetts, differs so much in style that it does not fit into the collection as well as it could, these diverse pieces constitute an important interpretation of early New England.

University of Kansas

Peter C. Mancall

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MORAVIAN BETHLEHEM: From Communal Mission To Family Economy. By Beverly Prior Smaby. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1988. \$32.95.

The book provides a thorough social and demographic portrait of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, from 1740 to 1840, one of the most important religious communities in early America. Established to fulfill a spiritual ideal that originated in fifteenth-century Moravia and Bohemia, Bethlehem became, after its founding in 1740, perhaps the most significant Moravian settlement in North America. Yet, as Smaby ably demonstrates, the religious intensity that prompted the initial settlement of the town, and that led to the creation of an elaborate social architecture which divided community residents by gender, age and marital status, did not survive longer than a single generation. By the 1760s the General Economy, the corporatist ethos that dictated individual social and economic behavior, gave way to a new emphasis on individual families. No longer would married couples, living in separate "Choirs" with others of similar marital status, need to take turns using the two double beds that existed in the community; after the decline of the General Economy they could share their intimate moments in greater privacy, and they could also raise their children themselves, another significant shift from the early, communitarian basis of the settlement. Yet these changes signaled a dramatic shift in religious sensibilities, and this shift was every bit as pronounced as the social and demographic changes that lie at the heart of Smaby's analysis. Through a study of biographies written at the time of death for Moravians in Bethlehem, Smaby has discovered a deep-seated reorientation of their spiritual beliefs representing, as she writes in her conclusion, a shift from those "whose hearts were centered on the more permanent world beyond this one" to "a community of families who cherished their time together here on earth." (243). The presentation of a wonderful series of views of the town (unfortunately without mentioning where these drawings can be found) reinforces the sense of change over time, and buttresses the many demographic statistics that the text contains.

University of Kansas

Peter C. Mancall

PHOENIX: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis. by Bradford Luckingham. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1989. \$29.95.

In 1870, more than 200 persons had moved to the Phoenix area, seeking opportunities in farming, retailing and land speculation. By 1911, town leaders had secured the state capital, railroad connections and federal financing of the immense Roosevelt Dam, fostering development of the city's agricultural hinterlands. During the world wars, federal spending boosted employment and property values. By the 1950s, local boosters routinely packaged warm weather and clean air along with notions of individualism, low taxes and public spending for Northerners seeking urban amenities. Surprisingly, in 1973, Phoenicians rejected additional freeway mileage in the central business district, apparently on aesthetic and environmental grounds. By 1980, moreover, as Phoenix emerged as the nation's ninth largest city, air and water pollution "threatened the good life. . . ." (249). Bradford Luckingham's *Phoenix* reinvigorates in a critical fashion a neglected tradition of American urban historiography that emphasize entrepreneurship as one of the keys to city growth, and adds to that tradition by highlighting processes of more contemporary interest such as racial accommodation, environmental control, infrastructural development and public policy, especially federal policy in peace and war.

Michigan Technological University
Love

Mark H. Rose

THE CONSERVATION OF CULTURE: Folklorists and the Public Sector. Edited by Burt Feintuch. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1988. \$27.00.

Over the past twenty years, American folklorists have steadily transcended their traditional base of operations in the academy to become directly involved in a variety of public and private institutions and agencies. The most visible symbols of the growth of folklorists' activities in the public sector are the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress and the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

This collection of seventeen essays, which grew out of a conference held at Western Kentucky University in 1985, heralds the maturity of public sector folklore. In it, the authors describe and discuss the work of folklorists in a broad range of settings, including state and urban folklife programs, ethnic and regional culture centers, folk arts exhibitions, festivals and architectural preservation.

A theme that runs like a leitmotif through the essays is the responsibility that folklorists assume for the conservation of the dynamic and vital components of American culture that they encounter in their work. In taking this position, folklorists are able to draw public attention to the humanistic and cultural values of folk expression, which has historically been undervalued by both academicians and cultural institutions and agencies. This volume should serve a parallel purpose for its audience, by acquainting Americanists with an excellent survey of the kinds of work in which public folklorists are currently engaged.

University of Notre Dame

Barbara Allen

SHAKER FURNITURE MAKERS. Jerry V. Grant and Douglas R. Allen. Hanover: University Press of New England for Hancock Shaker Village Inc. 1989. \$39.95.

Grant and Allen seek to make the Shaker furniture come alive by discussing its makers rather than the furniture. "We wanted to present Shaker furniture in a new context through our biographical portraits of prominent furniture makers—as part of the personal lives of the master craftsmen whose hands have it beauty and purpose" (x). They present twenty-seven short biographies of furniture makers from nineteen communities in chronological order preceded by a short interpretive essay. The careful research and, in some cases, extensive quotation from the makers' diaries make this a valuable book. Yet the reader is left wanting more—more detail and more interpretive context.

In many ways it resembles an exhibit catalog, filled with facts and discrete discussions of particulars. Each maker is discussed with sympathy and in the detail for which records are available. In a very few cases the authors peer behind the furniture into the mind and psyche of the maker as with the discussion of Freegift Wells and his relationship with his apprentice Thomas Almond.

The reader also will wish for a greater discussion of the way the Shaker ideology affected the work of these men. The quotations from the men's diaries reveal opportunities for this discussion. But the seeds fall on hard ground and do not grow. Perhaps the best of worlds combine the research of Grant and Allen with the analysis of June Sprigg, *Shaker Design*. Such a work, which is what the authors promised, would transcend the details of lives to discuss how the culture operated and was created. Even so this is a book worth reading for anyone interested in Shakers or nineteenth-century material culture.

University of Wisconsin—River Falls

Kurt E. Leichtle

GOD'S PECULIAR PEOPLE: Women's Voices & Folk Tradition in a Pentecostal Church. By Elaine J. Lawless. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 1988. \$15.00.

This important ethnographic study focuses on a oneness Pentecostal congregation in southern Indiana. Lawless is interested in the structure of services, the content of verbal art and the sociocultural matrix in which religious performance occurs. She analyzes verbatim transcripts of participant testimonies and offers a transcript of an entire testimony service as an appendix to support her contentions that Pentecostal services rely on a highly developed Pentecostal language and that they offer women a brief but powerful opportunity to control a public service through verbal art. This book makes a significant contribution to both an understanding of the folk aspects of Pentecostal religion and outsiders' perceptions about the role of women in Pentecostal churches.

Lawless's effort to place her field work in the broader context of American pentecostalism leads to overstatements. What she says about Pentecostals tends to be true of only a narrow segment of Pentecostals. While there are hundreds of thousands of oneness Pentecostals across the United States who may resemble her sampling, there are millions of other Pentecostals whose recent past has been marked by cultural accommodation rather than by maintaining boundaries. But these are minor points that do not detract from her invaluable contribution to the

growing academic interest in Pentecostal movements. Her rich analysis of women's use of verbal art in a local congregation and her emphasis on the folk aspects of Pentecostal religion suggest reasons for the movement's appeal in widely diverse segments of American society.

Wheaton College

Edith L. Blumhofer

Women

THE FEMALE FRONTIER: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains. By Glenda Riley. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press. 1988. \$25.00.

In comparing the experiences of women on the prairie and on the Great Plains, Glenda Riley brings the reader an abundance of new and important research. Her thesis is that gender dictated the structure of women's lives far more than did regional differences. Women were bound to the care of home and children wherever they were.

The idea is not new: Elizabeth Hampsten (*Read This Only to Yourself*, 1982) found that women's journals and letters showed "a rather striking absence of commentary about place and landscape" (226). From another perspective, Kathleen Underwood has pointed out that blurring the impact of geographical place also means that women in cities and on frontiers may have led lives more similar than different.

If gender exerted the powerful structural restrictions that Riley suggests, then men, whether they were farmers or businessmen or ranchers, were also always "breadwinners." Riley believes that while this may have been true, men enjoyed a diversity of life that always opened onto the larger scenes. *The Female Frontier* is rich in detail and it is one of the few comparative studies that we have. Its methodological importance may be that it encourages comparative research, a direction many scholars have been timid about following.

Brooklyn College—CUNY

Lillian Schlissel

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America. By Frances B. Cogan. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 1989.

This energetic and engagingly written study contests the view of many American women's historians that the antebellum era was dominated by one feminine ideal—that of the passive, pure, pious, submissive woman described by Barbara Welter in her 1976 essay "The Cult of True Womanhood." Following Welter's lead, Frances B. Cogan asserts, "critic after critic seemingly ignores the evidence of her own eyes" and reasserts this megalithic paradigm (4). Her book identifies and demonstrates the pervasive presence of another stereotype, which she calls the ideal of "real womanhood," one which advocated "intelligence, physical fitness and health, self-sufficiency, economic self-reliance, and careful marriage" (4). Although study of an image in and of itself will not prove anything about

human behavior, the presence of this image in a variety of types of written material allows us to see that women had options, and that they need not have been perceived as rebels or outcasts if they failed to act like "true" women. Cogan's work on antebellum fiction owes a (generously acknowledged) debt to Nina Baym's 1978 *Woman's Fiction*, but in surveying the advice books where the more restricting ideal supposedly flourished, and finding masses of counter-evidence there as well, Cogan enters new areas of research with edifying results. Particularly interesting to me is the evidence of interest in the physical health and athletic development of women. The book is organized in chapters following the stages of a woman's life from childhood through education to courtship and marriage, and each chapter is full of apt quotations. The occasional illustrations are also a delight. The study is then both good scholarship and good reading.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Nina Baym

AFTER THE FALL: The Demeter-Persephone Myth in Wharton, Cather, and Gasgow. By Josephine Donovan. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989. \$23.50

Josephine Donovan is known among feminists and Americanists for her important work on New England local color and for her widely-used introductory textbook of feminist theory. Here she provides a theoretically sophisticated continuation of her work on women writers, arguing that Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, and Willa Cather used the Demeter/Persephone myth to deplore changes in the status of women (white, middle-class women) occurring around the turn of the century. They thought that younger women were all-too-willingly eating the pomegranate seeds that attached them to the patriarchy (industrial capitalism) and separated them from their mothers (pre-industrial women's culture). We know that many women writers have made use of myth; Donovan historicizes this tendency by describing specific conditions that made the myths seem relevant to these authors and also affected their representation of it. Students of the three writers analyzed will want to ponder her provocative readings. The book leaves me wondering why these writers—if indeed they were spokeswomen for a deteriorating women's culture—aimed their criticism at other *women*, and even more why they adopted the persona of the all-forgiving, all-embracing Demeter to do so.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Nina Baym

ALONE IN THE DAWN: A Life of Adelaide Crapsey. By Karen Alkalay-Gut. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1988.

The poet Adelaide Crapsey was born in 1878 and died of tuberculosis in 1914, at the age of thirty-six. She came from a privileged background and was well-educated, but the disease attacked early and forced her into an invalid's life that was "nothing like what she had wanted to live" (8). Shortly before her death she put together a collection of her poems which, published posthumously, was unfortunately overwhelmed by its association with the romantic stereotype of the early-dying poet. This critical biography recovers the details of Crapsey's life and gives sensitive, sympathetic attention to her poetry and poetic aims. A student of metrics and prosody, Crapsey invented a form that she called the "cinquain," a

five-line poem beginning with a one-stress line, followed by lines with two, three and four stresses and concluding with a single stress line. Alkalay-Gut infuses this form with emotional and psychological meaning by describing it as representing "expanded and curtailed growth, like the life of the poet itself" (9). Crapsey is not likely to have another biography, so it is fortunate that this one makes her work available to those interested in recovering women's writing.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Nina Baym

THE ROMANCE REVOLUTION: Erotic Novels for Women and the Quest for a New Sexual Identity. By Carol Thurston. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press. 1987. \$27.95.

Approaching popular romance novels and their readers from a sociological rather than a literary perspective, Carol Thurston's *The Romance Revolution* offers a cogent and well-supported argument for the importance of this form of popular culture as a measure of the changing attitudes of American women. Statistically establishing the readership as demographically representative of all American women by her own surveys in 1982 and 1985 of about 500 readers, Thurston refutes earlier studies which generalize about "bored housewives" and gives credibility to her picture of self-conscious women demanding equally self-conscious heroines and responsive, sensitive heroes in their published fantasies. Her careful research into publishing trends also uncovers an evolution of subject matter since 1972 from "bodice-rippers" to euphemistic erotica more suitable, she argues, than violent and stark male fantasies to the complexities of female sexuality. This evolution is reflected in the growing popularity of the "erotic" rather than the "sweet" romance novels previously thought to represent majority tastes in this genre. Thurston points out that the sweet romances, a la Harlequin, originated in Britain, and that the new romances not only take their shape from the demands of American readers but have since gained popularity in France, Australia and Japan as well.

Arizona State University

Thelma J. Shinn

TAPESTRIES OF LIFE: Women's Work, Women's Consciousness, and the Meaning of Daily Experience. By Bettina Aptheker. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press. 1989. \$7.95.

Bettina Aptheker reflects on women's lives in a style that is both scholarly and personal, literary and vernacular. Ranging from activities such as quilting that preserve the texture of "dailiness" to theoretical analyses that strive to "place women at the center of our thinking" (7), her effort to re-build consciousness focuses on the stories women tell, the lives they lead, and the resistance to oppression they practice.

Concepts of a unique family resistance and the extraordinary nature of the "ordinary" woman are key to Aptheker's analysis. For her, the lesbian perspective is critical to an understanding of how women think and act. But these issues are far from simple, as Aptheker understands the relationship of determinants such as class and race to gender. Arguing that "nothing about our oppression as women is simple," (138) she reminds us of the importance of "women's everyday lives . . . of another way of knowing, of resistance re-visioned, of women gathering on

their own ground.” (247) With its clear analytical framework, *Tapestries of Life* communicates “an unconditional love for women, for their safety, their dignity, their wholeness.

Queens College—CUNY

Barbara L. Tischler

African-Americans and Native-Americans

THE INDIANS' WORLD: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal. By James H. Merrell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1989. \$32.50.

Merrell's primary concern is with “the adjustment” of the Catawba people to the “New World” created for them after 1540 by the irresistible intrusions of diseases, traders, soldiers, missionaries and settlers from the Old World. From 1650 to 1715 the Catawbas and their neighbors in the piedmont region of the Carolinas, adjusted peacefully to the British because of their distance from the coastal settlements and the presence of intervening tribes. They liked European trade goods and in exchange provided deerskins and captive Indian children as slaves. But in 1715 they joined in the Yamasee War against South Carolina; after their defeat, while their culture was still intact, they no longer had the power to fight the Europeans. Instead they provided a buffer zone against western and northern tribes, continuing to enjoy the benefits of trade and other assistance in exchange. However, after 1730 British settlers began to move into the piedmont; the deerskin trade fell off, and northern Indian raids took a heavy toll of lives. Two smallpox epidemics in 1738 and 1759 helped to reduce “the Catawba Nation” (a mixture of a score of remnants from piedmont tribes) from 5000 in 1715 to 500 in 1760. After 1755 “the Catawbas were no longer masters of their own destiny” (157). Placed upon a reservation in 1764, they gave what assistance they could to the colonists during the Revolution. Post-revolutionary settlers who surrounded them paid little heed to their rights even when they rented tracts on their reservation. By 1840 they were forced to sell their reservation to their white tenants for \$5000, and thereafter became a people without a country.

Merrell tells their story with great insight and sympathy. He has a thorough mastery of the sources (though they contain little from the Catawbas themselves). Merrell's effort to stress the shrewdness of the Catawbas in sustaining their cultural integrity even as they acculturated seems, on the surface, to refute the arguments of Richard White in *The Roots of Dependency*. Yet Merrell admits that after 1715 “they could not live without the English” and “thus trade had become a potent weapon for coercing” their cooperation (91). In a final chapter called “The Nation Endures,” Merrell traces the Catawbas from 1840 into the twentieth century. In Merrell they have found a historian worthy of their talent for survival.

Brown University

William G. McLoughlin

OGLALA WOMEN: Myth, Ritual, and Reality. By Karla N. Powers. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1986. \$19.95.

This is an awkwardly structured, lifeless and superficial study of a vitally important subject.

The first half of the book is a historical survey of sorts which considers woman's centrality in Lakota cosmology and the various roles she fulfills, as she moves from girlhood to old age, in traditional Lakota culture. The second half treats contemporary issues and concerns. Such a structure could work if it were shown how women's cosmological and traditional cultural significance is expressed in present day reservation life or how it helps to direct the lives of contemporary Lakota women; but given the blurred focus of this book—males and Lakota life in general, especially in the second half, are given virtually equal emphasis with the book's ostensible subject—and Powers' failure to make the necessary connections to show how the past informs the present, the structure seems disjointed at best.

The rich and generous selection of photographs and the quotations from informants, which afford the book's best insights into the lives of Lakota women, are the best parts of this book. But most of the quotations are anonymous and this, along with the lack of relevant statistical and historical evidence, seriously compromise the integrity of Powers' study. Moreover, her claims that "Oglala women purposely perpetuate" the myth of male dominance (7), that white and Lakota cultures "coexist so easily" at Pine Ridge (117), and that Lakota women "themselves recognize that they have the best of both worlds" (149) seem hopelessly naive and, in any case, are not effectively substantiated. *Oglala Women* might work as a very general introduction to its subject, but its shallow, misguided assertions and superficial analysis make me hesitate to recommend it even as that.

University of Kansas Bernard Hirsch

A LIFE IN THE STRUGGLE: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition. By George Lipsitz. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1988. \$29.95.

The author combined exhaustive research in traditional sources with extensive oral interviews to produce a work that combines the strong and the weak features of biography. The history of the civil rights movement in St. Louis which is central to the story is distorted because it comes to us only in episodes in which Ivory Perry participated. On the other hand, it is not presented merely in terms of generalized historical forces, but in very insightful, personal, human terms.

The author employed Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" (individuals who "direct the ideas and aspirations of their class even though they hold no formal status or employment as 'intellectuals'") to analyze Perry's social activism. Lipsitz challenged both the historical interpretation that purported the existence of a bourgeois ideological hegemony that prevented the growth of radicalism in the United States and the current sociological models used to explain social protest. He argued that Perry served as an example to demonstrate how class and race combined in Afro-American history to create a true American radicalism. Furthermore, he encouraged sociologists to add a historical element to their models, "collective memory" which organic intellectuals like Perry used to mobilize "an oppositional historical bloc around counterhegemonic principles."

Creighton University

Dennis Mihelich

WE ASK ONLY A FAIR TRAIL: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana. By Darrel E. Bigham. Bloomington: The University of Indiana Press. 1987. \$20.00.

The title of this book, suggesting the inclusion of black voices reflecting upon their own condition and their relationship to the determinants of national life, is illusory. Neither individual biographies nor the collective representations of group behavior and institutional development in black Evansville become the stuff of social history. Much of the discussion is derivative, and comparative or otherwise based on Kusmer's Cleveland and Katzman's Detroit. The absence of detailed analysis of internal structure delimits the discussion of class, effective decision-making, and the distribution of power. Examples are the lack of information on the continuum of activism from Washington, to Du Bois, to Garvey and no substantive discussion of the impact of Populism and Progressivism. The preeminent reference point in this book is the pathology of the black experience tethered to a self-fulfilling prophesy of the formation of the ghetto, the definitive metaphor for life in black Evansville in all periods. These problems make Bigham's study one dimensional thereby limiting its significance and particularity as a social history of blacks in the urban environment.

University of Southern California

Thomas C. Cox

Twentieth Century

HOPE AMONG US YET: Social Criticism and Social Solace in Depression America. David Peeler. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1987. \$35.00.

This interdisciplinary study of American "social artists" in the thirties concentrates on four disparate genres: travel reportage, documentary photography, the social novel and social realist painting. Besides an introductory and concluding chapter, David Peeler devotes a chapter to each of these four genres, carefully defining and limiting each category. Social novelists like Steinbeck, Dos Passos and Wright, for example, are distinguished from the proletarian writings on one side and Wolfe, Faulkner and Hemingway on the other. Similarly, Peeler criticizes the term "American Scene" when applied to American painters because the category uneasily combined the social realist painters he is interested in (Ben Shahn, William Grooper, and others) and the regionalists like Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood who, Peeler believes, were involved in quite different, more politically conservative and socially quiescent, enterprise.

Focussing on those "who grappled directly with thirties conditions in their art," Peeler argues that these artists levelled incisive social criticism in the decade, but that they also showed an "inclination to discover and celebrate some thing that could lead humans through the calamity" (3-4). This is the social criticism and social solace of the subtitle. The title alludes to James Agee's 1937 poem, "Summer Evening," in which Agee writes of the decade's socially oriented artists and intellectuals: "There is hope among us yet. Hope can cut the roots of reason:

And the sorrowful man can forget.” To Agee, writing in the later Depression years, and to Peeler, the social artists of the thirties too often allowed an unfounded hope or optimism to sever the roots of their reason, allowing, writes Peeler, “wishful thinking” to guide them instead of a “reasoned set of alternatives to the Depression’s dilemmas” (3).

The book has a number of strengths. Its juxtaposition of photographers, travel writers, painters and novelists, and the way they responded to the Depression through their respective artistic forms, stimulates readers to think about how the four genres are similar and different. Peeler also fruitfully devotes attention to a number of artists and writers like Nathan Asch, Philip Evergood, Josephine Herbst, and Louis Gugliemi, who may not be familiar to many readers. The nearly fifty illustrations, particularly the documentary photographs, provide good visual evidence to supplement Peeler’s analyses in the chapters on photography and painting.

My only major reservation with the book is the tendency to “flatten” the Depression by suggesting that the social criticism and the social solace were equally strong throughout the decade. In discussing the movies of the era, Robert Sklar once called the thirties “the golden age of turbulence and the golden age of order,” suggesting that the dissatisfaction with American culture was particularly pronounced in the first half of the decade and that the later thirties saw a gradually returning sense of stability in the country. Richard Pells, whom Peeler takes to task several times in his book, has convincingly argued the same point in *Radical Visions and American Dreams*, pointing to the declining critical spirit and growing nationalism in the United States after the success of the second New Deal, the beginning of the Popular Front period, and the rise of fascism in Europe. Had he been more sensitive to the interplay of these forces and the work of at least some of the artists he studies, I think Professor Peeler would have found that their social *criticism* was, on balance, more characteristic of the first five or six years of the decade and the social *solace* more important after that. To be fair, the chapter on documentary photography does hint at the shift; I simply believe that evidence would demonstrate the same to be true of the other three genres as well.

Nonetheless, *Hope Among Us Yet* provides much food for thought to scholars and students of American culture in the Depression. In its careful selection of artists’ and works, its inventive juxtapositions, and its solid research, it challenges us to think about the achievements and the failures of those artists who sought so vigorously to depict their age through their art in the decade following the Stock Market Crash.

University of Tennessee

Charles Maland

H. L. MENCKEN. By Vincent Fitzpatrick. New York: Continuum Publishing Company. \$18.95.

This digest of Mencken’s career is the model of what a short book on a literary figure should be. Quotes from Mencken are lively but Fitzpatrick, the Mencken bibliographer, goes beyond them to a fair evaluation of a controversial figure. Mencken’s shortcomings as a literary critic and economic analyst are contrasted with his never ending fight for free speech and civil liberties. And always there is a return to his boisterous style, the best since Twain, says Fitzpatrick. The book, one of Continuum’s series on American writers, contains a chap-

ter on Mencken's life, and others each covering roughly a decade of his lengthy career. The longest chapter is devoted to the 1920's when Mencken was at the height of his productivity and talent. Also included are a chronology, notes and a bibliography. All of this is given in barely more than 100 pages of clear, well-written prose.

University of Florida

Stephen Conroy

FAULKNER'S COUNTRY MATTERS: Folklore and Fable in Yoknapatawpha. By Daniel Hoffman. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1989. \$19.95

The title is meant, I think, as a pun. Hoffman proves that familiarity with the folklore of Faulkner's country enhances the novels under study here, *The Unvanquished*, *The Hamlet* and *Go Down, Moses*. Originally intended as the conclusion to his earlier work, *Form and Fable in American Fiction* (1961), this book understandably reflects many of the concerns and conventions of another era in literary studies. It also contains considerable hostility for later developments in the field. The author does not care much for what Faulkner wrote after 1942.

Bryant College

Joseph R. Urgo

CLIFFORD ODETS. By Gabriel Miller. New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation. 1989. \$18.95.

Miller's study of Clifford Odets is part of a series entitled *Literature and Life: American Writers*, useful introductions much like the Twayne books: biography in first chapter, followed by close readings of literary texts. Drawing on the 1981 biography of Odets by Margaret Brenman-Gibson and the recently published 1940 journal by Odets, Miller retells one of the quintessential twentieth-century American plots. A young communist of the 30s whose first great success is an agitprop play, *Waiting for Lefty*, repudiates his politics and names names in the 50s. An idealist playwright, hailed as the most significant playwright of the 30s, winds up writing screenplays in Hollywood, filled with self-loathing for having "sold out," and is unable to write another theatrical hit. Although Miller acknowledges the importance of history in Odets' career, his emphasis is on aesthetic choices Odets made as a playwright, and so he organizes his chapters on the plays by "visions"—"Chekhovian vision," "tragic vision" and so on. He pays equal attention to plays that made Odets famous and those which are forgotten, and comments on early drafts of the plays as well as the screenplays written for Hollywood. In an early play, Odets wrote that "No artist can go beyond his culture." It seems clear that the culture of the 30s provided rich soil for his art, while the cultural landscape of the Cold War did not. Miller's book raises the question—why?

Pomona College

Rena Fraden

JOHN STEINBECK: A Study of the Short Fiction. By R. S. Hughes. Boston: Twayne/G. K. Hall. 1989. \$18.95.

Divided into three main sections, this compendium opens with a general chapter that traces Steinbeck's development as an author of short fiction. Comparing his approach to the genre with the methods of such noted story writers as

London, Joyce, Lawrence, Anderson, Cather and Hemingway, Huges identifies likely influences on Steinbeck and makes it possible for readers to perceive in later chapters what the Nobel Laureate himself added to the tradition. The rest of the first section chronologically summarizes each of Steinbeck's fifty-odd stories and surveys the criticism in detail, thus providing an invaluable reference guide for anyone teaching or researching the short fiction. Extracts by Steinbeck on the art of the short story follow in Section 2, and the last section comprises four essays of special note by other critics. A chronology and useful bibliography precede the index.

Kent State University

Sanford E. Marovitz

BEYOND NATURALISM: A New Realism in American Theatre. By William W. Demastes. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1988. \$35.95.

Professor Demastes writes nothing that is new or terribly exciting from a historians's point of view, but his study is welcome and should be read carefully. He may well clarify much of contemporary American drama for students by pointing out once again a "new realism." This is an old and respected discovery, but Demastes' knowledge of pre-Eugene O'Neill American drama does not come from a first-hand acquaintance. He does, however, draw a true distinction between *realism* and *naturalism* and, though skipping too quickly through generations of playwrights, provides an excellent argument against realism as a limited form and for realism as a simple and clear view of the "atmosphere we breath"—which every generation of playwrights must mold into an expression of their views of existence. It has always been thus. Demastes' illustrations are Rabe, Mamet and Shepard, whose plays, he argues, are eliminating the barrier between elitist theatre patrons and the common man and revealing a popular theatre.

Graduate School--CUNY

Walter U. Meserve

THAT OLD TIME ROCK & ROLL: A Chronicle of an Era, 1954-1963. By Richard Aquila. New York: Schirmer Books. 1989. \$22.50 paper.

This book is an interesting and stimulating effort to bridge the gaps between popular music aficionados and cultural historians. Part I describes conventionally the stages of Rock & Roll's musical evolution, and thoughtfully places the music in an accurate cultural context. These contextual observations, while helpful, need more careful future elaboration in scholarly formats. For example, the claim that "Rock & Roll . . . reflected America's obsession with religion in the 1950s and early 1960s" (22) is derived from the content of ten songs; this intriguing relationship should be explored carefully. Part I's conclusion, that "early Rock & Roll reveals more consensus than conflict between the generations," while informally substantiated, reflects Aquila's serious approach. Most of the book consists of topical lists of songs and musicians (their musical styles and lyrical treatment of such topics as sex roles, teenage culture, rebellion, religion, the Cold War and the Old West) and short biographies of musicians popular with teenagers (many of whom, oddly, never sang anything resembling Rock & Roll music). The list section, like those found in other superior popular reference works, conveys a thesis by means of its taxonomic treatment of the subject, and invites more systematic investigation.

University of Kansas

Burton Peretti

Our THANKS, as always, to those scholars who have recently reviewed manuscripts for us: Beth Bailey, Barnard College; Lois Banner, University of Southern California; Michael Barkun, Syracuse University, Charles Berg, University of Kansas, John Braeman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Michael Cummings, University of Colorado-Denver; R. C. De Prospro, University of New Hampshire; John Ferre, University of Louisville; Mary O. Furner, Northern Illinois University; Peter Hales, University of Illinois-Chicago; Darlene Hine, Michigan State University; Richard Horwitz, University of Iowa; Thomas Grant, University of Hartford; James Grossman, The Newberry Library; Nicholas Kanellos, University of Houston; Frances Kay, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; David Kasserman, Glassboro State College; Peter Mancall, University of Kansas; James Mayo, University of Kansas; Timothy Miller, University of Kansas, David Noble, University of Minnesota; Debora Overmeyer, The Cincinnati Historical Society; Chester Pach, University of Kansas; Phillip Paludan, University of Kansas; Burton Peretti, University of Kansas; Diane Quantic, Wichita State University; Martin Ridge, The Huntington Library; Gary Shapiro, University of Kansas; Albert Stone, University of Iowa; John Stilgoe, Harvard University; Robert Toplin, University of North Carolina-Wilmington; Lawrence Wittner, SUNY-Albany; George Woodyard, University of Kansas; Donald Worster, University of Kansas; Norman Yetman, University of Kansas.

Errata: We apologize for two errors which appeared in our Spring, 1989 issue: Professor John Bracey's correct affiliation is the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; the publisher of Gary Snyder's *The Double Axe and other Poems* is Liveright.