

reviews

the lay of the land

THE LAY OF THE LAND: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters. By Annette Kolodny. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1975. \$8.95.

Kolodny illustrates the destructive paradoxes inherent in the two-sided characterization of the land-as-Mother and the land-as-Virgin in descriptive writings ranging from the early narratives of travel and exploration to the novels of Cooper and Simms. These examples of the feminine pastoral metaphor provide the sources of many of our contemporary environmental attitudes and clichés (e.g., “rape of the land”). Using some of Benjamin Lee Whorf’s theories, she makes an interesting, although not fully developed, argument for the adaptive necessity of our creative ability to impose metaphoric meaning on our actual experiences, and hence for the necessity of freeing ourselves from this “outmoded and demonstrably dangerous” pastoral pattern in favor of a healthier (“survival-oriented”) symbol and image system. *The Lay of the Land* is thus of interest to all persons concerned with the relationship of language and culture, as well as to students of early American literature or of American ecology.

The book also adopts the Freudian theories of Joel Kovel and Frederick Crews in their concepts of psychohistory. Although these illuminate the regressive and repressive consequences of belief in the pastoral fantasy, they also result in a less defensible pattern of misleading and selective readings that finds sexual implications and motivations everywhere. For example, the most innocuous reference to a man forcing his way through tangled underbrush invariably becomes symbolic of sexual penetration and masculine dominance over a vulnerable feminine wilderness. More seriously, quotations from Smith, Woolman, Freneau and others very carefully tend to stop just short of passages that would require recognition of far more plausible economic, religious, political or other interpretations.

The pastoral fantasy of the land-as-woman may not be the “single dominating metaphor” of “the move to America,” but the book is on the whole lively, provocative and quite convincing in its analysis of the moral and psychological dilemmas implicit in those numerous instances where the feminine metaphor really exists. Approached with due caution for its excesses, *The Lay of the Land* will prove valuable reading.

University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Norman H. Hostetler

SEATTLE, PAST TO PRESENT. By Roger Sale. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 1976. \$12.95.

Seattle grew so rapidly after its founding in 1851 that within six decades it could rightfully claim the title “foremost city in the Northwest.” That remarkable development has often been explained in terms of the area’s valuable resources and its location as an oceanic and overland commercial entrepot. This detailed study, however, challenges such explanations by focusing on boosterism and emphasizing the contributions of individuals. In a sense the book is a series of biographical sketches, covering the pioneering ventures of Arthur Denny, the Progressive Era reforms of R. H. Thomson and George Cotterill, and the questionable labor activities of Dave Beck during the 1950s. The business orientation of the city’s leaders sometimes exacted a terrible price for its prosperity. Most readily apparent is the failure to diversify and become independent of the Boeing Company, whose power has made the local economy vulnerable to post-war recessions and reductions in military spending. Equally re-

grettable are the city's participation in the Chinese exclusion movement of the 1880s and the humiliating detention of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Utilizing a variety of social science techniques, including demographic information and residential surveys, Sale has gone beyond the anecdotal approach to urban history and produced a balanced study. The lack of footnotes is somewhat offset by a bibliographical essay, though the failure to provide maps of Seattle at various periods of its development is lamentable.

[Roger Sale's "Seattle's Crisis, 1914-1919" appeared in *American Studies*, XIV, 1 (Spring, 1973).]

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Michael L. Tate

ARKANSAS AND RECONSTRUCTION: The Influence of Geography, Economics, and Personality. By George H. Thompson. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press. 1976. \$15.00.

Since the old Dunning School anti-reconstruction study (Thomas S. Staples, *Reconstruction in Arkansas*) this is the first attempt to provide another look at Arkansas. The new approach offers three long essays explaining the geographical basis of local politics, the mind of the native white leadership and the disastrous railroad promotion which led to repudiation and a ruined state credit. The Thompson essays suggest that Staples over-estimated Republican villainy, but they do nothing to correct the old white racism; in fact, blacks are entirely omitted. Despite the narrowness of this study, it uses fresh manuscript collections to extend our knowledge of perhaps half of the Arkansas reconstruction story.

Memphis State University

David M. Tucker

THE FUR TRADE IN COLONIAL NEW YORK, 1686-1776. By Thomas Eliot Norton. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1974. \$12.50.

The title of this book is misleading. It is much less a comprehensive study of provincial New York's fur trade than a concerted attempt to rescue the historical reputation of the Dutch residents of Albany, both from the unflattering descriptions of their English contemporaries and the stereotypic portraits of later historians. In this purpose the volume is successful, though sometimes repetitious. Norton's carefully researched study provides a more sharply focused picture of the Albany Dutch than has been available to scholars heretofore. However, as an analysis of the fur trade itself, the book is disappointing. It lacks a coherent perspective on the economic context of the fur trade and, moreover, it offers precious little insight on the relationship between the fur trade and New York's complex political and ethnic situation. It is, in short, a book which delivers both more (on the Albany Dutch) and less (on the fur trade *per se*) than the title promises.

Lawrence University

Douglas Greenberg

DROWNED VALLEY: The Piscataqua River Basin. By John Adams. With a foreword by Charles E. Clark. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England. 1976. \$20.00.

This is an elegantly conceived and produced photographic or visual essay of New Hampshire's Piscataqua River region which emphasizes the impact of technological and industrial change upon the ordinary people and the landscape of the area in the period from the mid-1850's to about 1920. The author has selected the 170 contemporary photographs with considerable sensitivity; and he has worked in transcribed interviews and contemporary newspaper accounts.

Iowa State University

HC

literature

THE NECESSARY BLANKNESS: Women in Major American Fiction of the Sixties. By Mary Allen. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976. \$8.95.

Allen develops the thesis that female figures in the major fiction of the period have a kind of vacant, bland, "blank" quality—an emptiness that does not afflict the more

active and aggressive male figures. She treats the work of Barth, Pynchon, Purdy, Kesey, Roth, Updike, Plath and Oates; yet she unaccountably omits consideration of either Mailer or Bellow, who has recently won the Nobel Prize. She does clearly recognize the severely limited or demeaning roles usually assigned to women in the fiction of the decade (which was not, it might be pointed out, fundamentally different from other decades in this respect). But she leaves herself open to considerable criticism by not dealing with two writers of obviously "major" significance during this time—writers whose fiction, moreover, reflects serious attempts to make important statements about the relationships between men and women in contemporary America.

University of Kansas

Charles G. Masinton

SHERWOOD BONNER (Catherine McDowell). By William L. Frank. Boston: G. K. Hall (Twayne Publishers). 1976. \$6.95.

In this excellent study of a minor literary figure we find the expected: a biography of the author, a review of her local color and realistic fiction, and a careful evaluation of her work. But for the feminist critic, male or female, there is more: Bonner's writings are a source of portraits of nineteenth-century American women—by a colorful author who was a protégée of Longfellow's, a well-traveled and an experienced person. She caught details and was, at the same time, sensitive to the role of women.

University of Northern Iowa

Keith McKean

COMEDY AND AMERICA: The Lost World of Washington Irving. By Martin Roth. New York: Kennikat Press. 1976. \$12.50.

Focusing primarily on *Salmagundi* and Knickerbocker's *History of New York*, but concluding with *The Sketch Book*, Roth convincingly develops a terminology for dealing with Irving's particular type of humor: "burlesque comedy," through which Irving found his imaginative relationship to America. Arguing for similarities between Irving's mode and motivation, and key writings by Melville, Whitman, Thoreau, Hawthorne and others, Roth successfully extends the usefulness and applicability of his analysis to the non-specialist as he considers the ways in which Irving, like others who followed, attempted to create a culture untrammelled by the limitations of a moralistic history.

University of Kansas

Haskell Springer

PLOTS AND CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF THEODORE DREISER. By Philip L. Gerber. Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, Inc. 1977. \$12.50.

A reference work, with plot summaries, an annotated index of characters and a chronology of events in Dreiser's life.

SGL

arts

SKYSCRAPER PRIMITIVES: Dada and the American Avant-garde, 1910-1925. By Dickran Tashjian. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. 1975. \$20.00.

In 1924 Gorham Munson first used the term "skyscraper primitives" to describe those American painters and poets who were influenced by the American Dada movement. Founded in New York by Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, Dada with its preoccupation with the machine, inspired a broad range of writers and artists to celebrate modern technology. Among those were Man Ray, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, E. E. Cummings, Charles Demuth, Waldo Frank, Charles Sheeler and Joseph Stella. The cultural changes wrought by technology which the Dadaists witnessed taking place around them motivated their reevaluation of the role of art in society. This searching inquiry appealed to the American avant-garde. In the protean and often anarchic nature of Dada, American artists found the freedom to experiment in their quest for an indigenous expression of contemporary life. Tashjian makes a convincing argument for the importance of the Dada movement during these formative years in American culture.

Iowa State University

Charles L. P. Silet

A SAILOR'S SONGBAG: An American Rebel in an English Prison, 1777-1779. Edited by George G. Carey. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1976. \$8.50.

A well-edited and annotated collection of song lyrics from a manuscript copied by a Timothy Connor, an American privateersman. Some were probably copied from broadside slip ballads; some can be connected with tunes in other sources. The subjects are sex, violence, life at sea and American patriotism, and will be of interest to modern ballad singers.

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FRONTIER MUSICIANS ON THE CONNOQUENESSING, WABASH, AND OHIO: A History of the Music and Musicians of George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1805-1906. Athens: Ohio University Press. 1976. \$16.00.

The Harmony Society, a communal society from Germany, founded Harmony, Pa., then New Harmony, Ind., and finally Economy (now Ambridge), near Pittsburgh. It published its own hymbooks such as *Harmonisches-Gesangbuch* (1820), and at its musical height in 1825-32 had an orchestra which performed music by such Europeans as Haydn and Pleyel, and music by its own composers. John S. Duss, beginning in 1892, made a splash with the Economy Band (soon called Duss' Band) in various cities, culminating in 1902-4 with performances in New York City which were supposed equals to those by the more famous bands of Gilmore and Sousa. Appendices give a full picture of the kind of music owned and played by this unusual enclave, which is a later musical counterpart to the Moravians. A useful but small recording is included, but the choral examples sound as if broadcast over short wave radio. (For an account of a revived New Harmony, see Horace Sutton in *Saturday Review*, 27 November 1976.)

University of Kansas

J. Bunker Clark

CHICAGO'S WHITE CITY OF 1893. By David F. Burg. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 1976. \$17.00.

The book is an impressive compendium of facts and general information concerning the 1893 World's Fair. Burg discusses preparations for the Fair, the specific exhibits, and the Fair's impact on American society. His style is readable, but statistics and accounts of minor incidents too often crowd out analysis and insight. The sections on architecture are strongest.

University of Kansas

Betsy Broun

reference works

THE DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN SOCIETIES, 1790-1800: A Documentary Sourcebook of Constitutions, Declarations, Addresses, Resolutions, and Toasts. Edited by Philip S. Foner. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1976. \$29.95.

A book of documents, but one which argues a case, set forth in Foner's careful introduction: members of the new Societies tended to like the Constitution; this was not simple anti-Federalism. They responded with remarkable strength to developments in France, and fought against both privilege and bigotry at home. Accused by Federalists of assorted heinous offences, they fought back eloquently. When Washington himself turned on them, the Republican Society of Baltimore warned respectfully of the dangerous precedents: "the free Governments of Venice, Geneva, the United Provinces and of several other countries of Europe have been changed the most into Aristocracies and yet retained the name of republics" (342).

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HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A Guide to Information Sources. Edited by Ernest Cassara. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Company. 1977. \$18.00.

One of Gale's "American Studies Information Guide Series," this volume is aimed, as its title implies, at History, not American Studies: it usually emphasizes chronology and events. (David Marcell is to do the American Studies volume in the series.)

Because it has happened a number of times in the past, I have decided from now on to say something nasty about any bibliographical work which carries misinformation about our journal. Since this guide lists us as "occasional," I conclude, perhaps unjustly, that the whole volume is slipshod. Capricious, it certainly is. For example, for periods in the nineteenth century, under the heading, "Prominent Individuals," it

includes both public figures and literary figures. But for the contemporary period, "Prominent Individuals" includes only people in public life. It is not nearly so rich a source as Frank Freidel's *Harvard Guide to American History*.

SGL

KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN RULE: The Intellectual as Christian Social Reformer in the 1890's. By Peter J. Frederick. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1976. \$18.75.

This is an outstanding survey of the careers of ten intellectuals who were staunch advocates of the application of Christian teachings to the socio-economic problems of the United States at the dawn of the twentieth century. In contrast to more practical reformers, W. D. P. Bliss, Ernest H. Crosby, B. O. Flower, George D. Herron, William Dean Howells, Samuel M. Jones, Henry Demarest Lloyd, Edwin Markham, Walter Rauschenbusch and Vida Scudder were all advanced idealists. With the possible exception of Samuel Jones, the famed Mayor of Toledo, their idealism and personal backgrounds generally prevented them from playing decisive roles in public affairs.

The careers of the ten "knights" are symbolic of the ambivalence of the entire progressive era. Likewise, the book is excellent in its portrayal of the trans-Atlantic migration of ideas. Indebted to the New Testament and the American intellectual tradition, the reformers also took inspiration from such Europeans as John Ruskin, Giuseppe Mazzini and Leo Tolstoy.

Knights of the Golden Rule is a first-class piece of writing based on exhaustive scholarship. The bibliography, particularly its listing of Social Gospel periodicals, is most useful.

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Harl A. Dalstrom

A HISTORY OF THE ICC: From Panacea to Palliative. By Ari and Olive Hoogenboom. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1976. \$10.00.

Why the Interstate Commerce Commission has failed is the central concern of this case study. The authors succeed best in describing the detailed workings of the Commission over time, but do not sufficiently analyze the implications for the general problem of federal economic regulation, its possibilities and limitations. A largely derivative summary of existing scholarship, this work might serve as a useful recommended reading in an advanced undergraduate course in American economic, political, legal or administrative history, if students have the stamina to wade through a sometimes ponderous presentation of bureaucratic detail.

Iowa State University

D. M. P. McCarthy

THE FATHERS OF THE TOWNS: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England. By Edward M. Cook, Jr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1976. \$12.95.

Cook builds on the work of Lockridge, Greven and the "new social history." Major officeholders were usually middle aged church members and had prepared for responsibility by holding minor offices. Deferential politics began to disappear after the Revolution; competition became the norm. Cook uses a variety of socioeconomic and political indices to develop a typology of towns which runs from cities or urban centers to unstable frontier communities. This solidly-researched, well written work is a major contribution to early American historical studies.

Ohio State University

Richard M. Rollins

SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON: Colonial American, 1715-1763. By Milton W. Hamilton. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press. 1976. \$17.50.

This is the first of a projected two volume biography of Sir William Johnson, the premier-arbiter of colonial Indian affairs in the northern provinces during the eighteenth century. Grounded in extensive and thorough research, the completed work is certain to be regarded as the definitive life of Johnson. This first volume follows Johnson from his Irish birth to the end of the French and Indian War; the second will carry the story through to his death in 1774. Hamilton touches all the bases, skillfully interweaving the details of his subject's life with judicious discussions of provincial and imperial politics. The prose, though occasionally turgid, is usually clear, and if the author sometimes lapses into partisan pleas on Johnson's behalf, he also

makes an effort to present the whole man, warts and all. Careful readers will also detect a subtle racism in Hamilton's descriptions of Indian society and culture. This is, to be sure, an interpretive error of the most egregious sort; still the factual accuracy of the account can hardly be questioned. If the Iroquois suffer at Hamilton's hand, Johnson does not. This is, therefore, a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature. It should be read critically, but no student of the eighteenth-century colonial frontier can afford to ignore the wealth of information contained in its pages.

Lawrence University

Douglas Greenberg

HENRY DEMAREST LLOYD. By E. Jay Jernigan. Boston: Twayne Publishers. 1976. \$8.50.

An examination of Lloyd as social reformer and muckraker, this book focuses on his writings rather than on biographical details in showing his involvement and contribution during the Gilded Age (1870-1898). The organization reflects this emphasis and 100 of the 147 pages provide descriptions of Lloyd's writings with some analysis and assessment. The main strength of this one in the Twayne's United States Authors Series is the complete surveying of Lloyd's work which provides valuable source material for this period.

Northern Iowa University

Otis Rhea Schmidt

THE DECISION TO GO TO THE MOON: Project Apollo and the National Interest. By John M. Logsdon. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1970. Paper: \$3.95.

Political scientist Logsdon provides first, in four chapters, a historical sketch of how men of power in Congress and the Executive Branch made the decision on the moon mission; then he assesses, in two chapters, the process through which the Apollo mission was made from the standpoint of a political scientist. Logsdon concludes the most important reasons had to do with the young president Kennedy's sense of national prestige and competition with the Soviet Union and with his hope that this decision might assist the passage of other elements of his legislative program. This is a useful book within the limits of the policy analysis genre.

HC

REBUILDING THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missions, 1800-1830. By John A. Andrew III. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1976. \$14.50.

A good and readable case study of the Sandwich Islands Mission. Andrew presents the missionary movement in the light of domestic social changes after the American revolution. Many missionary ventures were extensively recorded and documented; the author has drawn deeply from those primary sources. A useful contribution to the literature on missionism, which was one of the most important phenomena of nineteenth-century religion in America.

University of Kansas

Timothy Miller