

obnafrucepbopitroas

"Obnafrucepbopitroas" covers books which, under current editorial policy, are not appropriate for review in our book review section, but which we feel are of potential use to scholars in American Studies: unusual textbooks, collections of essays in newly-developing fields, reference works and editions of the writings of major figures, for instance. It also discusses museum exhibitions of special interest to Americanists, especially those which have been created by American Studies professionals. Items in "Obna" are by the correspondents named in the items. Unattributed items are by the editor.

Al Stone sees Leo Marx's *THE PILOT AND THE PASSENGER: Essays on Literature, Technology and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, \$29.95) in the context of the history of our field, and writes, This collection of seventeen essays by a major Americanist scholar/critic draws upon thirty-seven years of article writing, lecturing and reviewing. Like similar collections by Marx's peers John William Ward and Warren I. Susman, these essays are valuable not only as historical record and convenient collecting place—rather than as reevaluations, since except for a new footnote here and there the pieces are printed unchanged—but also as demonstrating the development and range of concerns articulated in Marx's major work, *The Machine in the Garden* (1964). As he notes in "Literary Culture and the Fatalistic View of Technology," the quarter-century since his study of literary pastoralism and America's machine economy appeared has seen a resurgence of native pastoralism—among Sixties youth and communitarians, in the ecological and environmental movements, even as subtext in anti-war writings like Susan Sontag's *Trip to Hanoi*. Hence Marx's lifelong preoccupation with nineteenth-century tensions in thought and feeling between progressive and pastoral world-views proves surprisingly relevant to more recent cultural history.

Some of the most perceptive pieces here explore these ramifications by connecting landscape and politics, civil religion and literature, anti-urbanism in recent writings, obscenity and literary politics, teaching and politics. To the extent that these confrontations and dialogues issue from subjective, imaginative critiques and creations, Marx's post-1964 work is of a piece with earlier criticism. His sub-title correctly ranks his concerns: literature is, for Marx, the central cultural activity and institution; technology and culture are routinely refracted through the lenses of Mark Twain, Melville, Thoreau, Frost, Fitzgerald, Mailer and others. Even literary culture critics are treated from this viewpoint, for F. O. Matthiessen's brand of left poli-

tics seems somehow sounder than Irving Howe's because of *American Renaissance* and the books on James and Dreiser. On this score, Marx's allegiance to the classic writers of the past remains largely undisturbed by recent developments in American Studies such as popular culture, narrative theory, Women's Studies, Afro-American Studies. The 1957 *American Quarterly* essay on "Covert Culture" opens promising prospects for a collaboration between literature and sociology, but (characteristically for Marx) closes with the assertion "about formal literature's significant confirmation of the existence of culture traits that are revealed only inadvertently in popular modes of expression. Here is a major source of those tensions that give a work of literary arts its structure, its irony, and its stylistic signature." In the 1981 essay "Anti-Urbanism in Classic American Literature," Marx reiterates his preference for the superior cultural value of elite literature. "The privileged status accorded to the 'classic' writers by this honorific label is of course open to question. That the label carried with it a burden of class, gender[,] ethnic, regional and other unacknowledged assumptions seems obvious enough. For present purposes, however, the existence of the subcategory within the prevailing conception of American literature may be taken for granted. A certain academic legitimacy has been conferred on it by the standard anthologies and course syllabi of our schools and colleges, and by the mutually supporting judgments of writers, critics, teachers, and audiences which created the entire canon. However skewed, in other words, it is in a sense an authentic product of the dominant culture."

This lack of interest in the broad range of literary expression in any post-industrial era of our culturally diverse society is, I believe, unfortunate. For everywhere in these pieces Marx reveals his skills in selection and interpretation of literary and historical texts. But questioning the canon which this essayist so eloquently uses is no more pressing than defending and updating the myth-symbol tradition of culture studies he

has signally served. Both topics are treated only in cursory footnotes, and the important (but now unfashionable) *New Literary History* essay on an "unscientific" method for American Studies is not reprinted in this book. This reader is grateful for the richly provocative and still-timely pieces which are here but is left regretting that a major spokesman for an honored tradition has not chosen to engage some of the critical issues directly relevant to his agenda—issues now being variously explored by cultural critics like John Kasson, Gordon Kelly, Cecilia Tichi and Janice Radway, for example.

Al also provides reports on a reference work and an edition of letters: *AMERICAN DIARIES: An Annotated Bibliography of Published American Diaries and Journals, Volume 2: Diaries Written from 1845 to 1980*. Detroit, Gale Research Co., 1987 is a 501-page tome likely to prove even more valuable to readers of personal histories than was Volume One, which covered the years from 1492 to 1844. The editors, Laura Arksey, Nancy Pries and Marcia Reed, have collected 3,256 diaries or more and annotated them with both a succinct summary of contents and citations of publication. Those entries about which I have hands-on knowledge seemed uniformly accurate in treating such themes as historical events, travel, social conditions, familiar and strange geographical sites and sights, religion, and notable figures met or known. The Indexes are notably detailed. The listings are chronological but the Subject Index is particularly full and helpful. *THE SELECTED LETTERS OF LIDIAN JACKSON EMERSON*, edited and introduced by Delores Bird Carpenter. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987. \$42.00. As every enthusiast of the American Renaissance knows, Emerson's second wife was very much her own woman. Her personal force and expression are evident from the early schoolgirl's letters beginning in 1813. But there was another side; "Asia," as her husband called her, was a highly emotional neurotic. He wrote once "The Lord made her curiously . . . she has many holes in her mind." Suffragette, Christian, animal-lover, Lidian outlived her famous spouse by a decade, after an often tempestuous marriage of 46 years. Some important correspondents include, besides Waldo, Elizabeth Peabody, Ellen Tucker Emerson Forbes and Lucy Jackson Brown.

Born in 1907, C. C. WANG [Wang Chi-chi'en] was raised in the most venerable traditions of Chinese art and connoisseurship available in our century. Already familiar with Western art as well, he came to the United States in the 1940s and responded to Abstract Expressionism, Post-Impressionism, Impressionism, and, of course, Western and particularly American attitudes toward art and creativity, attitudes very different than the "literati" and other Chinese traditions to which he had access. We should be paying attention to his work as we have paid attention to the work of European-trained artists who adopted America, for there are important cultural lessons here for Americanists. Not an unpleasant task, either, for his paintings are enormously varied and extraordinarily beautiful. C. C.

Wang, moreover, is articulate; we do not have to speculate about the forces which operated upon him to produce these lovely works: he tells us, for example, that he learned composition in America; "Composing seemed very difficult. But since I came here, after a few years, suddenly I understood. I don't know why." That's exciting; we know just what to look for, the moment in his art when a Western way of seeing the organization of a picture becomes clear to a painter who has seen very differently before.

We could learn by comparison and contrast, too: compare C. C. Wang's paintings with those of the Japanese-American artist Roger Shimomura, who knows and utilizes traditions of his ancestral Japan. The results are totally different, and the reasons for the difference are the stuff of American Studies.

The large and aesthetically satisfying show of C. C. Wang's paintings, "Mind Landscapes," was organized by the Henry Art Gallery of The University of Washington, Seattle; I saw it at the Spencer Museum of the University of Kansas where it hung from October 23rd through December 11, 1988. The rest of its itinerary: Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, Washington, February 24-April 24, 1988. Chinese Culture Center, San Francisco, July 9-September 3, 1988. Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas, October 23-December 11, 1988. Chinese House Gallery, China Institute of America, New York, March 29-May 30, 1989.

Richard McKinzie provides an evaluation of *ART IN ACTION: American Art Centers and The New Deal*. Edited by John Franklin White. Metuchen, N. J., The Scarecrow Press, 1987. \$22.50: During the 1930s the Federal Art Project, a small component of the Works Progress Administration, established over 100 art centers and museums as a part of Franklin Roosevelt's effort to provide "a more abundant life." The founders intended the art centers to offer employment to artists and education and elevated taste to the public. The burden of brief histories of art centers in eight localities (Minneapolis, Oklahoma, St. Louis, Spokane, Phoenix, Chicago, Utah and North Carolina) is that these depression experiments taught lessons and set precedents that rebounded to the benefit of those who championed local art centers after the New Deal ended. At the same time, the histories illustrate the extraordinary dependence of New Deal art centers on money and direction from Washington and the inability of local directors to divorce public attitudes toward art centers from public attitudes toward the Roosevelt administration. The documented local histories are more valuable than any collective insight into the larger and lasting significance of the art centers.

An abridged edition of *AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS: A Critical Reference Guide from Colonial Times to the Present*. Edited by Langdon Lynne Fause (New York: Ungar, 1988. \$59.50) has appeared, and Nancy Walker likes it. She writes, When the four-volume version of *American Women Writers* was published in 1979, everyone in my neighborhood sent up a

cheer: here, finally, was a reference set—well-researched and with useful bibliographies—that brought together biographical and critical information on American women writers from Phyllis Wheatley to May Sarton. The jacket blurb of this abridged edition (including about 400 of the more than 1000 women in the four-volume set) quotes an *American Studies* review of the original set as calling it a “treasure chest of information,” and the same is true of the abridged version, which is about the size of a standard dictionary and can save anyone doing work on American women writers many hours of library research.

Warren French, who for decades has papered our editorial office walls with change-of-address cards, reports from Swansea, New Orleans, New Hampshire, Indianapolis, Madagascar, Tonganoxie or somewhere on a significant roundup of the usual suspects: *IN MANORS AND ALLEYS: A Casebook on the American Detective Film*. By Jon Tuska. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. \$49.95 John Tuska writes in the Introduction to this revised version of his earlier book that it has been “rewritten and restructured” to provide “its definitive form so that all that ever need be added to any future edition would be an update.” He certainly lives up to his promise. All that can be added to this review in awestruck response to his 462-page account is that Tuska goes far beyond just detective films and trends in the genre to provide all the information and gossip about everyone ever connected with him. This is certainly a comprehensive compilation that will require only supplements with possibly some glossy stills to match the text better than the 36 well-chosen but dully reproduced ones included here.

AMERICAN HORRORS: Essays on the Modern American Horror Film, edited by Gregory A. Waller, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988, cloth \$34.95, paper \$14.50. William Graebner writes: Using arguments from some of the twelve (mostly previously published) essays in this volume, I was almost able to convince my doubting wife that even ordinary horror films like *Friday the 13th* are worth seeing. Almost. We settled for agreement that most horror films were worth studying and writing about. Highlights of this rich and complex collection include R. H. W. Dillard on *Night of the Living Dead* (1968); Virginia Wright Wexman on *Rosemary's Baby* (1968); Vera Dika on the late-1970s “stalker” film; J. P. Telotte on *Halloween* as the story of failed perception and understanding; Allison Graham on the bleak world view of Brian De Palma; and Vivian Sobchack on the horror film as an exploration of the decline of bourgeois patriarchal and familial culture. There are no cultural historians among the contributors, but a number of authors briefly attempt to establish an historical context for particular films and developments.

Here is a good example of a book too specialized for inclusion in our reviews section, yet of use to enough scholars in American Studies so that it merits comment in OBNA. We sent it to David Grimsted, formerly of our Editorial Board,

and he reports: **DIRECTORY OF HISTORIC AMERICAN THEATRES**, edited by John W. Frick and Carlton Ward. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987, \$45.00. Carrying on work begun by Gene Chesley, the editors have compiled valuable data on about 1250 extant theatres, located in every state but Alaska, built before 1915 that originally featured live performances, theatrical or musical. For over 900 of these, basic architectural, historic and current use information is provided in an easy-to-find format. It's heartening to learn how many of these structures still fulfill respectable dramatic and communal functions, but the book's chief value may be to help local people learn a bit of the heritage of these places to better the chances for preservation of the many buildings now vacant or used as warehouses. Both text and the eighty pictures testify to a love of theater in surprising places from Damariscotta, Maine to Ybor City, Florida, from Hot Springs, South Dakota to Socorro, New Mexico.

James Shortridge's **KAW VALLEY LANDSCAPES: A Traveller's Guides to Northeastern Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1988.** cloth, \$22.50; paper, \$7.95, is a remarkable book which might be described as a tour-guide to places you probably did not know you wanted to see. But you should, for to understand them is to understand connections with which our field is supposed to deal, connections between topography, ethnicity, race, assimilation, the built environment, Native American cultures—one hesitates to list more for fear of appearing to exaggerate.

My word “masquerading” is unfair, for this does work as a guide-book which will take you to a place on a road at which the author can explain how that, right over there, looks the way it does because of the interaction of glaciation, East European immigrants and the new shopping center we passed .065 miles back. Shortridge is a geographer in a tradition which too many people in American Studies do not know exists. Like Walter Kollmorgen, to whom *Kaw Valley Landscapes* is dedicated, he is on our frequency. He deals with contexts, physical, cultural and social.

Bud Hirsch covers Native American literature for us; here are his reactions to two anthologies. **RECOVERING THE WORD: Essays on Native American Literature**, edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. \$17.95. This superb volume, like Brian Swann's earlier collection *Smoothing the Ground*, offers a rich and varied interdisciplinary selection of essays which should prove indispensable to all students, teachers, and scholars of Native American literature. **NATIVE AMERICAN FOLKLORE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY PERIODICALS**, edited by William M. Clements, Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1986. \$21.95. The twenty-one essays in this enjoyable and important anthology, chosen “to represent pioneering work in the study of Native American Folklore,” will effectively acquaint readers with the various theories and concerns which occupied students

during this formative period in the history of the discipline.

Rich Horwitz writes, Richard O. Curry is to be congratulated for assembling twenty-five essays that provide a critical history of ways that the Bill of Rights has recently been sacrificed in the name of national security. In *FREEDOM AT RISK: Secrecy, Censorship, and Repression in the 1980s* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988. \$29.95), professors, reports, lawyers and editors provide ample evidence that the Reagan administration in particular has aggressively limited the ways that the public can learn about and hold the federal government accountable for its actions. Apparently small administrative changes have made it easier for federal agencies to conduct unauthorized wiretaps, spread misinformation, infiltrate domestic political organizations and restrict access to policy deliberations. The book provides valuable details on ways that changes in the administration of the Freedom of Information Act (including retroactive restrictions of previously public documents) and limitations on scholarly expression (including black lists) threaten the work of Americanists in particular.

Rich Horwitz goes on to describe a PROJECT of his own. He is negotiating a contract to publish a collection of reprinted and original essays in a book, "Exporting American Studies: Lessons in Educational Trade." He welcomes your suggestions. The focus, he continues, will be criticism of the political, economic, academic and ethical practices of international education about the United States. In what ways do USIS programs, Fulbright lectureships and the like work for better understanding of the U.S., subservience to the U.S., or something else altogether? What are we to do about it? For example, the edition will include a report on Horwitz's own field research on Americanists in the Republic of China—where/how they were trained, how they now apply their training, where they stand in ROC social structure, where they look for information about the United States, how they apply it, what they think of the U.S. (vs. the ROC), and how they stand relative to it. We have all heard the polemics about intercultural understanding and cultural imperialism, but in fact what are its agents doing? He is especially interested in finding or soliciting more essays that address actual participants and events in and around American Studies as an academic enterprise outside the U.S. and essays that evaluate practical strategies for progressive critics. Among the most important issues must be ways that inequalities (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, race, age, class, sexual orientation) figure in the internationalizing of American Studies. Please send your suggestions to Rich Horwitz, American Studies, 202 JB, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

John Braeman has this to say of *SKETCHES FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* BY HENRY ADAMS. Edited by Edward Chalfant. Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String press, 1986. \$25.00: This volume reprints twenty-two "sketches" that Henry Adams published in the

North American Review between January 1872 and October 1875 plus one (a review of Bayard Taylor's translation of Goethe's *Faust*) that Adams withdrew when in page proof. Most of the pieces are reviews of—or to be more accurate, reflections upon—contemporary works of historical scholarship, including Edward A. Freeman's *Historical Essays* and *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Fustel de Coulanges' *The Ancient City*, the first volume of Bishop Stubbs's *The Constitutional History of England*, volume ten of George Bancroft's *History of the United States*, Sir Henry Maine's *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* and J. R. Green's *A Short History of the English People*.

Since most of the pieces were published unsigned, specialists will be grateful for Chalfant's detective work in identifying those by Adams. And nonspecialists will welcome his making these important sources for tracking Adams' intellectual development readily available.

Here is a report by Angel Kwolek-Folland on *SISTERS IN SPIRIT: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*. Maureen U. Beecher and Lavinia F. Anderson, eds. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1987. \$21.95: This collection of nine essays and two poems is a feminist history and analysis of twentieth century Mormonism that calls for a positive reevaluation of nineteenth century theology. The authors represent several fields, including religious studies, creative writing, history and English. It is a "political" book in that it calls for changes in the modern Mormon church, using nineteenth century interpretations to bolster a twentieth century vision of women's equality. Both formal and "folk" theology of the nineteenth century, the authors claim, gave Mormon women a more powerful and equal role within the church and community.

The book adds an important voice to both contemporary and historical discussions of the role of women in American religious life, and the impact of theological change on images of women and women's experience. Further, it speaks specifically to the ongoing debate within the Mormon church over the current status and role of women. In the process, it demonstrates more generally the diversity of American religious experience as well as the cultural biases of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

A second unusual approach to Mormon culture is the topic of the following, from Haskell Springer: *SHIPS, SAINTS, AND MARINERS: A Maritime Encyclopedia of Mormon Migration, 1830-1890*. By Conway B. Sonne. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. 1987. \$19.50. This sequel to the author's *Saints on the Seas*, organized alphabetically by ship's name, is not only an annotated record of Mormon "migration" (including several sorts of travel to the United States), but also a useful compendium of information on the ships in which they sailed. Some of the annotations are also interesting in that they comment on matters of sociological and anthropological interest such as community organization, food and medical treatment.