

# Book Reviews

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Editorial note: Book reviews are edited for typographical errors, and otherwise are printed as received.



## Reviews

THE SENSES OF HUMOR: Self and Laughter in Modern America. By Daniel Wickberg. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1998.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN AMERICAN HUMOR. Edited by David E. E. Sloane. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 1998.

REBELLIOUS LAUGHTER: People's Humor in American Culture. By Joseph Boskin. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 1997.

It should not be necessary to defend the serious study of humor as a social, cultural, psychological, artistic, and intellectual phenomenon. Investigations by respected thinkers are readily to be found from classical literature to the present. Since 1976 a field of humor studies has developed, building on the initiative taken by the British Psychological Society which sponsored a conference on humor in Wales. There is now an International Society for Humor Studies which holds conferences every year, alternating venues in the United States and abroad (the next one is in Osaka, Japan, summer 2000), an international journal in its thirteenth year (of which I am editor, since July 1 of this year), an American Humor Studies Association with conferences and sections at professional meetings, its own journal, and newsletter, and with a growing literature in disciplines from anthropology to zoology (literally!) including history, sociology, psychology (experimental, social, clinical, educational, personality, cognitive), linguistics (a heavy contributor), philosophy (quite a shelf on humor theory), criticism in all the arts and modes of expression (literature, film, performance, media, art, music), folklore, and several more. There are web sites, a Center for the Study of Humor [www.otal.umd.edu/amst/humor](http://www.otal.umd.edu/amst/humor) center—see useful links—, in short a community of researchers interested in the topic.

The writers of the three books reviewed here are to one degree or another familiar with this large, healthy, and intellectually important field, but they make little use of it in their work. To be fair, all three books have specific focus which does not always demand reference to humor studies in general, but all three would be improved by more familiarity with, or at least more serious attention to what has been going on in that arena. My late

colleague, Gene Wise, lamented the information explosion which would make it impossible for a researcher to even survey anywhere near all of the pertinent literature, much less have the command of a field which was the traditional starting point for publishing. No one can be held responsible for the inclusiveness which was once expected, however, when even a cursory spot check of references and indexes indicates that many of the major contributors are ignored entirely and the choices for citation seem arbitrary, there is a cause for concern. Perhaps one of the important tasks of the International Society and of the journal is to promote better awareness of what is happening in humor studies today.

Daniel Wickberg's specific focus is indeed not really humor but the intellectual history of the concept of the sense of humor, mostly from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. However his subtitle "self and laughter in modern America" promises that understanding how humor has been understood has important implications, and while most of his inquiry takes the form of tracing how intellectuals have viewed, there is enough discussion of jokes, vaudeville, burlesque, and radio, Mark Twain and Will Rogers, women's humor, and other humor phenomena *per se*, to carry the inquiry beyond the argument that how the notion of humor is framed is a part of the political and cultural situation. The author tells us in the beginning, somewhat cryptically, "humor has always been about the ontological status of persons, about persons both as things and as more than things; accordingly that has been my theme" (5). Readers able to decipher this claim will want to read the book to see how it plays out. Those interested in what Foucault has to say on just about any subject are also good candidates.

The first two chapters of *The Senses of Humor* seem like pretty straight history of ideas, or in this case perhaps more aptly the history of a term which has very limited denotative meaning and broad, interesting connotative meanings. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are more ambitious and more interesting, focusing less on how various philosophers have defined and employed the term and more on its connection with cultural phenomena and the ways in which humor can be used to judge popular belief and behavior, personality, and values. When, in Chapter 3 for instance, Wickburg connects the old question of women's sense of humor to beliefs about how women were expected to think and to act, his observations are interesting and useful. Similarly in Chapter 4, the discussion of vaudeville, radio humor, and other more modern expressions of humor keeps the reader's attention more effectively. Here the author cites a few people who actually study humor as well as more general intellectual theorists—e.g. Elliott Oring, Albert McLean, Jr., Robert Allen—however there is a large literature devoted to these topics which is ignored here, and most of it is at least as valuable. One must remember that the claim of the book absolves its author from responsibility for studying the humor *per se*, but it is still fair to observe that when he stays close to his very specific concern for how the sense of humor is defined, instruction is limited, and when he ventures out from that tight corner, he necessarily competes with broader studies of humor in its social, political, and cultural contexts.

David Sloane's collection is for the most part gleaned from papers delivered at the Cancun conference (who says that humor scholars aren't a fun-loving crew?), sponsored by the American Humor Studies Association and the Mark Twain Circle. Most of them are very brief, and would profit greatly from being fleshed out to true article or chapter proportions. Humor in popular culture is examined in two papers on "Beavis and Butthead," a piece looks at the writing of P. J. O'Rourke, a few chapters look at aspects of women and humor, while others deal with writers Edith Wharton, Mark Twain, and Edgar Allan Poe. All are respectable and interesting despite their underdevelopment for

the scholarly print medium, and collectively they make a book worth adding to the humor scholar's library. A chapter on bibliography and humor courses would have profited greatly from a visit to the web site of the International Society for Humor Studies, which has links to two very extensive bibliographies and a cache of courses on humor. The author rightly expresses concern about the unavailability of adequate primary source anthologies to use as textbooks, but help is on the way: I know of at least three in progress, all due out fairly soon. Sloane's *Afterward* calls for more study of humor, and of course this reviewer can do nothing but applaud the attention to the subject he has studied for more than three decades, but good scholarly works build on what has been done and is being done, so it is crucial to insist that scholars know the literature and know the scholarly community or field that has been developing so powerfully for so long now.

Joseph Boskin has made important contributions to humor studies for many years now, both through his writing and his participation at conferences and seminars devoted to the topic. His work is particularly valuable for American studies scholars since he has been concerned with historical and political implications of various phenomena from the Sambo figure to Burlesque theater, to joke cycles. The present work is largely concerned with joke cycles, and unlike an interpreter like Alan Dundes, for instance, Boskin seeks to explain their significance less in psychoanalytic terms (though he does not shy away entirely from that temptation) than as tied to sociological factors in urban life and in the realities of post-World War Two America, particularly the 1950s and the 1960s. For instance Boskin interprets jokes as oppositional to the Cold War *zeitgeist*, not necessarily for a literal commentary in the text, but because the theme of the joke—for instance elephant jokes—reflects concerns about power, size, awkwardness, and other properties which can be transferred from the elephant to people or to nations. The author discusses racial, ethnic, and sexist joking and the question of political correctness and opposition to it. *Rebellious Laughter* is simply chock full of powerful claims for the meaning of humor as a way of understanding, negotiating and framing, and expressing social concerns. The reader will undoubtedly feel that some of them hold up better than others, but they are all interesting, provocative, and ultimately useful both for their specific, intended historical, social and cultural insights and for the argument of the importance of humor for the American studies scholar.

Taken individually or even as a three-book entry, these offerings are worthy of respect and appreciation, but they are of rather limited importance (this is perhaps less true for Joseph Boskin's than for the other two). As part of the literature of humor studies their value increases considerably.

University of Maryland

Lawrence E. Mintz

RETELLING U.S. RELIGIOUS HISTORY. Edited by Thomas Tweed. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1997.

Thomas Tweed, who teaches at the University of North Carolina and co-chairs the North American Religions Section of the American Academy of Religion, has gathered an important collection. Its subject is rethinking patterns for interpreting religion in North American history. Its overall theme is adequately accounting for pluralism. Its foil is the type of survey centered on white Protestants which dominated the field a generation ago, as well as fallback versions of such surveys featuring Protestant insiders in conflict with a motley crew of "outsiders." Just as American Studies scholars have flogged consensus approaches for some time, similar complaints are common in the subfield of U.S. religion.

Indeed for years scholars like Catherine Albanese (who appears here as a sort of senior mentor) and Sidney Mead have voiced related themes. In this regard Tweed's group breaks less new ground than first meets the eye. However, they make their case in a fresh and dynamic voice, extending past work on religious pluralism and marking a sort of coming of age for a cross-section of scholars who earned their Ph.D.s during the past two decades and are emerging as leaders.

Tweed's excellent introduction situates the collection within historiographical traditions and recent theoretical debates. As he notes, once we presuppose a post-canon-busting stage of U.S. religion scholarship, it becomes less clear what should replace older patterns to structure courses and surveys. Underlining pluralism is necessary, but is it sufficient? Using literary theory to problematize historical writing is illuminating, but can we function without periodization schemes and patterns of organization? This leads to the question: pluralism with respect to which dimensions of religion and considered from what standpoints? This collection cannot fully resolve such questions, but it significantly advances the discussion through wrestling with them.

Several essays take one dimension of culture—norms regulating sexuality for Ann Taves, ritual for Tamar Frankiel, contact and gift exchange for Albanese—and experiment with broad overviews of U.S. religion highlighting this dimension. These are stimulating articles although sometimes spread rather thin. Roger Finke's interpretation of church membership trends as function of free market entrepreneurship by clergy partially reflects this approach although here the thinness comes more from a single-factor focus than from pluralistic breadth. All these authors make persuasive cases for applying and/or testing their approaches more widely.

The best article in this category is Ann Braude's "Women's History *Is* American Religious History." At first glance the category of women's experience might seem even more likely to spread an article unmanageably thin, but Braude makes a brilliant selection of case studies with far-reaching interpretive resonance. She argues that the standard themes of declension, feminization of religion, and secularization are revealed as deeply flawed if women are factored into the analysis, and that each theme reflects male anxieties about a pervasive pattern: relative male absence and strong female participation among the laity, coexisting uneasily with male dominance of religious leadership. Thus Braude—strongly reinforced by Taves and others—places women's presence and the gender implications of scholarly frameworks at the center of future research.

Other essays start from geographic regions remote from canonical settings like Puritan Massachusetts, then experiment with overviews of history from these centers. William Westfall offers thoughtful reflections from a Canadian vantage point. Especially notable is Laurie Maffly-Kipp's masterful overview of religion from the Pacific rim. Like Braude, she is selective and carefully qualified yet wonderfully suggestive as she explores centuries of interplay among Russians, Chinese, Japanese, British, Anglo-Americans, and native peoples of Hawaii, Alaska, California, and Mexico. Joel Martin offers an excellent article on relations between Creeks, African-Americans, and Euro-Americans. It features the volume's most forceful discussion of race and colonialism and stimulating (although somewhat sketchy) suggestions for extending his approach. Besides these three authors, other contributors touch on colonialism and imperial expansion in less focused ways. Sometimes they subsume it under a larger category of cultural contact, thus embracing the tradeoff of downplaying Euro-American power (highlighting pluralism and harmonious cultural mixing) at the cost of reduced emphasis on conflict.

Thus within an overall commitment to pluralism and multi-perspectivalism, loose priorities emerge: cultural exchange and hybridity, gender and sexuality, geographic



space, and the interplay of race, colonialism, and global economics. Overall this is a commendable contribution and its strongest articles like Braude's and Maffly-Kipp's are indispensable. Future scholarship should extend these approaches in relation to work on the black Atlantic and Catholicism, among other topics with relatively thin presence here. Moreover, the authors demonstrate that the goal of retelling history to emphasize multiple geographic sites, dimensions of religion, and colonial/postcolonial encounters is not relevant solely to "outsiders" (as defined by Protestant elites)—it also requires ongoing rethinking of majority religions. Now is an exciting time to work in the overlapping territory between American Studies and U.S. religious history, and this book helps to explain why. It deserves a wide readership.

University of Tennessee

Mark Hulsether

UNPAINTED TO THE LAST: "Moby-Dick" and Twentieth-Century American Art. By Elizabeth A. Schultz. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 1995.

Beginning with *Moby-Dick's* implicit but fundamental premise that "to see well is to know more" (11), Elizabeth A. Schultz documents with staggering detail the extent to which pictorial artists have responded to the novel, furnishing readers with clearer ways to see and deeper ways to know Melville's mighty book. Ranging from both the earliest illustrated edition of *Moby-Dick* (appearing in 1896, five years after Melville's death) and Rockwell Kent's brilliantly realized engravings of 1930 (which helped to ensure canonical status and a wide reading audience for the novel), to various post-1970s critical, satiric and comic challenges to the novel's status as a cultural icon and literary "classic," Schultz demonstrates foremost the novel's "importance as a mirror of America's changing culture" (125). In this way, the finest illustrations and representations of *Moby-Dick*, Schultz argues, have a dual effect: to return readers to Melville's words, thereby giving them primacy" (15), and to turn a mirror to the larger historical moment, providing an instructive and intriguing cultural barometer.

Although *Moby-Dick* is, by Schultz's measure, "the most continuously, frequently, and diversely depicted of American literary works" (3), every illustration, every representation of the novel remains, in Ishmael's words, "but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught." In other words, Melville's novel paradoxically both invites and resists representation; with its full complexity unillustrated, *Moby-Dick*, like the whale which gives the book its title, in Ishmael's memorable phrase, "must remain unpainted to the last."

Meticulously researched, Schultz's study examines with equal eye both the novel and the art that it inspired. Surveying the diverse, often experimental responses of twentieth-century American artists to the novel, Schultz demonstrates that Melville's well-noted pluralistic sensibilities elicit pluralistic visual responses: "That these works reflect such a range of contemporary aesthetic movements—pop art, funk art, or magic realism; assume such a plurality of forms—a photograph, an installation, a house, or bridge; and embrace such a variety of themes-involving personal, national, and global politics, indicates that the complexity of *Moby-Dick's* narrative structure and open-endedness, the heterogeneity of its modes and the ambiguity of its symbols continue to intrigue American artists" (258). Schultz's thoughtful treatment confirms that these artists have repeatedly both "countered and confirmed various cultural responses to *Moby-Dick*: literary currents, trends in the art world, political movements, and the transformation of aspects of the novel—its tableaux, characters, and images as well as the

immensity of its questions and the ambiguity of its answers—into consumer products and a male adventure story” (325).

Pursuing the whale as it glides across the imaginative vision of a staggering number of artists, *Unpainted to the Last*, to be sure, is Melvillean in aim and execution. If at times Schultz’s voyage out feels discursive—steering us for example through comic book versions of *Moby-Dick*—we learn to journey with her, and are in the end amply rewarded. Particularly impressive are Schultz’s detailed discussions of the important influence of Melville’s book on various abstract expressionists, especially Frank Stella and Jackson Pollack.

Rich, dazzling, and absorbing throughout *Unpainted to the Last* earns its place alongside Christopher Sten’s *Savage Eye: Melville and the Visual Arts* (1991) and Robert K. Wallace’s *Melville and Turner: Spheres of Love and Fear* (1992), as seminal works in the largely uncharted field of Melville’s relationship to the visual arts. Impeccably researched, lucidly argued, and amply illustrated (including two-hundred-thirty-two illustrations and sixty-one color plates), Schultz’s study deserves high praise for its keen- and equal-eyed exploration of the rich interplay between verbal and visual texts. Two indispensable appendices complete the volume; one lists the illustrated editions of *Moby-Dick* and the other related autonomous works of art. Ten years in the making, the end product of Schultz’s efforts establishes beyond contention the position of *Unpainted to the Last* for students of Melville and *Moby-Dick*, and anyone interested in conscientious analyses of the relationship between verbal and visual texts. Schultz’s engaging and energetic book will remain an instructive resource for future inquiries into Melville and the visual arts—one for discussion, one for points of departure.

Fudan University, PR China

Kenneth J. Speirs

IMAGINING THE NATION: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent. By David Leiwei Li. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1998.

David Leiwei Li’s *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent* is a well researched, precisely written text that contributes much to the fields of Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, and literary criticism. The author demonstrates intellectual breadth and versatility as he attempts to map an Asian American corpus of literature. Like all racialized literatures, this body of work is crosshatched by overdetermined structures of representation, canonization, regimes of alterity, and the nation-state’s coercive thrusts, both towards marginalization and assimilation. Li navigates these dense and tricky areas with remarkable theoretical dexterity to create a rich and valuable work.

There are, however, a few shortcomings and aporias that need to be addressed. Li is very aware that the limited exposure of Asian American texts (both critical and fictional) has highlighted questions of representation, indeed this is one of the underlying themes of the book. And while there is a certain amount of prescriptiveness in requiring “minority” texts to represent everyone, I would argue that Li’s narrative of Asian American emergence needs to be more inclusive. Simply admitting that his work “does not encompass the full range of Asian American ethnicities” (16) does little to undercut his troubling tendency of privileging the Chinese and Japanese American experience. One is left with the impression of Asian Americanness as being overwhelmingly constituted by Chinese and Japanese Americans with all other groups relegated to the sidelines. This failure not only results in a monologic narrative of Asian American literary emergence, but weakens Li’s reading of texts by “other” Asian Americans like the South Asian Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* (1989).

All writers dealing with racial identity have to balance between the tensions of creating an imaginary, unitary Asian American identity necessary for political mobilization and the impossibility of such a task, given the incredible diversity of peoples labeled as such. Li, instead of juggling this contradiction, leans towards the former approach, creating a homogenized Asian American body, largely devoid of the “messiness of historical ebb and flow” (124). Surely a text foregrounding the nation should, for example, delve into the historical fractures and fissures between immigrants from various Asian countries that have produced different understandings of what it means to be classified as Asian American, if one indeed, accepts such classification at all. There is little discussion of the immigrant’s differing relations to the state they have left. Reading the Sikh community’s tense relation to India in Mukherjee’s work would have complicated the dichotomy of “mother land” versus “adopted land” that structures much of Li’s discussion of the various literary texts. Asian American literature does have to mediate between the specter of “motherland” (due to the relegation of non-white bodies to “someplace not here”) and the American state. However, agency, in this formulation, is always constricted by the overarching hegemony of the nation-state. Is Asian American agency, then, always contingent?

One of the aspects I like most about Li’s work is the comparative approach he takes between Asian American and Black literary and cultural movements. His discussion, for example, of the Black Aesthetic Movement deepens the discussion on similar problems in Asian American communities. But I would like to see more. If the Asian American body “is primarily a colored body, consanguineous with other colored bodies that are conspicuously missing from the Republic of Letters” (82), where are the other colored bodies? Native Americans (who were displaced to make room for immigrants) and Latinos (also struggling with “immigrant acts”) for example, are absent from the text. Their absence keeps the black/white racial Manicheanism intact, with Asian Americans sandwiched between the white normative Subject and the resistant, quintessential Black Other.

Part II, “Claiming America,” offers cogent commentary on the difficulties inherent in canon formation, or the institutionalization of certain texts deemed more representational than others. Given this understanding, one would expect more self-reflexivity on Li’s role in constructing an Asian American literary genealogy. I have tremendous problems, not only with which texts are included and omitted, but with where Li locates the beginning of Asian American literature. He introduces us in Part I, “Emergence,” to two key players—Frank Chin, the “ethnic nationalist” and Maxine Hong Kingston, the “diasporic feminist.” The detailed story that Li constructs, of an angry, hypermasculine Chin and the conciliatory Kingston who perpetuates culture tradition is a gendered, heterosexist one where women are the cultural heart of the nation and men, its warriors. This gendered origin-story reflects the inherent failure of a linear narrative that insists that Asian American literature began somewhere and followed a single trajectory. Not only is heteroglossia subsumed, but the narrative repeats one of the most powerful engines of national pedagogical narratives—the family. The nuclear family, a metonym for the nation-state, as Paul Gilroy argues, is subtly reinscribed by Li’s story of the harsh father and gentle mother giving birth to Asian American letters. That there could be different and simultaneous moments of beginning, that there were important texts that came before Chin and Kingston such as John Okada’s *No-No Boy*, that alternate resistant genealogies should resist patriarchal, heterosexist configurations, are not entertained by Li.

Li’s linear progressive narrative also reflects an interesting bias; he plays scant attention to works not embraced by the mainstream literary establishment. All texts,

mainstream or not, have specific and differential relationships to regimes of power. Aiiieeeee!'s lack of mainstream literary distribution, for example, instead of being dismissed as a shortcoming and constraint, could have been theorized as also occupying realms resistant to homogenizing circuits of literary publication and marketing. What kinds of theoretical interventions do texts like the short stories of Sui Sin Far that circumvent normative circuits of distribution make in the production of Asian American identity and literature?

Finally, the book's well-executed contextual readings is accomplished at the expense of close textual reading. One is left with little sense of the magic of these literary texts, their evocativeness of image, their lushness or sparsity of prose. As an African/Americanist, I have not read all the texts Li mentions and there is little to encourage me. Missing is an "erotics of reading", a politics of pleasure that affectively intertwines critical explication and imaginative text. Not only does the absence of pleasure fail to encourage ventures into the field of Asian American studies, but pivotal questions like structure, language use, and genre are glossed over.

Overall, while it was excellently researched, and demonstrated tremendous theoretical dexterity, David Li's *Imagining the Nation* lacks self-reflexivity, fails to be inclusive, and does not encourage me to further explore this field.

University of California-Riverside

Hershini Bhana

DESTINATION CULTURE: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage. By Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1998.

*Destination Culture* is a collection of essays written between 1988 and 1995; most of them began life as speeches at an assortment of conferences at or about museum exhibitions and curated performances. The coherence of the book suffers from its scattered origins.

Some chapters, such as "Objects of Ethnography," are long, carefully reasoned studies of important historical and philosophic problems—in this case, the development of modern exhibition techniques and how the process of creating a display may alter the meaning of the artifacts presented. Some chapters are merely mystifying: a too-long essay on the 1990 Los Angeles Festival of the Arts—originally, a commissioned critique of that event—does not describe the origins and intentions of the Festival with enough detail for the reader to contextualize pages of discussion of things we have not seen and are given little assistance in imagining. A short chapter on a 1993 exhibition at the Museum for African Art in New York reads like a smidgen of incidental criticism in yesterday's newspaper. The concluding chapter, on bad taste, shadowboxes with Jane and Michael Stern's *Encyclopedia of Bad Taste* (HarperCollins, 1990) without ever mentioning the authors' names or seeing the book for what it is: a product of popular culture which is also another milestone in the ongoing class struggle between the late Clement Greenberg (and an army of high-toned haters of *kitsch*) and the rest of us.

The exhibition and the museum (tourism is a pilgrimage to a museum) have come to be of increasing importance to American Studies. *American Quarterly* now carries long, analytic reviews of shows. John Sears' *Sacred Places* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), a trail-blazing study of America's earliest tourist attractions and what people went looking for in the nineteenth-century landscape, has just been reissued. Books like Eric Sandeen's *Picturing an Exhibition* (University of New Mexico Press, 1995) take the content of the museum-hung show and its very occurrence in history as key cultural incidents. Neil Harris, Robert Rydell, and others have made careers out of World's Fairs,

those giant expositions of anything and everything which, in the spectacle-starved epoch before TV, amounted to America's windows on the rest of the planet. Layers of architecture, art, machinery, educational theory, politics, live people, and prize jelly were all mixed together in a piquant visual lasagna that scholars have barely tasted.

What makes exhibitions endlessly fascinating is that the artifact, when mounted under glass with seductive lighting and an authoritative text nearby, resists all efforts at proper academic categorization. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is at her best when she points out where and how the ethnographic object—a spoon, a shoe, a piece of dried meat, a curio—slips over the line into the realm of art; where the exhibition becomes performance or drama; where the material world creates immaterial feelings in those who observe it under controlled conditions. This sideways slippage makes every exhibition an occasion for multi-disciplinary analysis but, until recently, the tendency has been to treat the show as a simple text, with the verbal content (the label, the catalog) counting for more than the display format or the formal qualities of the objects of inquiry. By re-complicating the exhibition, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests that texts simply won't do. "Like the picturesque, in which paintings set the standard for experience," she writes, "museum exhibitions transform how people look at their own immediate environs." (51). We are what we see—and how we see it.

One fine-grained case study, "Exhibiting Jews," traces the history of important displays of Jewish ritual objects from the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 through the New York World's Fair of 1939-40. A model of its kind, the essay shows how a number of Jewish collectors and thinkers—including the greatgrandfather of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss—managed to conjure up a kind of shadow state in the collective mind's eye over the course of time, in advance of the creation of Israel, and how, in the process, they also defined the categories into which curators still place artifacts connected with religious practices. So, in addition to inventing a Jewish nation, these exhibitions asserted that Jewishness was a religion to be understood just as the Christian majority understood their own beliefs. Given the current interest in race, class, gender, and ethnicity, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett here provides an excellent working model for examining the kinds of exhibitions and performances—from polka festivals and TV sitcoms to touring shows of African art—through which society often sees these issues in the flesh for the first time.

University of Minnesota

Karal Ann Marling

RECIPES FOR READING: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories. Edited by Anne L. Bower. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

Community cookbooks (fundraising, charitable) compiled by church and service organizations are abundant in the United States (the genre dates from the Civil War), but are ephemeral and rarely collected by libraries. Consequently little research work has been done with this mostly female legacy. Anyone reading this book, however, will be energized to pursue this rich resource from his or her own disciplinary perspective. Anne Bower has assembled a set of thirteen previously unpublished essays that, through their topics and exemplary writing style, engage the reader.

The essays are arranged into three sections. The first, organized around theoretical and historical issues, includes a history of "charities" that contains a valuable listing of libraries currently collecting these cookbooks (Janice Bluestein Longone). Another entry discusses the stories to be found in cookbooks and compares them with other feminist

sources such as diaries, quilts, gardens, and letters (Anne Bower). Finally, a linguist examines the language of recipes using a comparison of pie-crust recipes (Colleen Cotter).

The second section contains four essays each based upon a reading of discrete sets of texts. Four Methodist cookbooks from Houston, Missouri, yield a nice discussion about how communities work (Ann Romines); three from Mormon Relief Societies establish a feminine culinary genealogy (Marion Bishop). A set from Ontario and Manitoba emphasize the translation of an oral form into a written discourse (Elizabeth J. McDougall), while *The Black Family Dinner Quilt Cookbook* applies a quilting analogy to an eclectic mix of recipes and stories (Sally Bishop Shigley).

The third section of the book contains a diverse set of six essays of which three are especially relevant to students of American culture. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett uses a German Jewish volume from Denver to discuss the role of cookbooks in "fairs," charitable events descended from Civil War Sanitary Fairs that benefited military veterans and their dependents. Alice Ross provides a delightful tale of nineteenth-century life in Smithville, New York, based on an unpublished cookbook and diaries. Nelljean M. Rice uses several sources to analyze "Kitchen Klatter," an Iowa radio program that was syndicated for forty years throughout the Midwest and helped to create an entire regional foodways. The remaining three essays in this section are based on Latin American cookbooks. One explores the range of women's discourse from private to public using an Argentine example (Nina M. Scott). The second traces the establishment of a Mexican national cuisine (Jeffrey M. Pilcher) and the third discusses Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate* (Cecelia Lawless). These three pieces contain considerably less emphasis than the others on the concept of community.

The overall tone of this volume is powerful, although some of the voices are a little over-the-top with feminist rhetoric (cookbooks as a way for women to have power in the public sphere) and angst about food studies being taken seriously. Many point to Susan J. Leonardi's 1989 article "Recipes for Reading: Pasta Salad, Lobster à la Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie" in *PMLA* as a catalyst for their own work. The contributors in this volume deserve praise for their careful considerations of a few special books. Now we need to devise ways to utilize larger samples ordered through time and space and thereby to make some revealing observations on American culture regions.

University of Kansas

Barbara G. Shortridge

TENNIS: A Cultural History. By Heiner Gillmeister. New York: New York University Press. 1998.

This is an outstanding, indeed classic, history of tennis from the twelfth century until the beginnings of modern lawn tennis up until World War One. It is of an intricate and scholarly character involving multiple languages, extensive ancient and modern illustrations, and a plethora of types of documentation. The style throughout is like one of the earliest names for the game, a "jeu de bond" in which we bounce back and forth between rival interpretations and refutations of origins, game rules, game courts, game terms, game innovators, game regulators, and dominant athletes, until the scholarly hunt finally and breathlessly concludes. The bulk of the book, and its greatest interest, lies in the reconstruction of its origins beginning with mediaeval tournaments. It is contended that while war gave rise to warlike imitations in the tournaments, so in turn, the tournaments in the hands of the folk, became very rough forms of football, and that these in turn gave rise to relatively more peaceful ball games such as tennis, cricket, and billiards. But all of

these were in the first place in the hands of the folk rather than in the hands of royalty as has often been supposed, because of the latter's access to written records. "At some point in the twelfth century the clergy banned by the authority of the church from the public riots called football, thought of ways to improve their situation. What they wanted was to avoid the worst excesses of the game, its violence, and to preserve the excitement of shots at goal and brilliant saves" (9). Early forms of tennis therefore involved kicking the ball as well as hitting it with the hand. But civilizing it was something else. As played in collegiate church yards it was often said to be characterized by heinous and blasphemous words, senseless curses, squabbles, disputes, and battles. The church yard world was full of frocked John McEnroes many of whom were excommunicated for their bad play habits. Knowing about these problems in management is something of a relief for those of us who still persist in trash talking while at tennis.

Of particular interest is the hunt throughout for the origins of such terms as tennis, love, fifteen, thirty, etc. Tennis turns out to be from the French cry calling the opponents attention "Tenez" which is to say "Hold your attention I am about to serve." Love is from Danish "lof" meaning honor. Which is to say that when you are at love and are therefore losing, all you have is your honor. The fifteens involved in the scores refer to the gambling odds which were apparently seldom absent from tennis games. Fifteen sous in French made a Grand Penny, and sixty sous was the limit allowed the poor folk as their tennis gambling excess.

The latter and smaller portion of the book is about the relative extinction of traditional tennis after the French Revolution, and its revival as lawn tennis in France, England, United States, and Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century. Here the bouncing ball is now between those who claimed they invented the new game. Who did or didn't use the new rubber ball. Who were amateurs and not athletes. Who were women and had to find other courts to play on. Who were rivals from different countries. Who were Wasps from England or the colonies. And who finally had a Germany champion in Otto Froitzheim in 1907.

In sum, this is a life work by Gillmeister and a comprehensive work of historical scholarship on tennis. Amazingly it is also a fun read.

University of Pennsylvania

Brian Sutton-Smith

**O BRAVE NEW PEOPLE: The European Invention of the American Indian.** By John F. Moffitt and Santiago Sebastián. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1996.

Studies of the Columbian Encounter generally take one of two approaches: the first emphasizes the incomprehension resulting from the collision of two profoundly different cultures, the second argues that Europeans drew upon well-established myths and prejudices to incorporate the New World and its peoples into the Old. Moffitt and Sebastián's *O Brave New People* follows the second type. The two authors, both art historians, examine the "evolving iconographical invention of America" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and argue that it was built out of mythical elements such as "the Noble Savage, the (Ignoble) Cannibal, the Asiatic quasi-Christians, and Amazons, pygmies and giants, the Age of Gold, the Age of Iron, potential Utopias, lost Edens, a Paradise on Earth regained, then another lost again, and so forth" (8).

The book will disappoint readers who might hope to find in European visual representations of American Indians some more creative or sensitive portrayals than appear in the writings of Columbus, Vespucci, or Cortes. If anything, the iconographic

patterns are shown to be more stereotyped than literary ones. Medieval legends of monsters with dog's heads, or no heads at all, were quickly transferred to the Americans, and a survey of woodcuts and engravings accompanying written accounts from 1493 to 1523 shows a pattern of visual plagiarism—images of bare-breasted women and bar-b-qued body parts are copied from one book to another. The authors concede that “The underlying problem that produced this repetitiously simplistic, even caricatured, *indio* portraiture may be simply described as artistic failure” (170). The worst such failures are the topic of the weakest parts of the book, such as a section discussing nineteen prints illustrating a 1554 Zaragoza edition of Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia General de las Indias*, which the printer pirated from an edition of Livy's history of Rome. Given this origin, the resulting juxtaposition of scenes from Roman history with the History of the Conquest lacks interpretive significance. The books' sixty illustrations do include many which have rarely or never been reproduced before, but some are too small or too blurry to show clearly the features of interest, and at least one unusual image discussed, a 1513 map by Turkish geographer Piri Reis, is unfortunately not reproduced. Moreover, I wondered why no attention was given to the images of American Indians done by John White, which are among the most accurate, and only a little to the engravings of Theodor deBry, which are among the most sensational. The discussion of deBry concentrates on revealing the German protestant's motives in vilifying the conquistadors. Moffitt and Sebastián emphasize Spanish materials, and take pains to expose the bias behind *la leyenda negra*.

The book is actually stronger in its analysis of texts than of images. The first chapter examines the myth of an earthly paradise situated in the far east, frequently imagined as being a walled, mountaintop, or island garden, and sometimes identified with Ceylon. Numerous quotations from classical texts and medieval travel writings explain how Columbus on his third voyage could have imagined sailing toward a Paradise situated atop the nipple of the earth. (However, Edmundo O'Gorman's *The Invention of America* and other books have already tackled this question.) Later sections discuss the Amazon myth, the importance of Mandeville's *Travels* for Columbus and others, and the legends of prior discoveries of America by St. Brendan and St. Malo. A number of little-known sources come to light in the book, but the promised analysis of the iconography of the American Indian is disappointing.

University of Oregon

Gordon M. Sayre

NEW WORLD BABEL: Languages and Nations in Early America. By Edward G. Gray. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1999.

Edward Gray's new book provides intriguing historical context for the current struggles of Native Americans to preserve the approximately two hundred distinct indigenous American languages remaining from an estimated 1,000-2,000 different tongues in use at the time of European contact. Crisply written in the “history of ideas” mode, Gray's study traces shifts in thinking about language from early seventeenth-century America to the antebellum United States. The author contends that the modern idea that one's language could indicate civility or savagery was, in fact, a new concept developed during the eighteenth century. Building on the Lockean notion that words had no necessary connection to any kind of stable reality, the Enlightenment view of language abandoned the earlier belief in languages as divine endowments over which their speakers had no control. Instead, eighteenth-century thinkers posited that all languages reflected the unique social and intellectual experiences of their speakers. The impact on attitudes toward



Native American languages was clear, if not swift. While Puritan minister John Eliot could publish a Bible translated into the Massachusetts language in 1663 (because he believed that Native tongues were no necessary obstacle to the Word of God), by 1825 even Thomas Jefferson (a long-time student of Native American languages) came to the unhappy conclusion that the languages of Native Americans indicated distinct and inferior habits of mind.

Gray makes extensive use of English-language printed materials in supporting his case, and his strongest evidence therefore resides in Puritan New England and the early national eastern United States. Concepts of Native language among the Jesuits of New France are discussed briefly, but no mention is made of the language encounter in early Spanish America. These omissions are redeemed by the author's ability to explain abstract theoretical concepts of language with clarity for the non-expert reader, which helps him to craft a convincing interpretation of the ways in which language became tied to national identity (and ultimately, national fate) in early American thought. Less convincing, however, is the author's assertion that Native Americans perceived the language barrier between themselves and Europeans as a defense against cultural intrusion during the era of early colonization. This viewpoint leads the author to rather strained interpretations of Native interactions with printed texts (79), to downplay significant evidence of Native New Englanders' eagerness to teach their language to any willing Puritan (however few were actually willing), and to overlook the incorporation of Native American loanwords (such as *moccasin*, *toboggan*, *succotash*, *tomahawk*) into the early American vernacular.

Gray's study represents an important starting point into an interesting field of inquiry. Princeton University Press is to be commended for preserving the useful scholarly conventions of footnotes and a bibliography in this book. Most significantly, Gray helps his readers understand the process by which the democratic society of the United States became an intensely monolingual society, with tragic consequences for many of the speakers of the continent's Native languages.

St. Lawrence University

Jon W. Parmenter

*STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845.* By Catherine A. Brekus. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1998.

More than 100 evangelical women preached in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America. Between 1740, when the First Great Awakening began in New England, and 1845, when the Second Great Awakening ended, these women struggled to invent a tradition of female religious leadership. Many of them were belittled as unfeminine, eccentric, or worse, but they insisted that God had called them to preach the gospel. They defended women's right to preach long before the twentieth-century battles—over female ordination.

Despite their numbers and remarkable accomplishments—Harriet Livermore preached before the House of Representatives in January 1827—female preachers of this period have been largely forgotten by historians. Historians have studied women's religious leadership in missions, Sunday schools, charities, and radical sects like the Shakers, but most have assumed, or at least implied in their work, that large numbers of women did not become ministers until after the Civil War. Brekus shows this not to be the case.

Harriet Livermore described herself as "a stranger and a pilgrim," thus the title of this book; other female ministers considered themselves "strangers in a strange land." As Brekus explains: "Comparing themselves to the biblical heroes and heroines who had lived

by faith, they wondered if they would always be exiles who ‘sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country’” (4).

Nevertheless, at least for a time, they were not entirely strangers, or exiles. As Brekus shows, they were part of a larger evangelical culture—black and white—that sanctioned women’s leadership. Some angry clergy locked them out of their meetinghouses. Many sympathetic clergymen gave them support, however, and huge crowds gathered at camp meetings to hear them preach.

How and why these female preachers disappeared from the historical record is an important part of this book. Brekus admits to having assumed at first that they had been dismissed as radicals on the fringes of American culture. What she found, however, is a more complicated story. They were firmly rooted in their own place and time, and their revolutionary vindication of women’s right to preach was always secondary to their faith in biblical revelation.

They were biblical rather than secular feminists, Brekus argues, and they based their claims to female equality on the grounds of scriptural revelation, not natural rights. They never asked for permission to baptize, to administer the Lord’s Supper, or to be ordained. Instead, they resigned themselves to serving as men’s helpmates and assistants. In sum, Brekus concludes, they were forgotten because they were too conservative to be remembered by women’s rights activists, and too radical to be remembered by evangelicals.

It might be argued that the women Brekus examines in her book—female preachers of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century—are important to study because they were neither entirely radical nor traditional. They did not demand ordination, but they shared many of the same values as the countless numbers of anonymous women who sat in the church pews every Sunday. They did not join the women’s rights movement, but they defended women’s essential worth and dignity. Like many other women of their time, they were active participants in the public sphere, but they never challenged the political structures that enforced their inequality in the family, church, and state. As such, they offer a revealing glimpse of early American history.

Creighton University

Bryan F. Le Beau

RECOVERING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: An Exploration of a Life of Science and Service. By James Campbell. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court. 1999.

Near the end of James Campbell’s book he suggests that his interpretation of Benjamin Franklin as a Pragmatist is “not totally novel” (270). His admission is accurate, but he has nothing to apologize for in offering this excellent book. No biographer or historian that I know of has argued so suggestively that Franklin belongs to the school of the Pragmatists, that in a sense he joined it before it was created by William James and others. What Campbell has done, without dogmatism, is to examine Franklin’s thought, with some reference to his life, with the intention of placing him in a philosophical tradition. He also wishes to attain a different perspective on the early history of that tradition itself. Thus he places Franklin in the line of Emerson, James, and Dewey.

Because Campbell does not systematically reconstruct Pragmatism in its modern form—some would say the only form it has ever had—his book is less interesting, and surely less important, as a study in the history of philosophy than as an introduction to Benjamin Franklin. In studying Franklin, Campbell demonstrates that he knows the relevant scholarship and has more than a passing familiarity with the sources. Indeed he has read widely and well in the enormous body of historical scholarship that has appeared

in the twentieth century on Franklin. His footnotes themselves provide a running commentary on what has been written about many sides of Franklin's life. Frequently Campbell disagrees with the arguments of his scholarly authorities, but does so temperately and fairly. His citations of Franklin's works are also impressive and resourceful.

Campbell's method is to examine Franklin's thought on four broad topics—science, religion, morals, and society. He concludes this survey with a chapter, "Franklin and the Pragmatic Spirit," that pulls together his conclusions reached in the substantive chapters on Franklin's ideas. In most respects these substantive chapters offer few surprises: they are careful summaries of much that is known about Franklin's science, religion, and society (though they are not—and cannot be—exhaustive). The chapter on morals is the most important of the lot and perhaps the key to understanding the others—and surely essential to the concluding chapter in which Franklin's thought is described as an anticipation of the thorough-going Pragmatic philosophy of this century.

Campbell argues that Franklin stands at the "head" of the Pragmatic tradition even though the founders of Pragmatism were not "particularly cognizant of his contribution" (271). This contention, Campbell suggests arises from a profound concern Franklin shared with modern Pragmatists for human welfare—and several of the means to advance it. Franklin also appeals to Campbell as a philosopher, as indeed someone committed to a "broad social conception of philosophy," and Campbell argues that the field of philosophy as it presently exists would be improved were it outward looking in Franklin's way.

Whether Campbell is right in his condemnation of the current state of philosophy (as a field) is not clear to me. But I do agree that philosophers and just about everyone else would profit from the study of the life and writings of Benjamin Franklin. This book is a good place to begin that study.

University of California, Berkeley

Robert Middlekauff

**CELEBRATING THE FOURTH: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic.** By Len Travers. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

Len Travers has produced an incisive and convincing work on the oddly understudied history of early national Fourth of July celebrations. Travers reads the signs and signals of public ritual to prove how "The observance of Independence Day... succeeded in fostering national consciousness in the Revolutionary and Confederation periods, a time when real political union among the thirteen states was tenuous at best" (225). *Celebrating the Fourth* examines Independence Day celebrations between 1776 and 1826 in Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia to show how Americans symbolically expressed their hopes for their united nation. At the same time, the realities of public celebration also exposed real divisions along social, political, racial, gender, regional, and class lines

Travers traces the development of Independence Day in his three cities in roughly chronological order through seven chapters. He argues that during the Revolutionary War, sporadic Fourth of July celebrations created a sense of necessary *communitas* as Americans separated themselves from British control. Immediately following the war, officially-organized celebrations proved to Americans that they were capable of creating social order and putting it on display in church services, parades, ritual toasting, and militia musters. By the late 1780s, Travers argues, Independence Day had become a political battle ground, as Republicans and Federalists vied with one another to prove whose republicanism was most true. The contest was especially fervent in Boston, where reserved Federalists frowned upon the raucous and potentially violent celebrations of the

French-loving Republicans. Open tensions died down after the national Republican political victory in 1800, as Americans used the Fourth of July to measure their faith in the idea of political consensus. Although the War of 1812 challenged this vision of consensus, especially in Federalist hold-out Boston, a new preoccupation with “national character” emerged after the war as a new generation of Americans celebrated their own contributions to public life and enjoyed a wide variety of “entertainments” on July 4. Travers contends that as party contest died down in the late-1810s and 20s, Americans’ national identity seemed less urgent as they turned Independence Day increasingly into a “festival,” a kind of celebration which would, perhaps, be unable to contain sectional difficulties yet to come.

Travers draws together an impressive collection of evidence of diverse celebratory and ritual practices, and his work will be of interest to anyone interested in early American popular or political culture. Travers augments extensive research in newspapers and other printed sources with many manuscript letters and personal recollections; we learn from a variety of men and women what they thought about the themes presented by the celebrations’ organizers. Chapter Four, “Observing the Fourth,” nicely analyzes the forms and texture of urban celebration, as Travers shows how the holiday evolved from commemoration into festival after the turn of the nineteenth century. Travers also weaves a variety of social science, cultural, and literary theories about the nature of festival and national identity throughout the work to good effect.

Travers paints such a convincing picture of the importance of Independence Day to the political culture of Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston that one wonders what else he might have found if he had turned his eye west of the eastern seaboard. It is important to understand how westerners fit themselves into visions of the American nationalism even as the nation was expanding. Travers’ analysis would also have been strengthened by an even greater attention to race. While he includes an interesting section on how African Americans tried to ameliorate their official exclusion from celebrations, particularly in Charleston and Philadelphia, a more holistic treatment of the tensions that race provided on a day devoted to the celebration of “liberty” would have added much.

All in all, Len Travers’ analysis of Independence Day shows how fireworks, picnicking, and parades were vital to early national political culture. His book should take its place among a growing list of works that show how Americans created a sense of nationalism in their public celebrations.

Central Michigan University

Sarah J. Purcell

THEATRE CULTURE IN AMERICA, 1825-1860. By Rosemarie K. Bank. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997.

IN THE MIDST OF PERPETUAL FETES: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820. By David Waldstreicher. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1997.

These two books illustrate some of the strengths and excesses of history under the aegis of cultural studies.

First, the excesses. Rosemarie Bank begins *Theatre Culture in America* with a quote from Borges. She ends with a theoretical physics that posits multiple, coexisting universes, and that is what happens in between: she leads us into a maze, and she never lets us out.

Take an early chapter. Bank tells us that the New England townscape was a state of mind. It was thus transcendent and, better yet, often the home of Transcendentalists. That

leads to a discussion of plays staged at Brook Farm. The plays—like the townscape—hinge on tensions between the individual and the political/communal, though, Bank tells us, “these tensions at Brook Farm await more contained study elsewhere.” (“Contained” rather than “sustained”: that’s a hint at what goes on in this book.) From Brook Farm we go to the stage Yankee, and thus to the question of class—something that working people experienced as a liminal state. (That will be news to most of the labor historians whom she cites.) Returning to the theater, Bank argues that boundaries between the aristocratic balcony, the male-democratic pit, and the plebian upper tier were either nonexistent or easily crossed. The theater itself was a liminal space in which classes seized opportunities to act out class.

Along the way, Bank says things that are interesting and new. She ironizes the popularity of Indian plays during the years of Indian Removal very nicely, her treatment of prostitution in antebellum theaters is subtle and satisfyingly dense, and her description of the theater as a workplace is truly valuable.

Bank’s conclusion, set within that theory of simultaneous universes, seems to be that antebellum Americans learned to stage culture in ways that made diversity the focal point. The theater and other places in which Americans “acted out” (there really are no limits) were contested sites at which a multiplicity of cultural universes were made and lived in. That much makes a kind of sense. But the book’s anything-goes theorizing and its pick-and-choose pillaging of the historical literature will turn most working historians away.

David Waldstreicher’s *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* shares Bank’s starting point: culture is not a transcendent ideology but a disorderly, contested activity. He differs from Bank in that he has a definable subject matter: the relations between a divisive partisan politics and a unifying nationalism between the Revolution and 1820.

In the movement for the Constitution and in the 1790s, Federalists created a festive public sphere in which they acted out nationalism through ordered, unifying, and respectable celebration. They were the first to make national feeling out of a particular way of being partisan. Jeffersonians matched the staged virtue of the Federalists. But they added a heightened round of festivities (along with the all-important newspaper accounts of them) that created a partisan continuum of local and national politics—all the while claiming (as did the Federalists) that they were true Americans and that their opponents were partisan intriguers. These celebrations also took on regional forms, particularly during the divisive War of 1812. Southerners enjoyed a rare convergence of section, party, and national state, and reveled in their role as real Americans. Westerners, whose loyalty had been questionable, performed for newspapers that portrayed them as America’s uncorrupted cutting edge. As for New Englanders, they moved the founding of America back from the common Revolution to the sectional Plymouth Rock and waited for government to return to the authentic Americanness of Yankee Federalism. (Waldstreicher points out that the sectional variants of partisan nationalism would end badly.)

Federalists and Jeffersonians shared another technique: both played racist masquerades on the other. Federalists staged “black” parades and wrote mock Jeffersonian articles in blackface. In turn, Jeffersonians created black masquerades in order to distance ordinary white men from blacks and Federalists—both of whom were incapable of national feeling. In the festivities of both parties, women were present but did not participate (at banquets, for instance, the toast to the ladies was offered only after the ladies had left the room.) Partisan/patriotic celebrations were celebrations by and of white men.

Blacks had their own uses for national festivals. Both gradual abolition laws and many slave revolts began on July 4, and black manifestos drew on the Declaration of

Independence—thus tying talk about race to talk about the nation. In the process (this is one of Waldstreicher's more doubtful assertions) they made black nationalism out of white festive/patriotic culture. The all-important absence of a black press, however, limited the remembered results to actual participants.

Waldstreicher combines cultural theory with fresh research, graceful writing, and a defined subject matter. It is the last three that separate him from others in the field.

University of South Carolina

Paul E. Johnson

VOICING AMERICA: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States. By Christopher Looby. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1996.

Positioned against such monumental studies of the ascendancy of American print culture as Michael Warner's *The Letters of the Republic* and Larzer Ziff's *Writing in the New Nation*, Christopher Looby's *Voicing America* locates a "distinct countercurrent" in the Early American period, one that "valorizes the grain of the voice in addition to, or instead of, the silence of print" (3). In his concern with the central trope of a nation that is "spoken into being," Looby paints a picture of the nation as performative, as that which originates through language. Insofar as he is concerned with the nation as an effect of spoken language, then, Looby's study is implicitly positioned as a supplement, if not a corrective, to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. So, too, is it in harmony with Jay Fliegelman's *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (1993), particularly in its assertion of the "legitimizing charisma" (4) of the voice and of the need to contest the centrality of print. Chapter One is a panoramic introduction to the problem of the United States as, in the words of Washington Irving's Mustapha Rub-a-Dub Keli Khan, a "LOGOCRACY or *government of words*." Chapters Two, Three, and Four are case studies of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, and Hugh Henry Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry*, respectively. Looby's book is, as he attributes to Brackenridge, a series of extended and "patient close reading[s]" (237), all of which make clear that the strength of his contribution to the study of the politics of language in America comes particularly through his careful attention to the "rhetoricity" of Early American literary culture.

As Looby makes clear, behind the central trope of a "spoken" nation lies a concert of voices, and while the dynamics of the voice are such that it promises wholeness and integration, it is instead necessarily ephemeral, disunited, and fragmented. This insistence on "the ineluctably dialogic nature of any utterance" (28) allows for a corresponding insistence on the fragmentation, contestation, "disunity," and destabilization of the nation. (The paradigm of the dialogic is also mirrored in Looby's reference to a vast range of theorists, among them Gramsci, Derrida, Nietzsche, Barthes, and Bakhtin.) Looby seems to want to find both identity and difference between the spoken and the written, and therein lies the problem with the thesis of the book. In that there is a shift from vocalization to the "performative act of writing" (5), the problem of the voice is quickly absorbed into a general problem of language itself, and the consequent loss of specificity weakens the critical focus on the voice and suggests that the book ultimately remains within the print culture paradigm. Perhaps symptomatic of this slippage between the voice and language is his focus on three regional (Philadelphian) figures, because to treat thoroughly the idea that the "nation is constituted out of speech acts" (256) would necessitate a turn toward, for example, the Native American oratorical tradition. Moreover, it is often the case that the distinctions Looby wants to make between the voice and print are practical rather than

theoretical. As a result, the general claim that “everything happens on account of voice” (165) is at times asserted more than it is convincingly proved, especially as vocal expression and linguistic innovation are not exactly analogous. Looby’s immediate concern is not with the problem of a national linguistic standard, but that thread undergirds the study at key moments to productive effect. In this sense the book has interesting implications even for the English-only debates, as its recent analysis of American polyglottism suggests.

University of Minnesota

Rita Raley

COMMON FIELDS: An Environmental History of St. Louis. Edited by Andrew Hurley. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press. 1997.

Andrew Hurley’s important contribution to the field of environmental history has been to apply the insights and methods of that field to urban history, notably in his recent monograph, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980*. When teaching duties took him to the University of Missouri--St. Louis, Hurley immersed himself in the environmental history of his new home. In compiling and editing *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*, Hurley demonstrates the many disciplinary traditions that may be brought to bear on urban environmental history.

Following a forward by the director of the Missouri Historical Society (to which congratulations are due for publishing this fine collection) and an introductory essay by Hurley, *Common Fields* presents thirteen essays, two by Hurley and the rest by eleven other authors. The editor has drawn upon scholars of both local and national repute representing the fields of archaeology, architectural history, geography, and social and labor history, among others. As a whole, the essays depict the complexity of natural and historical forces that have shaped the physical reality of St. Louis as we now know it.

Reflecting an important theme from environmental history, *Common Fields* embraces a geographical area beyond the city limits of St. Louis, including the terrain east of the Mississippi River. The early essays also encompass a broad span of time; indeed, in the first essay geographer Walter Schroeder presents the geological and ecological histories of the St. Louis region. Archaeologist William R. Iseminger follows with a description of the prehistoric peoples who lived around the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, including the Cahokia culture that thrived about a thousand years ago on the Mississippi’s bottom lands below the confluence.

All the remaining essays concern the environmental history of St. Louis and its region as shaped and experienced by various waves of Euro-American settlers and residents. An important theme in many of the essays is the role that class differences played in how decisions were made in shaping the environment and how various groups experienced that history as it was unfolding. For example, in the chapters by Eric Sandweiss and Katherine T. Corbett on street paving and sewer construction, respectively, the authors show how the interactions between terrain and the relative social status of different neighborhoods encouraged city officials to develop municipal infrastructure in some areas while ignoring the needs of others, exacerbating emerging class distinctions among neighborhoods.

As is typically the case, edited volumes of essays often display a certain unevenness, and *Common Fields* is no exception. In this instance, virtually all the essays are well and engagingly written, but the variety of perspectives from which they are written somewhat disturb the cohesion of the whole. Some essays are very local in tenor, giving little hint of

what parallel developments may have been occurring in other parts of the country. Other essays provide broad overviews of environmental trends in a particular municipal development elsewhere in the United States, paying what appears to be passing attention to how St. Louis fit into the national picture. This does not detract from the book's value, however. As a primer in how environmental histories of metropolitan areas may be written, *Common Fields* offers examples from which readers may judge the relative merits of different perspectives. Indeed, *Common Fields* provides fine models for scholars whose interests do not reside in St. Louis per se.

Finally, Andrew Hurley is to be particularly congratulated for his essays: "Busby's Stink Boat and the Regulation of Nuisance Trades, 1865-1918" and "Floods, Rats, and Toxic Waste: Allocating Environmental Hazards since World War II." Each essay presents episodes in St. Louis' history that are emblematic of wider concerns, and Hurley's narration is such that the reader may discern their relevance to environmental problem-solving in our own day.

University of California-Berkeley

Fredric L. Quivik

RIOTING IN AMERICA. By Paul A. Gilje. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1996.

*Rioting in America* is a sweeping, analytical synthesis of collective violence from the colonial experience to the present. Defining riots as acts of violence beyond the bounds of law by twelve or more individuals endeavoring to impose their will on society, Paul A. Gilje draws from existing scholarship to interpret over four thousand upheavals. He emphasizes their social and political importance as "mechanisms of change" (1) and expressions of the inarticulate. As significantly, he dissects the myriad types and periods of bloodshed over three hundred years of history.

Gilje divides rioting into four phases, each influenced by past violence and contemporary issues. Thus seventeenth-century collective violence tended to be either popular disorder grounded in custom or bloody rebellions to preserve an English world already lost. In the face of eighteenth-century social stability, crowds returned to ritualized action to preserve their sense of community and morality from a changing economy and newcomers. They, in part, advanced the American Revolution, which unleashed the very egalitarianism that checked hierarchy and redefined community along more heterogeneous political, ethnic, racial, and class lines; and, ironically, these cleavages sparked the most devastating and longest era of carnage from the 1820s through the 1930s. Indeed, most notably between the Civil War and World War II, diverse identities and competition—real or perceived—over values, power, and resources induced bloodletting on a national scale and revealed the limits of democracy. Twentieth-century modernization, particularly from the Great Depression onward, brought greater political centralization, economic regulation, media coverage, popular culture, and egalitarian commitment that extended democracy and reduced substantially violent attacks on people.

Throughout these phases, Gilje charts important shifts in patterns and participants. For example, he notes the various manifestations of racial violence: lynching in the New South represented white socio-economic and political control over blacks; riots in the industrial North revealed inter-racial combat—communal outbursts—initiated by whites preserving the color line and, following migration and urbanization, property destruction and looting—commodity disorders—at the hands of blacks protesting ghetto conditions. As the federal government became increasingly involved in inter-group conflict, lynching



declined and black grievances, if not their riotous redress, became viewed as legitimate.

Occasionally Gilje leaves some themes underdeveloped, for instance, the impact of the nation's reform, as opposed to revolutionary, tradition on rioting or the role of external forces in sparking and quelling disorders. On the latter point, more can be said about the limitations of local police in recent times. Likewise, while comprehensive in identifying the patterns of disorder, Gilje gives fewer specifics about rioters and spectators; in part, this is because only a handful of scholars have provided profiles of those in the street. In addition to suggestions for future research, a fuller discussion of rioting prospects in the new millennium amid demographic changes in race and ethnicity would have benefitted most readers. Nonetheless, *Rioting in America* is a first-rate overview, filled with information and insight for scholars and students alike. It is impressively researched, tightly written, and persuasive.

Southwest Missouri State University

Dominic J. Capeci, Jr.

TEMPERANCE & RACISM: John Bull, John Reb, and the Good Templars. By David M. Fahey. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1996.

THE SERPENT IN THE CUP: Temperance in American Literature. Edited by David S. Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

In the nineteenth century, the attempts to limit alcoholic consumption, known collectively as the temperance movement, achieved astounding success. Whereas the early republic was arguably an "alcoholic republic," (to use W. J. Rorabaugh's phrase) by the twentieth century the anti-drinking campaign had generated a constitutional amendment banning production of alcohol. Such a result implies a seismic shift in attitudes toward the time-honored tradition of tipples. Both David M. Fahey's *Temperance & Racism: John Bull, John Reb, and the Good Templars* and the essays in David S. Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal, eds., *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature*, subtly and effectively illuminate aspects of this shift.

David M. Fahey analyzes a lesser-known part of the Anglo-American temperance movement, the international fraternal organization known as the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT). By examining the different approaches of British and American IOGT lodges, Fahey offers a valuable international perspective. Committed to abstention from alcohol, or "teetotalism," the IOGT was one of the largest fraternal organizations of the late nineteenth century (5). However, their cause was complicated by a dispute between the white supremacy of many of the American Templars and the universalism of the IOGT's largest chapter, the Grand Lodge of England. The racism of the American Templars resulted in the chartering of a few separate African-American lodges, whose histories Fahey explores briefly in "The Black Templars." But separate lodges flew in the face of the IOGT's stated commitment to internationalism, and in 1876 the Templars embarked on what Fahey calls "The Great Schism," which pit British universalism against American segregationism. After ten years the exhausted international order called a truce, and quietly accepted racial segregation. As Fahey concludes, the IOGT "paid a price" for its emphasis upon internationalism, and that price was racial division (150).

Fahey's topic is important, his use of the often scanty sources is imaginative and persuasive, and the story is generally well told. One only wishes that there were more to this slim volume. Fahey makes a compelling preliminary case that the Templars, unlike virtually every other contemporary social organization, accepted men and women as

members on virtually equal footing. But he does not sufficiently explore the causes or implications, if any, of this startling break with convention. Moreover, because much of its framework focuses upon the personality-driven Great Schism, *Temperance & Racism* works best as an institutional history of a much-overlooked international social organization.

The temperance movement produced not only fraternity but a significant body of literature as well. *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature* offers ten essays, plus the editor's introduction, that slices this literature into manageable bites. Three essays are reprinted or reworked pieces, and each is worthwhile: John W. Crowley's, "'Alcoholism' and The Modern Temper;" Edmund O'Reilly's, "'Bill's Story': Form and Meaning in a. a. Recovery Narratives;" and Karen Sanchez-Eppler's splendid "Temperance in the Bed of a Child: Incest and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century America." The other six essays are original, occasionally brief, explorations of themes from the temperance genre: David S. Shields's "The Demonization of the Tavern;" David S. Reynolds's "Black Cats and Delirium Tremens: Temperance and the American Renaissance;" Robert S. Levine's "'Whiskey, Blackening, and All': Temperance and Race in William Wells Brown's *Clotel*;" Nicholas O. Warner's "Temperance, Morality, and Medicine in the Fiction of Harriet Beecher Stowe;" and Debra J. Rosenthal's "Deracialized Discourse: Temperance and Racial Ambiguity in Harper's 'The Two Offers' and *Sowing and Reaping*." The book concludes with Joan D. Hedrick's, "Drink and Disorder in the Classroom," a wonderful discussion of the problems Hedrick encountered while teaching a course to college students on the history and meanings of alcohol consumption. Closing the useful but occasionally esoteric collection with a practical essay on teaching was brilliant, and the editors should be congratulated.

Old Dominion University

Carolyn J. Lawes

EDGAR ALLAN POE AND THE MASSES: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America. By Terence Whalen. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1999.

Perhaps the first thing to be said about this fine study is that a considerable amount of work has gone into it. Whalen is a tireless researcher whose injunctions to historicize do not come off as empty slogans. Circulation and subscription figures for the *Southern Literary Messenger* are painstakingly tracked down, charted, and analyzed in one chapter, while a dispute over the authorship of an unsigned review occupies the better part of another, with Whalen calling upon an impressive array of contemporaneous sources to buttress his own case. In addition to providing a rich background of documents for his long section on the *Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*, he also decodes one of Poe's cryptograms, linking its contents to Poe's hopes for a political appointment in particular and his fascination with the concept of public secrecy in general. The sheer amount of legwork and diligence calls for acknowledgement, inevitably, comparisons between critic and subject come to mind. In his meticulous command of the obscure but relevant source, his delight in overturning received opinion, his rather relentless mode of argumentation, Whalen comes to resemble nothing if not one of Poe's detectives, ever attentive to the profundity of surfaces.

But the book's merit derives from something more than hard work, a common enough commodity. All of Whalen's themes—the political economy of publishing, mass culture, Poe's "average racism," and many others—are sufficiently timely that no reader will mistake this book as an exercise in pedantry. More important, his analysis usefully extends

our sense of just how much the so-called “market revolution” in antebellum America altered attitudes toward the collection and dissemination of information. With the “emergence of information as an economic good,” writers like Poe confronted a “growing commercialization of meaning” (43), which in turn is linked to “the material crisis of overproduction and the ensuing competition among writers for increasingly meager compensation” (103-4). Whalen sees Poe forging a “poetics of novelty” in response to these conditions, a poetics whose features “Poe painstakingly enumerated in his critical writings: condensed, unified, easily circulated, consumable in one sitting” (106). But as much as Poe was determined to use developments in mass culture to his advantage, Whalen finds Poe equally used by them. “The Man of the Crowd,” for example, allegorizes the commercial writer’s fear of being “annihilated” upon his integration into the masses while the hopelessly ambiguous conclusion to *Pym* is the result of the author’s inability to fuse two exceedingly popular but disparate genres, scientific travelogue and sensationalized nationalism. In other words, Poe emerges here as neither a shrewd opportunist cannily exploiting the market nor a doomed neurotic exploring the terrible secrets of the psyche. Whalen interprets the contradictions and tensions in Poe’s work as symptomatic of the contradictions and tensions in the publishing environment of antebellum America at large.

In matters of critical method, Whalen may be considered something of a hardliner. He thinks that ideology as a critical concept has been overplayed by recent interpreters and wants to revive and defend the thesis of “economic determination” (43, 61-2, 108). This can sometimes lead Whalen into reductive readings of his own, as when he suggests that “the secret plotting by the natives of Tsalal” (from *Pym*) “looks very much like the model for Poe’s plan to overcome the exploitation of writers by the publishing industry” (191). Still, there can be no doubt that Whalen’s scrupulous attention to what he calls “the material conditions” of Poe’s discourse is an altogether welcome addition to the scholarship on this writer. *Edgar Allan Poe and The Masses* will also engage those eager to learn more about the political economy of writing and its complications during this period.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Kerry Larson

AMERICA’S BACHELOR UNCLE: Thoreau and the American Polity. By Bob Pepperman Taylor. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press. 1996.

A WIDER VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE: Henry Thoreau’s Study of Nature. By Robert Kuhn McGregor. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. 1997.

Thoreau said he left Walden Pond because he “had several more lives to live.” It is certainly true that his multi-faceted work—as naturalist and conservationist, as transcendental philosopher, as moralist and social critic, and as professional writer and man of letters—attracts an equally diverse readership, with different, and sometimes competing, claims for *their* Thoreau. These two recent studies of Thoreau are a case in point. Bob Pepperman Taylor (a political scientist who has previously written on the history of environmental politics) argues not only that Thoreau “is one of America’s most powerful and least understood critics and political thinkers” (12) but that this was the most abiding and important dimension of his life’s work: “It is a just polity, not the natural world, that is Thoreau’s primary concern” (117). Furthermore, Pepperman argues that if Thoreau’s political vision is flawed, “the true weakness . . . is in his naturalism, his belief that the American landscape can provide an alternative source of inspiration, can teach a way of life that encourages the moral independence required by democratic citizens” (127). On

the other hand, Robert Kuhn McGregor (an historian whose work has been in environmental history) argues that Thoreau's desultory and largely unsuccessful early career was transformed after 1850, when he "settled almost exclusively on the subject of nature, treating matters of morality and politics as virtually extraneous subjects" (109). Further, shedding Emerson's crippling Platonic understanding of nature and immersing himself in scrupulous scientific observation, "Thoreau was by 1854 a fully committed naturalist" (108) of such fierce insight and originality that, "Almost by himself, Henry Thoreau was inventing what we now call the principle of biocentrism and the science of ecology" (3).

Pepperman argues that Thoreau's career may be understood as a sustained meditation on the nature and responsibilities of democratic citizenship and on the "moral development of the nation" (13). Pepperman's most original contribution is his argument that Thoreau conducts this social analysis by examining a sequence of American conditions and character types. Thus, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* is represented as "a sophisticated meditation on the realities and consequences of the American founding" (17), primarily through its treatment of Indian-white relations. The frontier conditions and character are further explored in his analysis of *The Maine Woods*. Ascending though a sequence of increasingly socialized and politicized spheres, "Thoreau explores a third American type, the member of the morally committed community, in his book *Cape Cod*" (55), where he finds that both charity and history are exploited in morally flawed ways in the effort to construct a communal identity. *Walden*, in turn, critiques "economic man" (76) in a flawed capitalist society, insisting that it is moral, not economic independence that a successful democracy requires. This leads to Pepperman's chapter on "Resistance," for the true democratic citizen will inevitably find himself compelled at times to resist an imperfect or misguided political world. Pepperman's framework feels, at times, reductive and forced, but it also generates some fresh readings of individual texts (especially, I think, in his chapter on *Cape Cod*), and it successfully invites us to consider Thoreau's social criticism and the course of his career as a whole in a provocative new light.

McGregor expends considerable critical energy in advancing the argument that 1850 was a watershed year in Thoreau's career, though he is by no means the first Thoreau critic to suggest this. And the first half of his study, devoted to the pre-1850 career, is both less sophisticated and less original than the second half, on Thoreau's late nature studies. Throughout, McGregor is best on the natural history of Concord and Thoreau's evolving understanding of this complex natural environment. The most valuable part of this book is chapter 5, on "The River," in which McGregor distills for us the almost indigestible field observations that Thoreau recorded in his journals for ten years after 1850. This chapter, McGregor explains, offers "a geographical orientation to the Concord River, followed by a compound descriptive analysis of a year in the life of the river during the 1850s, as derived from Henry Thoreau's journals. Literally speaking, this is not something Thoreau wrote, but something he experienced" (125). That is, McGregor gives us a version of the Concord calendar that Thoreau envisioned but never completed. It is a masterful accomplishment, revealing how Thoreau's minute observations all cohere as part of his ongoing pursuit of an answer to the question, "How did all the different components of nature work together to make a complete whole?" (115-16). McGregor argues compellingly that Thoreau's unique merging of spiritual and scientific vision made him the forefather of modern ecology.

If neither of these books gets the whole Thoreau, each explores in useful ways one of the many lives he led. And if these two accounts seem to make competing, even mutually

exclusive claims, about Thoreau's career, together they nevertheless confirm the richness of that life and work.

Ohio State University

Steven Fink

HAWTHORNE AND WOMEN: Engendering and Expanding the Hawthorne Tradition. Edited by John L. Idol, Jr. and Melinda M. Ponder. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1999.

This collection of twenty-four essays is a useful extension of the kind of project undertaken by Richard Brodhead in his 1986 *The School of Hawthorne*. The Idol and Ponder collection similarly explores the resonances of Hawthorne's work in his own time and more recently, but does so in the specific context of women: as readers, writers, reviewers, and supporters. In the process, the volume serves to redeem Hawthorne from the negativity of some of his pronouncements on women writers, in which he called them "ink-stained Amazons" and, most famously, a "mob of scribbling women." It is the latter characterization that occupies Nina Baym in the appropriately-placed first essay in the volume; Baym deftly contextualizes Hawthorne's remark, noting that his retraction of it has been largely overlooked.

While *Hawthorne and Women* does not attempt to claim for the author a particular feminist orientation, the accumulated weight of the essays establishes that he and his work—especially his fiction, but also his essays and travel writing—have had vital significance for both American and British women. The three essays that follow Baym's explore the ways that women in his family promoted and supported his career. The roles of his wife, Sophia Peabody, and her sister Elizabeth in, respectively, creating an environment conducive to his writing and bringing it to the attention of publishers are fairly well known; less so is the work of his daughter, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, whose writings about her father in the 1890s both kept his name before the public several decades after his death and enabled Rose to indulge her own autobiographical impulses. The next group of essays addresses the work of five New England writers, Hawthorne's contemporaries, for whom he was an important presence. Two of the essays deal with Margaret Fuller, with whom Hawthorne had a vexed relationship and on whom he very likely modeled Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*; particularly informative are the essays about Hawthorne's relationships with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Annie Fields, the wife of his publisher.

The high regard of British readers that came so readily to Stowe following the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was more elusive for Hawthorne, but the next group of essays demonstrates that he had champions among women writers in England—notably, Mary Russell Mitford and, in a more complex and indirect way, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who was asked to contribute a letter to a volume commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Hawthorne's birth. The essay that seems misplaced in this section, even though it does concern a British writer who read and admired Hawthorne, is "Virgin Saint, Mother Saint." Although the author argues persuasively that the figure of Dorothea, in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, is a reworking of Hawthorne's Hilda in *The Marble Faun*, the essay seems logically to belong in the final group, in which resonances with Hawthorne's work are explored in women writers as disparate as Mary Wilkins Freeman, Virginia Woolf, and Flannery O'Connor.

It is this last group of essays that will be most problematic for some readers. While most of the authors are careful not to claim the direct influence of Hawthorne (except in those cases in which the writer herself claimed such influence), and while the textual

analyses are in most cases careful and sophisticated, reading some of these essays gives one the sense that too much is being claimed for Hawthorne. Although the women writers featured did read Hawthorne, it is also the case that most educated Americans have; and surely others besides Hawthorne have written about human isolation and obsession. Such tenuousness is perhaps especially evident in the essays about Willa Cather and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. A much stronger case for Hawthorne's long shadow is made in the essay about Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People," and Karen Kilcup writes convincingly about resonances between the image of the pearl in the work of Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson. In her concluding essay, a sort of meditation on *The Scarlet Letter* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Franny Nudelman seems to anticipate a critique such as mine when she notes that historicist literary critics are faulted for allowing "potentially coincidental associations between texts stand in for history," but she counters that history is "a relationship between past and present, itself unstable," that can yield "valuable information."

Fair enough. The editors' avowed intention in this collection is to demonstrate that Hawthorne has had and continues to have relevance to women readers and writers, and, taken as a whole, the volume succeeds admirably in doing so. The historical essays in particular contextualize Hawthorne in the literary culture of the nineteenth century, complete with its "scribbling women."

Vanderbilt University

Nancy A. Walker

**MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY, A HISTORY: From the Telegraph to the Internet.** By Brian Winston. London & New York: Routledge. 1998.

The author begins this book by stating his premise, which he feels is so radical that that "right thinking people" will surely doubt it: that we are not in fact living amidst a "revolution" of digital communications and computing after all. He asserts, and buttresses with ample evidence from the historical record, that we instead are in the midst of a social phenomenon that has been going on for centuries. He further states that scholarly and popular literature has not recognized this fact, and he finds those who celebrate this "revolution," as well as those who rail against it, both equally guilty of blindly accepting the rhetoric of Silicon Valley hucksters and Madison Avenue advertising men. He is especially critical of historians and other scholars, who are presumably not on the payroll of telecommunications or software firms, and therefore have no excuse for their excessive prose.

Having thrown down such a gauntlet in his introduction, the author must therefore accept criticism of that thesis from this reviewer, before I go into the details of the book. I grant the author the right to state that too few scholars have taken the proper view of recent events. But he has slighted at least a few scholars who have taken such a view, if not with such fanfare, perhaps. Thomas Parke Hughes, of the University of Pennsylvania, and Donald MacKenzie, of the University of Edinburgh, to name two, have addressed this issue in serious ways over the past decade and a half, and both have carefully tried to place the notion of technological "revolutions" in a proper social, historical, and political context. Neither are cited in this book's extensive, but uneven, bibliography. Nor does the author make use of the extensive collection of oral histories of computer and communications pioneers assembled, and edited with close attention to issues of historical context, by the Charles Babbage Institute, at the University of Minnesota, and by the History Center of the Institute for Electrical And Electronics Engineers, at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

With that out of the way, we can turn to the body of this book. A brief Introduction sets out a theory of technological innovation, invention, and diffusion, centered around a “social sphere,” although the author does not employ the term “social construction” favored by others. That is followed by four substantive historical sections, dealing respectively with the transmission of sound at a distance, radio and television, calculation and computing, and networks of communications’ systems including the now-ubiquitous Internet. Each section is informed by the postulates stated in the Introduction; i.e., that mechanisms for suppression of a new technology, to mitigate its destructive effects on existing social and economic institutions, are typically found in tandem with mechanisms that advance the spread of the same technology.

Another recurring theme in the following chapters is a detailed unwrapping of all the parallel developments that went on at the same time, or before, the one that history books accept as the “real” invention; i.e. Bell’s telephone patent, Morse’s message “What hath God wrought,” et al. These passages are among the best of the book.

With an impressive breadth of scholarship, the author makes an effective case. I must nevertheless hesitate to recommend it as a starting point for future scholars, for two reasons.

The first is that the author relies too much on secondary sources, which in some cases leads to a muddy and inaccurate narrative. In his discussion of the development of the computer (187), for example, he confuses the development of magnetic core memory—a solid state technique that made the minicomputer possible with the prior development of the rotating drum memory—a technique whose very drawbacks the core was invented to remedy. Later on, in a discussion of the Internet, he cites the popular book by Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon, *Where Wizards Stay Up Late* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996) as an example of how misleading are histories that are centered on the heroic efforts of engineers and that ignore the wider context. In that he is correct. But at the same time, when it comes to relating aspects of the technical development of the Internet, he finds himself relying on the same Hafner and Lyon book for technical details, some of which are not quite right.

The second problem that I found was an inattention to detail at the copy-editing level, leading to numerous spelling and other factual errors. For example, Howard Aiken is spelled correctly in the index but spelled “Aitken” throughout the text; the breakthrough Apple II computer is confounded with that company’s later product, the Macintosh (the Apple II had nothing to do with Xerox’s Palo Alto Research Center, nor did Apple’s Steve Wozniak work on the Mac); and it was the Digital Equipment Corporation, not Control Data, that produced the PDP series of computers (this is stated correctly in most places but misstated several times on p. 328). I found many other of this nature. Even the U.S. passenger rail system, Amtrak, is misidentified in the Acknowledgements. These are the kinds of errors that could easily be corrected in a future edition, and I hope they are.

In sum, this book should provide a healthy counterweight to the hyperbole that currently surrounds talk and writing about the “Information Age.” Its scope is to be commended, but ultimately I feel that it fails to make a solid enough case.

Smithsonian Institution, National Air & Space Museum

Paul Ceruzzi

JUST THE FACTS: How Objectivity Came to Define American Journalism. By David T.Z. Mindich. New York: New York University Press. 1998.

This intriguing but ultimately frustrating study locates five pillars of modern journalistic objectivity—detachment, nonpartisanship, the inverted pyramid, “facticity,”

and balance—in nineteenth-century social, political, and cultural history in order to explain how they came to define mainstream journalism.

Each chapter identifies a signal event and historical figure to embody one of these formulas. This yields some interesting results; roots of the inverted pyramid style in news writing, for example, are found in Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's dispatches during the Civil War.

The author asks important questions about enduring ambiguities in the objective news report: "How does one balance a story about lynching?" (122). Unfortunately, the book's assumptions and methodology limit its ability to answer these questions historically.

The work is too dependent on a framework established by journalism textbooks. It seems to make forays into the historiography of the nineteenth century less to learn what scholarship might reveal about the subject and more as a test of the claims made in journalism histories. "Objectivity" is presented throughout as a naturally occurring substance whose roots and sources need to be revealed. We seem to be waiting at the train station of history, looking at our watches and asking, "when is that objectivity as we know it today going to get here?"

James Gordon Bennett is represented as "detached" from partisanship apparently because the *New York Herald's* defense of slavery and issues closely allied to Democrats did not receive monetary support from the party. Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison are similarly "nonpartisan" because their crusades were not linked to the electoral system.

In Chapter 4, newspapers are faulted for not recognizing scientific truths that hadn't been discovered yet. In Chapter 5, they ignore Ida B. Wells and fail "to recognize a truth, that African Americans were being terrorized across the nation" (136) at a time when few white Americans imagined lynching as a social problem.

A claim that objectivity existed at its purest form when it was first mentioned in 1890s journalism textbooks (114-15) assumes that ideas are adopted when first propounded. Much of the evidence presented here (and elsewhere) suggests that newspaper readers had to be convinced that objectivity was a good idea. The author suggests that Einstein, Picasso, and others sent objectivity on its way almost as soon as it had arrived. Were most newspapers in 1920, or today, filled with cubist layout or stories written with words picked at random?

The book concludes with a discussion of "public journalism," a recent movement to make newspapers more relevant to their readers' daily lives. In the context of late-20th-century media consolidation, such an effort is an attempt to reconnect with a public alienated from most mainstream information sources. When Wells, Garrison, and Douglass created newspapers to address controversial issues in their day, they demonstrated how individuals with limited financial and cultural capital could make an unpopular point of view heard. Would they have the resources today to get into print; would any of them even be quoted in the mainstream media?

A potentially fascinating story lies within the events recounted here: the growing significance of authorized voices in the news throughout the nineteenth century as newspapers associated themselves increasingly with the establishment and older story forms were incorporated into objective narratives. A book in which modern television anchormen and newspaper reporters of the last century are represented as the same kind of journalist seemingly affected by the same social and cultural constraints has limited its



chances to trace change over time. This study needs more than just the facts it offers to provide a framework that would allow readers to answer such questions.

The Center for Arts and Culture

Glenn Wallach

MARK TWAIN AND THE NOVEL: The Double-Cross of Authority. By Lawrence Howe. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1998.

This is an important book, exemplary of the rich, synthesizing possibilities in XIX-century American history and culture, American fiction, Mark Twain's key roles in both, the useful but usually inadequate perspectives of conventional Twain scholarship, and literary theory, European and American. Within 229 pages of text and 27 of notes, Howe has embraced a wide horizon, giving fresh demonstration of the literary cultural resources of American studies.

Though not quite sticking to it to the end, Howe grounds his analysis in biography and a political- economic- psychological survey of a crucial era—the Civil War to the mid-Nineties—during which Mark Twain assumed a representative role. Through the medium of the modern novel he sought to articulate a countervailing voice against (but always, as he ruefully discovered, within) the culture's power struggles and structures. Power and authority were his and his age's obsessions. The Union Army and Southern Reconstruction established the conflicted ground: slavery, racism, and (at century's close) white fears of miscegenation. Industrial capitalism spawned Robber Barons and paupers. History exerted a powerful pull toward both romantic nostalgia and realistic urge to examine critically America's traditional role as heir of the Enlightenment and mythic spot for starting over again in the West.

What could Mark Twain do or write to ironize (a favorite Howe verb) these sources of hegemonic authority which steadily eroded American ideals of exceptionalism and individualism? Meeting this question means reexamining Twain's major "American novels": *Life on the Mississippi*, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Connecticut Yankee*, *The American Claimant* and *Puddnhead Wilson*. "I am the only man alive who can scribble about the piloting of the day," he wrote Howells. This claim for the authority of direct experience of the great American river is undercut by that little verb "scribble." Twain never succeeded in exerting authorial authority over history, unless critically deployed. So he attempted his own version of the modern novel—a vernacular, expansive field of ironic verbal play open to both conscious and unconscious impulses and imperatives. But try as he might, Twain couldn't escape the double-cross of novelistic power. "Fictional narratives may question and reconfigure the ideological assumptions of the culture," Howe writes, but "fictional image is not the real thing, and to confuse the two is to suffer from quixotic delusion." (227) Huck and Jim on the raft recapitulate the dreams and realities of abolition, humanitarianism, slavery, escape, Emancipation, Reconstruction, Jim Crow. "Unable to give any guarantees that would extend beyond fiction, Twain found it even more difficult to complete, to control, or to imagine he was controlling his fictional challenges to the world that had turned so grim." (225)

Throughout a remarkably suggestive career, Twain rediscovered that the modern American novel as a linguistic construct is truly (in Henry Gates' phrase) an "elaborate signifying text," revealing repeatedly here Twain's sensitivity to racial injustice and "his internalized racial bias." (222) Huck Finn at career's apogee and later David Wilson, detective, in *Puddnhead Wilson* both dramatize this double bind.

Howe's examination of these perennial problems shows the value of juxtaposing Freud, Adorno, and Girard, say, and the insights of Smith, Blair, and even James Cox. He restates that we humans are both within and beyond culture, and this double-cross is the fate of language itself. Americanists' attention to language and hence to literary criticism proves at once a trick and a revelation. Along this sometimes-familiar path Howe leads readers of *Mark Twain and the Novel* to a host of subtle textual and psychological insights. His display of fashionable jargon (e.g. "potentiated," and "gene-illogical authority") was only mildly annoying to me. My final querimonious note, though, is just to chide Howe for subordinating, at the end, Mark Twain's role as self-proclaimed representative American in favor of a clever, occasionally far-fetched, and not very original argument that Poe is the secret literary ancestor Twain sought to slay Oedipally in *Puddinhead Wilson*. This reads like an act of signifying bravura. It suggests that Howe's allegiance to literature, language, and theory has here displaced somewhat biography, history, and the deeper realities of race—deeper and wider, that is, than those Gates's literary Afro-American term might suggest.

University of Iowa

Albert E. Stone

PARLOR RADICAL: Rebecca Harding Davis and the Origins of American Social Realism. By Jean Pfaelzer. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 1996.

Sometimes the recovery of a previously neglected writer results in the canonization of a single text, rather than the recontextualization of an author's body of work. Since the Feminist Press published "Life in the Iron-Mills" in 1972, Rebecca Harding Davis had been at risk of this fate. The story is now a standard in anthologies and survey courses, as well as in revisionist histories of realism, naturalism, the short story, and women's writing in America. But while "Life" has been effectively revived, its author's death has been only partially reversed.

Jean Pfaelzer's *Parlor Radical* documents Davis's literary engagement with virtually every social and political issue of the second half of the nineteenth century, including temperance, racism and Reconstruction, women's suffrage, and "New Womanhood." Davis also tried out most of the narrative genres and modes available to her, from the short story to the novel, from the captivity narrative to the journalistic essay. *Parlor Radical* thus extends Sharon M. Harris' argument in *Rebecca Harding Davis and American Realism* that Davis's writings should be seen as crucial to the development of realism in the United States.

Unifying Davis's literary life was an ongoing concern with a set of issues simultaneously social and literary. For Pfaelzer, Davis wrote "political fiction, which is always, regardless of her historical topic, about female subjectivity" (4). She linked politics and subjectivity by staging a dialogue between the discourse of sentiment, as practiced by domestic novelists and deployed in abolitionist-feminist discourse, with the more socially oriented mode of literary realism. The tensions between these discourses animate Davis's writing from her early fiction about the social and psychological effects of industrialization, including "Iron Mills" and her first novel *Margaret Howth*, through her 1867 novel of postbellum race relations, *Waiting for the Verdict*, to the late political writings that led her to give up fiction for journalism.

Pfaelzer's view of Davis's writings as sites on which ideological and generic tensions are played out leads to some rich readings and recontextualization of her work. Her approach is at its best in her reading of the politics of sympathy in "Life in the Iron-Mills."

The function of the anonymous middle-class female narrator in that story about workers has always intrigued and puzzled critics; Pfaelzer's argument that the narrator's framing commentary "not only mediates conflicting class values and gender identities; it also mediates the tensions between realism and romanticism" is nuanced and persuasive. At times, however, the discourses she puts into dialogue are interwoven so intricately that literary and cultural history becomes a series of abstract and often underdefined "isms." For instance, even in that opening chapter on "Life" transcendentalism and sentimentalism come to seem seriously interchangeable, and later she deploys the categories of realism, naturalism, and romanticism in ways that are only partially helpful. Can the oft-debated distinction between realism and naturalism really be boiled down to a distinction between stories involving "complex moral choices" and those characterized by mechanistic determinism?

Pfaelzer writes in her introduction that her book "began as a biography" and "evolved from cultural biography to historiography to . . . a literary analysis that engages political, legal, historical, literary, and psychoanalytic studies" (23). *Parlor Radical* borrows from the strengths of each of these critical modes, much as Davis herself took up whatever literary mode was appropriate to her subject matter. It is, at its core and at its best, a literary analysis, a fact underscored by Pfaelzer's choice not to discuss at length Davis's later journalistic writings. Readers who know Davis only as the author of "Life in the Iron-Mills" will find here a literary career as rich as that of any nineteenth-century writer, male or female, and a persuasive argument that American social realism was always in dialogue with forms, such as sentimentalism, to which it has usually been opposed.

University of Notre Dame

Glenn Hendler

GENDER AND AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCE: The Formative Years. Edited by Helene Silverberg. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 1998.

Scholars of intellectual history frequently represent professionalization as a natural phenomenon of the nineteenth-century's quest for knowledge and identity. This rich publication, edited by Helene Silverberg, complicates any assumption that our modern social sciences evolved along neutral, inevitably progressive lines. Instead, this volume suggests, ideas about masculinity and femininity shaped both the content and communities of emerging disciplines. Turn-of-the-century upheavals in sex roles left marks for years on the pursuit of economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. "Gender became encoded in the analytical tools. . . ." (4)

*Gender and American Social Science* concentrates on 1870-1920, when pressure from conservative university authorities, combined with professionals' own "crisis of masculinity," made academia increasingly theoretical and specialized. Leading thinkers conferred upon themselves the prestige of "objective" science and male "rationality," contrasted against "emotional female" reformers. Barred from elite university posts, women with social science degrees worked in settlement houses, women's groups, and government agencies to create "new forms of social knowledge that were frankly reformist and policy-oriented. They also engaged questions of gender more openly. . . ." (13)

The book's first essays investigate how turn-of-the-century intellectual and cultural conditions mediated social science's discussions of gender difference. Nancy Folbre nicely details how male economists assumed society had moral justification for keeping women inside domestic spheres. Their "rhetoric of objectivity concealed an uncritical acceptance of prevailing social norms"; a few female Ph.D.s, notably Sophonisba

Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, broke away to assert women's economic importance as wage-earners. Similarly, Mary Dietz and James Farr contend that political scientists, explicitly defining the State and Citizen as male, set the tone for anti-suffrage arguments that voting would ruin gentle femininity. Kamala Visweswaran explores early cross-cultural investigations by female anthropologists, unfortunately losing focus amidst the complexities of this fascinating subject.

The second set of articles asks how gender shaped social science methodology and professional self-conception. Kathryn Kish Sklar expertly describes *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (1895) as a landmark product of distinctively female research, applying reform-oriented analysis to visual geography. Silverberg's intriguing piece on political science declares that "while the new science of administration appeared to be gender-neutral, neither it nor the discipline constructed around it actually was." [P]olitical scientists incorporated a gendered perspective on politics into the very foundations of their discipline." (178) University programs and textbooks focused narrowly on male expertise and city government, ignoring the growing importance of the National Consumers' League, suffrage organizations, and local women's clubs. Nancy Berlage (adding a valuable, though not particularly novel, dimension to this book) suggests that unique among the social sciences, home economics represented a discipline defined by women. Claiming space and authority inside academe, home economists blended supposedly-masculine scientific ideals with traditionally-female reform goals to inaugurate new fields of nutrition and child science.

Finally, the volume emphasizes links between the ideas and personal lives of prominent female social scientists. As Dorothy Ross skillfully details, Jane Addams combined a middle-class background and desire for reform into a gendered alternative to university teaching. Addams hoped to guide urban immigrants toward good citizenship, while arousing public opinion for societal change. "Had the academy been more open to her work, sociology might have become a site for the production of a different kind of social knowledge." (255) Elsie Clews Parsons reacted against her middle-class upbringing, Desley Deacon's well-written piece suggests, mixing sociology, anthropology, and feminism to challenge domestic norms which suffocated girls' autonomy. Struggling to juggle her own family and career, Parsons advocated trial marriage, contraception, and women's employment, ultimately re-inventing herself outside imprisoning conventions. Proclaiming the relevance of biography, Guy Alchon uses Mary van Kleeck's commitment to technocratic Taylorism to warn against overly-simplistic gender analysis which automatically associates objectivity with men. Alchon's cautions emphasize the need for further scholarship unpacking the complex inter-relationships between gender and social science. Admirable insight and thorough documentation make *Gender and American Social Science* an invaluable starting point for students of American studies, intellectual history, or gender studies.

Iowa State University

Amy Sue Bix

**FIGHTING FOR AMERICAN MANHOOD: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars.** By Kristin Hoganson. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1998.

In *Fighting for American Manhood*, Kristin Hoganson responds to the call first sounded by Akira Iriye in 1979: to study the links between national cultures and international relations. In this case, Hoganson investigates the cultural context that moved

the United States to war first against Spain in 1898 and then against the Philippines from 1899 to 1902. She argues that anxieties about American manhood provided a motive for the two wars and that gender also supplied a method for pulling fence-sitters into the war camp in each of those conflicts.

Hoganson does not simply lengthen the current list of explanations for U.S. involvement in the Spanish-American War. In gender convictions, she finds a bond between policymakers and commentators who otherwise seemed to be urging belligerence for different reasons. What united jingoes from different political parties, regions, and classes, her evidence demonstrates, was their passionate desire to establish a version of American manhood that they believed necessary to the survival of the American political system.

These men believed that the only way to create the requisite form of manhood was through war. Proponents of war in 1898 and American rule of the Philippines thereafter argued that combat and imperialism would create the kinds of men that America needed to continue its democratic experiment: strong, risk-taking, vigorous men, quick to avenge an insult. Alternatives to war, like arbitration, represented a betrayal of manly honor, and Hoganson opens her analysis with their successful opposition to the arbitration movement in 1895.

Driven by gender motives, these men then used gender to draw others to the cause of war. In the case of Cuba, for example, they told two tales. In the first, Cuban women were drawn as victims of Spanish lust, crying for chivalric rescue by American knights. In the second, Cuba itself was painted as the ravished maid, with American men their only hope of deliverance. Failure to respond to Cuba's need would show that the American nation and its men were unworthy of respect, self-interested weaklings rotting with over-civilization.

Hoganson argues that anxieties about American manhood were widespread enough and manliness such an accepted prerequisite to political authority that these arguments won the day when the United States barged into Cuba and then took the Philippines in a more protracted struggle. But, she also astutely shows that the length and conditions of war in the Philippines later helped to tip the scale against imperialism. As diseased and injured men returned with stories of American atrocities and sexual license, they supplied evidence that fighting and ruling in the "fair tropic islands" might create moral and physical degeneracy in American men rather than invigoration. In this context, concerns with manhood pushed Americans away from additional imperial schemes and toward domestic reform.

My most significant quibble with the book is that it is not clear whether Hoganson believes that the strenuous manhood promoted by jingoes was new or old. Sometimes, she seems to argue that it sought to re-establish the manhood represented by Civil War veterans who were dying off in the 1890s. At other times, however, she seems to suggest that this belligerent manhood was something new, that it rejected the more restrained manhood of the Civil War generation, which, though willing to fight, still preferred peace and self-control over impulsive pugnaciousness. Clarity on this point would have made the book even more compelling.

Still, a brief review cannot do justice to the complexities of Hoganson's intelligent argumentation. Her engaging book should appear on syllabi for both undergraduate and graduate courses. It is a great read.

University of Maryland-College Park

Robyn Muncy

THE QUEST FOR UTOPIA IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA. Volume I: 1900-1960. By Timothy Miller. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. 1998.

Most of the historical literature on communal societies in America focus on the “spiritual ferment” associated with antebellum religious culture. This literature argues that the yearning to create an alternative society based on communitarian principles rather than the prevailing individualism shaping both the material conditions and the religious imaginations of many Americans had all but disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century. Timothy Miller makes it clear at the very beginning of his new book, *The Quest for Utopia*, that such a historical position simply “does not stand close scrutiny” (xi). The rest of his book provides the “close scrutiny” missing from so many studies of communalism in the United States.

Even though Miller comments about the scarcity of research materials for many communities now long gone, one of the most impressive elements of the book is the range and depth of sources he relies on to narrate the history of communal living in the first half of the twentieth-century. It is obvious that the author is at ease with his references; from unpublished dissertations to popular magazines and newspapers to a variety of journals from around the country, Miller positions his arguments on a sound, sturdy edifice of data. Indeed, in his effort to revise historical awareness of twentieth-century forms of communalism before the 1960s, Miller organizes and presents the data in a logical, well-organized manner: begin with “the continuing tradition” of intentional communities from earlier periods in American history, such as Shakers, the Harmony Society, the Oneida Community, the Hutterites, and a great many more from across the social landscape; then move to the significant growth of art colonies between 1890 and 1910, such as Roycroft, Byrdcliffe, and Beaux Arts Village; and finally, turn to a decade-by-decade account of developments in communal living throughout the nation.

In the end, the force of the book resides in the startling diversity of community experiments in American society. On the one hand, the existence and appeal of these communities, and their relation to the larger cultural environment of the time, raises a series of questions about social and religious life in the first half of the twentieth century (questions that go beyond Miller’s remarks about “larger social themes” related to socialism, the social gospel movement, and arts and crafts movements [xviii]). On the other hand, the variety of religious and ideological sensibilities inspiring these communities “ranging from the teachings of Swami Vivekananda in Vedanta communes to the rural romanticism motivating anarchists in Ferrer Colony” suggests that, contrary to conventional historiography, this period in American history had a surprising amount of cultural heterogeneity. While Miller presents this history in an informed, encyclopedic fashion, each one of these cases cries out for more detailed cultural analysis.

Miller’s book is an important contribution to the historical reconstruction of American efforts at community living in the first half of the twentieth century in particular, and to a more expanded view of American religious and cultural history in general. This text, along with the projected second volume that will cover the even more exciting period from the 1960s to the closing years of the millennium, should become standard reading for anyone interested in historical threads that go beyond the typical investigations of American social life.

Emory University

Gary Laderman

KID'S STUFF: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood. By Gary Cross. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press. 1997.

Toys are serious business, in two senses of the phrase. Nowadays the toy industry is among the nation's largest, with retail sales of \$17.5 billion in 1993. And as Gary Cross shows in this thoughtful and well written study, toys give us some revealing answers to important questions. They can teach us plenty about our children, ourselves, and our society.

Although Cross dips briefly into the longer past of American playthings, he concentrates on the changing nature and role of toys in this century. His departure point is the common feeling among parents that toy-giving has gotten way out of hand. Children today seem to expect (and to get) far more than ever before, and what they get seems to have little in common with the toys adults remember. There is a lot to this impression, Cross writes, but parents' anxieties overlook complexities in this situation and miss some pertinent details. He finds some fascinating lessons by tracing the origins of the contemporary feeding frenzy among youthful customers.

Cross's approach is basically a triangulation among children, parents, and the toy industry. Each changed considerably, especially after World War II, and each change resonated with the other two. Sons and daughters have enjoyed far greater autonomy and buying power, and they have exercised much greater leverage on their parents as they have moved to the center of the family's concern. Increasingly they are arbiters of taste, and not only in the things they play with. The toy industry has responded, pitching its appeal more and more directly to children's fantasies rather than parents' values and concerns. A crucial breakthrough was the "managed fad," in which manufacturers have linked up with radio, films, and television to create characters and narratives that in turn inspire dolls, games, clothing, and other paraphernalia that children grab up in loyal identification with the original fantasy. This revolutionized the rhythm of sales. Before, there had been two marketing seasons: Christmas and otherwise. Now buying became a year-round frenzy, with lines of products spawning more and more of their own kind. The toy industry was steadily integrated into mass culture. Mom and pop toy stores gave way to supermarkets; plastic figures of movie characters are sold in fast food franchises (surveys having shown that in 84 percent of families children play a major role in deciding where to eat).

As for parents, Cross argues that a crucial influence has been their deepening bewilderment about the future for which they are supposedly preparing their youngsters. Although goals of childrearing, of course, have always been fractured and debated, a critical mass of past certainties provided a core of key messages that toys were intended to convey, especially when parents were the primary toy-buyers. Dolls, air rifles, train sets, and board games were undisguised efforts to lead children along certain developmental paths. Those certainties today, however, have been badly shaken, Cross writes. This rattled confidence, with the media revolution and soaring youthful buying power, has shifted the initiative away from mothers and fathers. Instead of traditional parental lessons, toys increasingly embody youthful fantasies born from high fashion, superhuman powers, primal drives, and the grotesque.

Several other lesser but intriguing themes run through *Kids' Stuff*, and with them a wondrous survey of our century's playthings, from racist penny banks and the Modern Trench Warfare playset from the World War I era to this generation's Barbies and mutant turtle-heroes. Clearly and entertainingly written, Cross's book is always enlightening, sometimes disturbing, and often—there's no other word for it—fun.

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Elliott West

VENUS ENVY: A History of Cosmetic Surgery. By Elizabeth Haiken. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1997.

Henry Junius Schireson received diplomas in 1906 and 1922 from two nonaccredited medical schools and eventually obtained licenses to practice in Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois. But his enduring claim to fame was a publicity stunt he staged to promote his career as a cosmetic surgeon—a nose job he performed on Jewish actress and musical showgirl Fanny Brice in her New York Ritz apartment in 1923. Another of Schireson's patients, Miss Sadye Holland, was less fortunate than Brice. When an operation in 1928 to correct her bow legs went awry, gangrene threatened her life. She survived only after the amputation of both legs above the knee. Regrettably, such sensational incidents were not confined to cosmetic surgery's early history. Fifty years later a forty-year-old divorcee living in the San Diego suburbs answered a newspaper ad promising her "perfectly . . . safe" silicone treatments to enhance her bustline. She paid \$800 for injections that increased her flat chest to a 38B. Eighteen months later, both breasts became infected and eventually had to be surgically removed.

The fact that neither of the perpetrators of these disfigurements were respected members of the American Association of Plastic Surgeons is part of the complex history of the specialty. Indeed, these tragic anecdotes are only two of many that illustrate the rich narrative Elizabeth Haiken has to tell. Hers is a story of the confluence of technical medical advances, professionalization, consumer culture, changing gender norms, and modern notions of personality and selfhood. The history of cosmetic surgery provides a marvelous example of the relevance of the history of medicine to studies of cultural change, underscoring the increasingly accepted notion that science and medical treatment are never "objective" and value free. This book carefully weaves together and measures the significance of various causative strands—including patient pressure and cultural transformation, the development of scientific knowledge and its practical application to patient care, capitalist enterprise and its relationship to medical professionalism, the role of individuals—into an innovative study of subject matter not always likely to fall under the rubric of American studies.

Because plastic surgeons are physicians, medicine provides one important context for Haiken's story. Like other medical subspecialties, the discipline emerged early in the 20th century, as individual physicians found themselves drawn to certain aspects of the work. Several physicians, for example, experimented with nasal operations at the end of the 19th century, occasionally reducing large noses, but primarily building up depressed ones resulting from trauma, abscess, syphilis, or infection. But before World War I, practitioners struggled in vain to find a niche in medical practice. Warfare produced an unprecedented number of facial injuries, however, stimulating extraordinary interest in reconstructive surgery and generating an ideological justification for the importance of such work to comprehensive patient care. Surgeons in the United States, England, and the Continent made dramatic technical advances. Not surprisingly, the American Association of Plastic Surgeons was founded in 1921; its early membership comprised primarily of a generation of men for whom the war was a personal and medical turning point. In time, other professional societies were organized, as, like other medical specialists, plastic surgeons attempted to define the boundaries of their work, control training programs, and fashion a respectable medical self image and history.

The year 1921 not only marked the professionalization of plastic surgery, however, it also saw the establishment of the first Miss America, Beauty pageant. In deliberately



juxtaposing that symbolic convergence of events, Haiken develops her thesis that “cosmetic surgery lies at the nexus of medicine and consumer culture.” (12) She demonstrates that the development of the specialty throughout the 20th century, including its introspective struggle with the nature and meaning of the services it provided to patients, cannot be properly understood without examining changing American notions of beauty and concomitant alterations in ideas about identity and self-presentation. Whereas in the 19th century Victorians eschewed vanity and mistrusted physical beauty, emphasizing the importance of naturalness, character, and health, 20th-century Americans increasingly measured attractiveness as external, essential to success, and indeed a necessary and achievable ingredient on the path to self improvement. Personality and good looks were inextricably intertwined, insisted one cultural commentator in 1931. It “gets jobs, it wins friends, it draws beaux like a magnet; it keeps husbands in love with you.” But even more important: “You don’t have to be born with it. You can develop it. . . . Work for what you want. You must have will power, courage and determination.” (101)

Whereas many responsible, self-respecting plastic surgeons did their best to resist becoming full participants in the “beauty industry,” the power of American culture’s emphasis on good looks guaranteed that their struggle would be a losing one. Inability to regulate who performed cosmetic surgery even within medicine, combined with pressure from quacks like Junius Shireson and the female beautician who in the 1970s offered cheap silicone injections to discontented housewives in the San Diego area prompted them to seek a greater share of the cosmetic surgery boom. Many believed that they were acting in the patient’s best interest by bringing to the business professional ethics, the latest in surgical technique, impeccable medical training, and the highest standards of treatment. Ironically, as Haiken demonstrates in her illuminating discussion of the handling of silicone injections and implants, none of these categories could ever be kept absolutely free from the pressures of consumer culture. Even highly professional physicians took irresponsible risks when patient demand shaped medical decision-making just as powerfully as did the new frontiers of technological and surgical science. This readable book should be of interest to a wide range of scholars interested in 20th century history and culture.

University of Michigan

Regina Morantz-Sanchez

**PARTISANS AND POETS: The Political Work of American Poetry in the Great War.** By Mark Van Wienen. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1997.

*Partisans and Poets* examines the poetry and song lyrics of women pacifists, Wobblies, African Americans, soldiers, and pro-war advocates that appeared in newspapers, party literature, topical anthologies, and broadsides during the First World War era. It considers how this poetry played a vital role in the political discourses of the early-twentieth century and the move from a pacifist to an interventionist consensus on the war. By investigating this largely forgotten yet substantial body of poetries, the book seeks to illuminate the cultural history of America’s conflicted involvement in the Great War, to interrogate the hegemony of modernist poetics, to challenge the gendered representations of war poetry, and to engage with Althusserian and Gramscian modes of cultural interpretation. In short, the book’s ambitions are large.

In the main, it delivers on its promise and is one of the best cultural studies of poetry I have ever read. Van Wienen’s densely textured study draws on all manner of historical data to shed light on the varied contexts for early-twentieth-century poetic production.

Because Van Wiene's research is so thorough his book presents a formidable intervention in American poetry studies. The extensive evidence he presents demonstrates that early-twentieth-century American partisan poetry was both much more varied and much more vital to culture than has been previously acknowledged, and further, that it deserves much more attention as an alternative modernism. The poetry Van Wiene discusses has been virtually erased from cultural memory, yet his incisive readings and persuasive arguments go a long way towards recuperating it. In many ways, his work makes previous historical studies of early-twentieth-century poetry obsolete.

Like many cultural studies of poetry, however *Partisans and Poets* neglects form in favor of content. Many of the texts Van Wiene cites tend to use conventional meters and rhymes, yet he rarely engages these elements. Van Wiene misses an important opportunity here: by giving the same kind of detailed historical and cultural analysis to form, he could effectively undermine the ahistorical and implicitly reactionary authority of academic formalism. New Criticism's hegemony in most formalist study is precisely what has marginalized the poetry Van Wiene examines. His emphasis on content, then, at times threatens to undermine the larger theoretical and political arguments his book makes by ceding form to more conservative critics. And like other cultural studies of radical poetry, the book treats IWW songs as primarily printed texts, giving little attention to their music and performance. Yet even Van Wiene's opening example of 250 IWWs singing "Hold the Fort" in the face of armed vigilantes demonstrates how oral performance, music, and form are key factors in the song's political significance. Van Wiene argues that "what counts in the constitution and cultural power of these forms of 'partisan poetry' is not their status as poetry per se, but their placement within the ideologies and political practices of particular groups" (34). Yet his study makes clear that partisan poetry's status as poetry is instrumental in its role as a distinctive form of praxis.

Van Wiene's strongest readings focus on the works of women pacifists and the Wobblies. His analysis of the role played by IWW songs in articulating ideology is illuminating, especially when he demonstrates revealing rhetorical similarities to commercialism. The discussion of women's poetry exposes revealing conflicts in positions among women on the war. And although most poetry he discusses is conventional, he cites interesting examples of experimental styles comparable to canonized modernism. His discussions of "The Sayings of Patsy" by Bernice Evans, a verse-editorial featured in the "Women's Sphere" section of the *New York Call's* Sunday magazine, demonstrates how these forgotten texts combined free verse with cartoon illustration and satire. One of the most interesting areas Van Wiene examines is the role of food as a theme in war poetry and the part the U.S. Food Administration played in forging consensus. Although many of his analyses of African-American poems concerning the war are insightful, at times he neglects important contexts. Van Wiene's discussion of William Stanley Braithwaite's support of the war, for example, leaves unexamined Braithwaite's complicated relationship to black culture, the role of "passing," or the Anglophilic nature of the early-twentieth-century West Indian educated class.

Overall, however, Van Wiene's book stands out as an exemplary work in the cultural studies approach to poetry associated with Cary Nelson, Maria Damon, and James Sullivan, and it makes an important contribution to the study of politics and literature, giving theoretically sophisticated and historically detailed attention to the marginalized poetries of political partisans.

Shippensburg University

Michael Bibby

THE RISE OF SINCLAIR LEWIS, 1920-1930. By James M. Hutchinson. University Park: Penn State Press. 1996.

That this volume is the second study in a series called "The History of the Book" suggests to us that James M. Hutchinson's project is not a "reading" of certain novels by Sinclair Lewis. It is rather a reading of a major phase of Lewis's career through his compositional practices. Hutchinson seeks to correct the influence of Lewis's most famous biographer, Mark Schorer, by explaining the relationship between Lewis's creative processes and the varied reputations of those of his novels produced between 1920 and 1930. Hutchinson believes that Schorer's affinities with New Criticism left him particularly unable to explain or even understand the more sociologically-oriented, "Flaubertian" Lewis's rise to prominence in the Twenties.

Hutchinson's study is of the compositional practices that lay behind the production of *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), *Arrowsmith* (1925), *Elmer Gantry* (1927), and *Dodsworth* (1929), with stops along the way for lesser texts. Hutchinson also pursues one of the real mysteries of Lewis's career, his failure to complete the major novel of American unionism over which he labored for more than twenty years, by interweaving the tale of Lewis's attempts at the thing throughout his chronological account of the composition of the other novels. Finally, Hutchinson would like to have us read his book as a narrative of American publishing as it was practiced between 1920 and 1930.

Inasmuch as earlier observers, Schorer included, have remarked on the structural peculiarities of Lewis's compositional program but have neglected to examine in any detail the relationships between those peculiarities and the shape of Lewis's career, Hutchinson has a good idea. He is able to show us not only how Lewis produced the novels for which he is most often remarked and taught (immersion in the milieu, exhaustive research, extensive planning, quick drafting only after much "internal" work) but he suggests how Lewis's abandonment of one after another of these practices contributed to the problems he encountered after 1930 finding enthusiastic critical acclaim for his books. The account of the writing of *Arrowsmith*, for example, is exemplary and its presence helps us understand how far away from such practices Lewis eventually moves. Hutchinson also argues well not only for the symbiosis between Lewis's writing strategies and his satiric intent but about the limitations that intent placed on his ability to choose subjects for his later novels.

If Hutchinson falls short of his goals anywhere, one instance is in his wish that we see this story as one about American publishing of the period. I'd have to say that doesn't come off although his account of Lewis's relationship with Alfred Harcourt and the influence of that relationship on both their careers is informative. There simply isn't enough scope here to support Hutchinson's wish. More importantly, I think, and unfortunate for the reader whose interest is piqued, is the book's inability to get finally to the heart of the matter of the unrealized labor novel. In some ways, the question of Lewis's inability to bring it off turns out to be the most interesting issue Hutchinson raises, if only because Lewis chased the story throughout the entire period he was becoming the most honored American novelist of his day. Certainly, as Hutchinson suggests, Lewis's satiric impulses must have got in his way as he thought about what the novel could be, but from this analysis we don't see in real depth how and why that was so.

Here Hutchinson is, ironically, hampered by his own methodology. Throughout this very workmanlike study he works within a range of primary materials and secondary sources almost exclusively limited to Lewis himself. Consequently this is, in some ways,

a hermetic exercise; the wider world always seems to be just outside Hutchinson's own narrative. Had he read and thought more about the particular world of labor, working-class, and proletarian literature that Lewis was skirting in his attempts to understand how to write the book he thought was out there, Hutchinson might have ended up with more to offer us. As it is, his brief accounts of Lewis's "research" feel somehow too superficial for the topic. When he describes Lewis's agreement with one Carl Haessler to help him generate the labor novel, he identifies Haessler as "a reporter for the *Federated Press*, a labor newspaper" (196). In fact, *Federated Press* was the news service for labor's left wing, one of its cooperative owners being the Communist Party through its newspaper, the *Daily Worker*; Haessler was not just a reporter but was *FP*'s managing editor throughout the 1920s. Had there been the same attention to detail on Hutchinson's part here as he admirably displays in other chapters, we would have more confidence in the incomplete account he offers us. As it is, we are left with the impression, and it may be a reasonable one, that Lewis failed to write the novel because he could find no common ground to share with the men and women who would populate such a book. Class turns out to be an unsurmountable barrier for Lewis, as Hutchinson leaves the argument in lieu of a well-grounded analysis of Lewis's relationship not just with working folks but with the working left.

This book is quite practical, letting us see pretty easily the strengths and weaknesses of Lewis's understanding of the craft of fiction. Hutchinson's investigation (and inclusion of photographs) of journals, drafts, research papers, and maps is thorough. His appendices include reprints of documents we are not likely to come across easily, such as a deleted chapter from *Main Street* and an unpublished introduction to *Babbitt*. To see how Lewis "did it," come here. To find out how and why the practices that served him ceased to work for him, you can start here and Hutchinson will point you in some useful directions.

John Jay College/CUNY

Jon-Christian Suggs

**BOLD RELIEF: Institutional Politics and the Origins of Modern American Social Policy.**  
By Edwin Amenta. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1998.

It is by now almost heresy to question the presumption that the United States was a welfare state laggard. Nearly everyone agrees that, compared to other western, capitalist democracies, the United States was slow to adopt national welfare programs, that it failed to provide benefits other nations included as basic elements of their social insurance systems, such as health insurance and family allowances, and that its benefits were divided into two-tiers, means-tested programs for the poor and entitlement programs for workers. In *Bold Relief: Institutional Politics and the Origins of Modern American Social Policy*, Edwin Amenta challenges conventional wisdom. Rather, he argues, in the midst of the Great Depression, the United States not only devoted a larger share of its gross domestic product to social spending than most European nations but also embarked on a "bold program of work and relief" (3). In his view, the failure of most studies of welfare state development to incorporate the ambitious work programs of the New Deal contributes to misleading perceptions of the trajectory of American social policymaking.

Amenta begins by reviewing the principal theoretical arguments about American welfare state development and then develops his own version of an "institutional politics" theory. Convincingly arguing that neither purely institutional nor purely political arguments can fully capture the historical trajectory of U.S. policymaking, he instead demonstrates the complementary nature of these perspectives. Early in the twentieth century, Amenta contends, institutional and political impediments conspired against the

creation of modern social policies. Then in the first years of the Great Depression, the Roosevelt administration instituted an ambitious emergency relief program. The policy efforts of this First New Deal (1933-34) represented the first major national social spending effort since the Civil War pension system had dwindled away. These initial relief programs influenced the structure of the Second New Deal of 1935, which launched the permanent national welfare state.

Unlike most comparative research on the welfare state, Amenta must explain why the United States, which was a social spending leader in the 1930s, failed to follow the path of other affluent capitalist democracies and enact a fully developed array of social programs. To answer this question, he includes an historical analysis comparing the United States and Great Britain. This is the least developed and most unsatisfactory part of the book. Amenta provides only a brief and unconvincing rationale for why he chose Great Britain as the case for comparison. He argues that both countries were major industrial powers and both had long-standing democratic political institutions. Although much of the comparative research on the welfare state emphasizes the similarities rather than the differences between Britain and the United States, Amenta never places his comparison in the context of this vast literature. As a result, this chapter appears to be tacked on, a hasty afterthought.

What the comparative question actually does is provide a starting point for a very effective single country analysis. The strength of *Bold Relief* lies in the wealth of original archival data, the sophisticated state-society theoretical approach, and the analysis of policy implementation at the state level.

Florida State University

Jill Quadagno

MAIN STREET BLUES: The Decline of Small-Town America. By Richard O. Davies. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 1998.

In 1958, a debate erupted in Camden, Ohio, over the issue of a highway extension that would bypass the town. On the one side, most residents were glad to see plans for re-routing State Highway 127 around downtown Camden. For them, the noise, dust, congestion, and pollution from increased traffic along the Cincinnati corridor would be a thing of the past, restoring Camden to the quiet calm they recalled from their childhoods. On the other side, downtown merchants painted dire pictures of a bleak future for Camden, with derelict buildings, failing businesses, and decaying streets. In the end, the townspeople siding with the State won, and Highway 127 was re-routed through a large loop bypassing Camden. Ultimately, however, the merchants' predictions came true. By the 1970s, Camden was a husk, a shell of its former self, straddling a forgotten stretch of road between Cincinnati and Richmond, Indiana.

This debate reflects a moment in America, a moment before the massive dislocations caused by the Interstate Highway System—signed into law two years earlier, but with little effect on the Southwest corner of Ohio until the late 1960s. The debate reveals a town confident of its economic vitality, and assured that reduced traffic, rather than a reliance on exterior commerce, would be the best way to keep the community strong. Had the re-routing debate erupted in the early 1970s, when the town was struggling with loss of businesses, jobs, commercial traffic, and young people, downtown merchants would have carried the day. Such a debate is almost unimaginable today.

Richard Davies' *Main Street Blues*, the most recent in the Urban Life and Urban Landscape Series edited by Zane Miller, examines the decline of small-town America

through a finely-grained and nuanced study of one such place. Camden, Ohio, is birthplace not only to Sherwood Anderson (though sadly for the Camden tourist industry the town is NOT the subject of *Winesburg, Ohio*), but to Davies himself. His principal goal, then, is to balance the nostalgia for the town in which he grew up with a critical understanding of its past. Contrary to the booster histories found in the local archives, histories which depict a community ever free of racism and intolerance and bigotry and class distinctions, Davies wants to recover a story of vulnerability by connecting Camden's fragile and uneven development with larger regional and national political economic processes. Though he does not claim his Camden is "typical," he argues that his study will reveal "core themes" applicable to many other small towns in America.

The first part of the book is heavily influenced by the work of William Cronon, who placed the growth and development of Chicago within the context of a rapid expansion of its environmental hinterland. Likewise, Davies locates Camden within a regional system which pushes and pulls small towns into the agro-economic orbit of Dayton and Cincinnati. In the first half of the nineteenth century, for example, Camden was a farming village in transition from subsistence agriculture to production for the Cincinnati hog and whiskey market. Camden farmers not only raised hogs for sale in Cincinnati, but increasingly put land under monocultural crops such as corn—used both as hog feed and as a primary input into the production of whiskey. The result of widespread hog husbandry and corn farming was a rapid foreclosure of species diversity in the region, as well as increasing integration of small towns into distant markets over which they had little control.

Through the latter half of the nineteenth century, these processes accelerated rapidly. A major event for towns like Camden, Davies reveals, was the coming of the railroad. The railroad brought a flood of new consumer goods into Camden, and it enabled farmers to move their goods with a massive increase in efficiency. People, too, moved more freely in and out of town, bringing material goods and ideas from the larger cities such as Cincinnati, Louisville, and even Chicago. It was an era of increasing prosperity in Camden, though never at the level predicted by railroad boosters. Indeed, fluctuating freight prices, an unstable hog market wrought by increasing competition with Chicago, and the autocratic practices of rail companies hurt small farmers and merchants in Camden. Moreover, the railroad jerked Camden into interregional networks of trade and commerce on a scale never before dreamt, with all of the advantages and disadvantages that accompanied reliance on large-scale markets.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the rapid growth of metropolitan America and its dominance over hinterland economies. The proliferation of the automobile and the development of road infrastructure increasingly linked small towns culturally and economically with big cities. Roads brought still more consumer goods to Camden, and in ever more variety than the bulky rail system could match. Roads brought vaudeville theater and later cinema, canned foods and durable goods, the latest furniture and clothing fashions, radios and eventually televisions, and more reliable newspaper and magazine deliveries. But the automobile also sped people away from Camden in ever-increasing numbers across ever-increasing distances, whether on periodic trips to Cincinnati, or permanent moves to war production facilities in search of good jobs. As metropolitan America assumed dominance, linking urban systems more tightly through roads and highways and communications, youth began to leave Camden in large numbers and for permanent resettlement.

By the time the Depression hit, Camden was already in decline. The bubble in consumer goods production known as the roaring twenties did not help agricultural

communities. Once the Depression hit, already declining food prices took a nose dive, ruining farmers and small traders. This had a disastrous effect on towns like Camden. But the Depression brought yet another, perhaps more powerful and lasting force to small-town America: the New Deal. Though long plagued by the distant power of rail and pork barons, Camden seldom had to relinquish control and authority to higher political entities. The New Deal, however, swooped down onto Camden in a flurry of programs and personnel designed to rescue small farmers and businesses. More than anything before, the New Deal and the suits behind it signaled to Camden residents their connections with the world outside. For a time, they were compelled to relinquish civic independence for survival.

World War Two, unlike the Depression, accelerated the process of depopulation of Camden, as men and women left town to fight or to find defense industry jobs. The massive transformation of metropolitan areas after World War Two with the growth of suburbia only continued what had been a long process of decline for small towns and, incidentally, inner cities. But the war also caused a shake-up in values, as more and more women worked outside the home, as families left in search of higher incomes, and as more and more transients moved through Camden and other small towns in search of low rents.

Perhaps the two greatest changes of the postwar era, however, were the termination of rail service and the development of the Interstate Highway system. The 1958 debate over re-routing Highway 127 was only the first in a series of anxious discussions among Camden residents about their town's future. The most important debates, however, came with the announcement in 1961 of the termination of rail freight service. While most farmers had been trucking produce since the 1920s, and most merchants received shipments by truck after World War Two, Davies argues that the termination of freight service was a symbolic blow to the community. Indeed, for over 100 years the center of Camden had been the train depot, whose future was now an open question.

For Davies, then, these two major changes in transportation and their effects reveal the fragility of Camden's relationship with regional and national economies. "These two major changes in its transportation system," Davies writes, "greatly altered Camden's relationship with the urban network of southwestern Ohio. Within a few years, grass was growing out of the cracks in the pavement and sidewalks of Main Street" (170). Despite the boosters, despite the Progressive clubs and councils that Davies documents in admirable detail, Camden's economy and social fabric deteriorated, and its physical make-up decayed rapidly, from the late 1960s to the present.

What, then, does *Main Street Blues* have to say to those interested in small towns in America? On this matter, Davies is rather vague. Perhaps one major shortcoming lies in his claim of the "replicability" of his study. Indeed, Davies argues that Camden is not "special" in any way, and that the same book could have been written about "many other small towns" (2). Camden, for Davies, is a prototype, and therefore its story does a great deal of work for a broader national story—one of small-town decline and metropolitan domination. And yet, Camden is unique. If many basic small-town features are recognizable, and if many of the processes that inhere in its development are widely extant in small communities, there is also a degree to which Camden is the "special place" that Davies downplays. Indeed, he and Sherwood Anderson were both born there, and the local historical and archival authority of Camden is a retired Librarian of Congress! No other town looks exactly like Camden or has the same people living in it, people who shape its history and remember its past in their own ways.

This shortcoming is only partly that of Davies'. It also belongs to urban history as a field, and to American history as a discipline. Historians always want the small subjects

of our fancy to illuminate big national stories. We have a fear of telling small and intimate stories about the past. While Davies breaks important new ground for the study of small-town America, this story may change as we accumulate more stories, and we may find ourselves facing a new kind of past: not of small-town America, but of the small mission-town in Anglo-Chicano Southwest, the small Texas border town, the small Cajun community, the small coastal fishing village, the small Midwestern town north of the glacial isogloss, the tiny collection of miners' shacks, the timber worker or migrant camp. The story of the small Southern town may be at least TWO stories--the white one and the black one. Towns may have Catholic and Protestant stories, stories by regular passers-by (train conductors, sailors, travelling salesmen), stories by permanent residents, or stories by transplants from the town to the metropolis looking back at life in the small community. We can imagine any number of stories for a vast variety of towns, shaped by very different historical, regional, religious, cultural, and linguistic trajectories.

We need to begin to fill the map with such stories, and to outline a history of small towns in America that does not take the national story as its point of departure, but rather which enables the town, its landscapes, its rhythms, its particularities, and its varied peoples to speak memory to history.

While Davies' story about Camden looks to the national level for clues to explain the local, he nevertheless provides us with an excellent point of departure, a set of important questions about what shapes a small town and the experiences of people in it. Ultimately, then, Davies' book makes a powerful contribution to urban history and American studies. Urbanists who study American cities too often focus on the great metropolises of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, on second-tier cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, St. Louis, and Detroit, and on the major industrial agglomerations such as Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Little attention has been paid, however, to the thousands of smaller urban concentrations that dot the American landscape. Besides local histories—crucial in their own right—scholars have paid little notice to towns such as Camden, with populations of 1000 or less. These towns are generally below the radar of urban scholarship, even though small towns exert and call forth powerful images in songs, films, novels, and the vernacular imagination.

Davies tells a story of a small town shaped by its environment, its hinterland, and its situation within a larger urban-agricultural system. But in so doing, he also achieves something more important: he tells a story about Camden as a vulnerable place, a fragile place, a place full of anxieties about the past as well as fears about the future.

Indiana University

Joseph Heathcott

LET THE COWBOY RIDE. By Paul F. Starrs. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1998.

A couple of years ago I was in Elko, the heart of Nevada's buckaroo country, talking to a couple of old-time cowhands (one was 75 and the other 20 years his senior) who were passing the time, as they did nearly every day, smoking cigarettes, telling yarns, and braiding rawhide—quirts, romals, riatas. I asked a question about ranch sizes in the Great Basin and how the use of public grazing land was administered. As a native of Kansas, in the first tier (from Texas through North Dakota) of western states, where nearly all ranch land is privately owned, I was unprepared for the heat this simple question produced. Fulminating against both tree-hugging environmentalists, who wanted all cattle and sheep off government lands and the sooner the better, and short-sighted bureaucrats, who dictated when and where and how long cattle and sheep could graze according to the



calendar instead of on-site range and weather conditions, the younger of the old-timers ended his diatribe with a bitterly humorous comparison: "I'd rather have a sister in a whore house than a brother working for the BLM."

In the dispute about the appropriate use of public lands, those voices (one thinks particularly of Edward Abbey) opposed to ranching have tended to be the most articulate and persuasive, while those who support traditional ranching often come across sounding overly defensive if not downright reactionary. Moreover, both sides tend to be absolute in the righteousness of their cause; there is no room for compromise.

In this conflict of ideologies it is as refreshing as it is rare to encounter an open mind on the subject, someone who can acknowledge the devastating environmental effect of overgrazing by cattle and sheep and at the same time acknowledge the equally devastating loss of cultural richness if ranching in the West were to become extinct. Add to this balanced view an impressive depth and range of research, an admirable acquaintance with creative literature, a perceptive grasp and analysis of issues, and a clear and pleasant writing style and the result is a book that should be required reading for pro- and anti-grazing factions, for those politicians and bureaucrats who regulate the use of public lands, and for the general public who, in a democracy, are ultimately responsible for determining land-use policy.

As the title of this book suggests, Starrs is not without bias, nor does he claim to be. Before he became a cultural geographer (he teaches at the University of Nevada), Starrs had worked on ranches, which explains his conclusion that ranching should continue as a viable part of western American agriculture but that ranchers must alter their attitudes and practices in order to survive, an opinion with which I concur. The final section of this book, concerning the future of ranching, follows upon an introductory section that surveys the history of ranching and a middle section that is comprised of case studies of ranching in five states: New Mexico, Texas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Nevada. These case studies are instructive in showing both commonalities and differences in ranching. Some problems (markets, public perceptions, animal care) pervade all five areas, while others (privately versus publicly held land, small holdings versus large ones) vary from region to region. Starrs also considers the impact of the iconography of ranchers (and their cowboy employees), which has attained mythic status in our national character.

The accessibility of this book is enhanced by its apparatus: a thorough index, a glossary, a thoughtful bibliographic essay, extensive endnotes, and numerous graphs, maps, and charts. Not only are numerous photographs included, but the captions are most informative.

Emporia State University

Jim Hoy

**TRUE DISBELIEVERS: The Elvis Contagion.** By R. Serge Denisoff and George Plasketes. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers. 1995.

**GRACELAND: Going Home with Elvis.** By Karal Ann Marling. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press. 1996.

When heard often enough, what might otherwise sound whimsical can assume an air of credibility simply by virtue of its repetition. The putative mystery of undead Elvis Presley proves to be an apt example. For more than a decade after his demise in 1977, the American people were asked to consider the possibility of undead Elvis, and not just at the check-out lines of supermarkets where the tabloids routinely scream outrageous headlines, or on the talk-show circuit where Oprah and Geraldo legitimated guests whose specula-

tions on how Presley “faked” his death both entertained viewers and boosted ratings. Reiterated so consistently, the deceit acquired respectability. Even eleven years after his death, the *New York Times* was reporting “sightings” of Presley, and *Time* magazine found it reasonable to entitle an article, “The King Is Dead-or Is He?” As one industry wag observed, “Elvis made more personal appearances than any dead person since the Virgin Mary.”

R. Serge Denisoff and George Plasketes, in *True Disbelievers: The Elvis Contagion*, record a cacophony of voices that profited by promoting the notion that Presley did not die on August 16, 1977. A cottage industry of authors have chronicled scenarios of an undead icon. Gail Brewer-Giorgio’s book, *Is Elvis Alive?* sold a million copies. Commercial spots aired on MTV that peddled the fiction by inviting telephone callers to pay \$2 per minute to “participate in a nationwide effort to determine if Elvis is really alive” (178). Several television specials devoted to the conundrum have been broadcast over the years; *The Elvis Files*, in 1991, was among American television’s most-watched shows for the week it aired, its viewers enticed by the question posed in *T.V. Guide*: “Will Elvis Be Watching?” (222). Fanatical followers could find solace in the denial of Presley’s death while others milked a “cash cow” (179).

Among the more elaborate efforts to capitalize on the possibility of an undead Presley was the singing career of the ersatz Elvis, Orion, whose first public appearance in 1979 coincided with an “exposé” on the television program *20/20* that concerned ambiguous details of Presley’s death. Orion’s stage name mimicked a novel of that title, a book that chronicled the thinly veiled life of Presley, except that instead of dying at his home, “Dixieland,” in the final chapter, the protagonist of the book fakes his death to flee a prison of fame. Life seemingly imitated art, as a poseur took to the stage to live out the farce. Wearing a sequined mask, with a voice that sounded close enough to Presley’s, Orion toured the nightclub circuit for several years with singles like, “Am I That Easy To Forget.” His album, *Reborn*, recorded on the Sun label, charted at number thirty-seven in the *Cashbox* survey. It was issued with a cover depicting a masked, caped performer, standing over his likeness in a casket. In due course, the ubiquity of Elvis impersonations invested the entertainer with an odd sort of afterlife that made him impossible to hide from.

The burden on the authors of *True Disbelievers* quickly becomes insuperable, as Denisoff and Plasketes try to assemble and to sort through various manifestations of the cultural construction of undead Elvis, ultimately unable to distinguish petty scam from outright hoax from literary license from talk show gossip from spoof. Perhaps some folks have found religious significance in these goings-on. As the title of *True Disbelievers* suggests, Denisoff and Plasketes attempt to invest undead Elvis with spiritual meaning for some unidentifiable cohort of followers whose number, they claim, is “legion” (2). The argument is presented more in the nature of affirmation than evidence, however, in this disjointed text. The Catholic holy sights of Lourdes and Fatima “are to Marians what Kalamazoo, Michigan has become to Elfans” (7); “for many,” they assert, Graceland is “a shrine, a mecca, the Vatican, a sacred place” (240); “both Jesus and Elvis are Capricorns” (263). This is just one tangle of thought in a thicket of possible meanings through which the authors wander.

Trying to fathom Elvis Presley, whether alive, dead, or undead, the authors would have benefitted by considering that category of modern phenomena that Daniel Boorstin labeled the “pseudo-event. No less real for its having been contrived, nor necessarily less significant in our daily lives for its having been engineered from the outset, the pseudo-event is the stock-in-trade of American consumer culture. The media require a perpetual and inexhaustible supply of something seemingly new to relate, to fill up all the newspapers’

pages, all the television talk shows, all the radio programs, all the newscasts, and all the magazines that saturate our time and space. There is both nothing and everything inconsequential about these endless permutations of media filler through which goods are marketed and our days are made.

As if to signify the stature that this particular pseudo-event has acquired, Karal Ann Marling has written and illustrated a thoughtful evocation of Presley both in life and after, as canned icon, both a person and a product, entitled *Graceland: Going Home with Elvis*. Marling captures the transformation to human spectacle, “King of the rednecks” (133), of a Southern boy of particularly humble beginnings. Presley’s journey ““up the hill””(152) to Graceland is so close a reading of the American Dream of rags-to-riches that, in its very excess, it is marketable as parable today.

As Marling takes us through the entry foyer of Graceland, oddly enough, the dead man speaks. She explains that, “In death, Elvis lay right here, at the foot of the stairs, under the chandelier, to say goodbye to his fans before he disappeared forever into the final mystery that lingers over Graceland Still, like a stormcloud above the earthly Jerusalem confounding understanding” (153). Yet Marling knows that pretense is carefully promulgated to keep customers coming to Graceland, that reference to the condition of Presley at the end of his days is avoided assiduously to divert attention from that “bulging besotted King who was fatally out of control or dying of his very excessiveness” (185). Perhaps he is hiding upstairs still, in those regions of Graceland where no one is permitted to peek. What Marling calls the “Peckerwood Palace” is an off-beat variety of theme park illuminated in a profitable “posthumous, largely fictitious” glow (224); even the rooms themselves have been decorated in “a determined effort to polish the reputation of the deceased” (225).

By neglecting to convey the depth of Presley’s final daze, however, Marling slights Elvis Presley Enterprises and its success at obscuring the man to market a legend. According to Denisoff and Plasketes, Presley was existing on a diet of pills when he died, ingesting dozens of pharmaceuticals on a daily basis; he also may have been injecting as many as nine shots of Demerol a day. They quote his stepbrother, Rick Stanley, who claims that Presley probably passed out while sitting on the toilet bowl upstairs. He fell to the bathroom floor, which apparently was not unprecedented; Stanley reports having found Presley collapsed in that posture “many times” before. As Stanley explains it, “See, that shag carpet’s thick. Big, thick stuff. That night when he fell forward, being so overweight and out of it, he couldn’t lift himself up. And he smothered in the rug” (283). Those sorts of details generally do not make a marketable memory.

Presley’s death knell, for his estate, was the sound of opportunity knocking. When the man passed away in 1977, he left roughly \$4.8 million to manage. Resurrected as Elvis Presley Enterprises, a company founded by Priscilla Presley in 1979, his image took on a new career. The gates of Graceland parted for paying guests in 1982, in time to lure tourists going to the World’s Fair in Knoxville. By 1990, some 700,000 passersby paid tribute. Apparently even Presley’s cousins and other kinfolk must pay. Lyricist Paul Simon has noted reason to believe that at Graceland, all will be received. In 1993, the estate was worth \$100 million. Therein lies a tale of promotional genius and the power of effective public relations campaigns.

Despite Marling’s eloquent critique of the visual iconography of the spectacle, or Denisoff and Plasketes’ odd inventory of sightings and mystery tapes and headlines from *Weekly World News*, their accounts must remain incomplete. Peter Stromberg has pointed out that “the myth that Elvis lives is not random or bizarre.” Stromberg believes that the prevarication has possessed staying power because it resonates with an American

fascination with self-transformation. What we need to understand the packaging of this phenomenon fully, however, is a detailed analysis of just how enterprising Elvis Presley Enterprises has been. But that may be as difficult as raising the dead. Corporate records, like the contents of the results of Presley's autopsy, like his coffin itself, are sealed.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE SIXTIES: The Making of Postwar Radicalism. By James J. Farrell. New York: Routledge. 1997.

A TALE OF TWO UTOPIAS: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968. By Paul Berman. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1996.

For many students of the 1990s, the 1960s is the decade of sex, drugs, and rock and roll with a few protest marches thrown in for good measure. However, James J. Farrell and Paul Berman have written important books that rescue the Sixties from terminal silliness and present two quite different but related perspectives on the spiritual and political roots of movement activists.

*The Spirit of the Sixties* is a moving and beautifully written analysis of how, as the saying goes, the personal became political. Farrell, Director of American Studies, Professor of History, and Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities at St. Olaf College, begins with a personal story of his own. In 1969 he wrote to his parents and told them he was going to Washington to march against the war in Vietnam. His father, a World War II veteran, threatened to disown him if he did. Farrell wrote back and explained his reasons for opposing the war. He went to Washington, his father didn't disown him, but they continued to take opposite sides on that war. After his father died, Farrell found that he had kept his second letter, his own version of, as he writes "how to live responsibly in the world." This book is "the story of the letter in the bureau drawer, the story of an almost forgotten tradition called personalist politics." (2)

Farrell, like most historians who think seriously about the Sixties, argues that the ideas that surfaced during that decade have deep roots in American culture. His most important sources are those expressed in the Catholic Worker movement, especially in the ideas of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day, and in the idealism of beat poet Kenneth Rexroth and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. From these early activists for social justice and world peace, Farrell traces their descendants in Sixties student leaders, antiwar protestors, and countercultural critics. He concludes that political personalism did not end with the conclusion of the war in Vietnam but continued in movements that promoted women's rights, environmental concerns, and antinuclear campaigns. In conclusion, he offers a thoughtful analysis of the significance of postwar American radicalism and the importance of the tradition of personalism in contemporary culture.

Taking his final question "What are people for?" as a way of illuminating this richly woven text, one of the most compelling themes is the overriding sense of activists' personal commitments to making America a more humane place—humane, that is, in that they believed that it should be people, rather than institutions, who really matter. From the "somebodiness" of African American personalism to the existential politics of meaning of the New Left, Farrell makes a compelling argument for the essentially American qualities of these radical social, cultural, and political movements.

Berman's ability to translate abstruse political and philosophical doctrines into highly readable and understandable language is one of the main attractions here. For contempo-

rary students whose ideas about Sixties activists consist of little more than slogans like “Girls say yes to boys who say no,” his chapter on “The Moral History of the Baby Boom Generation,” should be required reading. From the arcane histories of Old Left alliances and battles, Berman makes sense of the New Left’s attempts to break through ideological rigidities that began in the revolutions of 1848. Whether you agree with his interpretation or not, his explanation of leftist political thinking throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe will provide students with at least the foundation for understanding many of the nuances of national and international events.

In addition, Berman’s chapter on “The Gay Awakening” is an excellent summary of one aspect of the Sixties revolution that is usually dismissed with a cursory paragraph or two, at best. Berman relies heavily for this account of the emergence of gay liberation on Martin Duberman’s earlier work, *Stonewall* (1993), but his analysis of gay history as an essential outgrowth of leftist ideology, psycho/sexual rebellions, and British historian E. P. Thompson’s ideas about “history from the bottom up,” is engaging and well argued. And, while he acknowledges that the battle for gay rights is far from over, he concludes that “those battles will spread and not grow narrower, and the final vector will point toward more liberation, not less.” (194)

While this work is not an uncritical celebration of Sixties activism, Farrell comes down on the side that the successes of that decade outweighed the failures. He cites important civil rights legislation, nuclear test ban treaties, the elimination of the military draft, the women’s movement, and renewed religious social activism as proof of personalist victories. On the other hand, Farrell admits that personalists were often unclear about their vision of a renewed nation, nor were they necessarily adept at translating their language of civic republicanism and religion into terms that allowed them to converse easily with other political activists. Moreover, he concedes that a central problem with the consensus building processes of participatory democracy was that “sixties people seemed to spend more time in meetings than in meeting people’s needs.” (257) Yet, in the end, despite the fact that practical politics won out over personalism, Farrell maintains that the Sixties tradition is “more important for questions than for answers, more important for assumptions than for conclusions, more important for ideas than for lasting institutions.” (260)

While Farrell emphasizes the essentially American qualities of Sixties activism, Paul Berman’s *Tale of Two Utopias* offers an international perspective on *The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*. Berman focuses on four revolutions that erupted around the world in the years immediately preceding and following that momentous year: against middle-class culture and customs (which included the spiritual rebellion reflected in Roman Catholic liberation theology); against Western imperialism; and against dictatorships of the left.

Berman’s chapters on “Zappa and Havel” and “A Backward Glance at the End of History” concern the influences of Sixties culture on European philosophy, politics, and literature. From an American studies perspective, they are more interesting as illustrations of the important, and frequently unsettling, interactions between American and European culture in the post-1960s.

Taken together these two books present serious, thought provoking, and challenging analyses of American culture in the 1960s. Certainly James Farrell’s *The Spirit of the Sixties* along with selected chapters of Berman’s *A Tale of Two Utopias* should be required reading for any course on that decade, along with Doug Rossinow’s more recent and provocative *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in*

*America* (1998). It does give one hope that the activists of this decade who made such an impact on American culture will not be easily dismissed as they often are in phrases like “hippies who turned into yuppies.” The ideas and the people who earnestly tried to create a beloved community deserve better. Echoing James Farrell’s final thoughts, we need to look again at one of the questions that Sixties activists asked—“What are people for?” and imagine America, as they did, as a place where all people truly matter.

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Mary Ann Wynkoop

**CADRES FOR CONSERVATISM: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right.** By Gregory L. Schneider. New York: New York University Press. 1999.

The history of the 1960s—like the decade itself—continues to provoke controversies. As Rick Perlstein asked in his 1996 article in *Lingua Franca*: “Who Owns the Sixties?” Younger historians, born in the ages of Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, chafe at the hold that old New Lefties have had on the literature of that decade and are publishing with a vengeance. Many tend to play down the historic importance of the New Left (David Farber, Thomas Sugrue) while others, like Professor Schneider, have focused their attention on the rise of the New Right.

In this latest attack on the New Left from the New Right, author Gregory L. Schneider provides a well researched analysis of the national organization of the Young Americans for Freedom from its origins in the 1950s to its collapse in the mid-1980s. It seems strange but it is true—Students for a Democratic Society, whose members often argued for “living in the moment,” left considerable archival materials for future scholars to peruse while Young Americans for Freedom, whose faith was in tradition, did not. But perhaps this deficiency was a blessing in disguise because the author was then forced to interview past members and in the process produced a much livelier account than one based on archival research alone.

Professor Schneider is a true believer but he is not entirely uncritical of his subject. He points out obvious petty disputes and bureaucratic infighting that led to the downfall of the YAF. However, his argument is that YAF ultimately dissolved because its main goal—the triumph of conservatives over liberals within the Republican Party—was achieved in the Reagan presidency. As he puts it in so many words, the YAF became just like another branch of the Young Republicans.

However, this was not always so and Professor Schneider traces the skirmishes and battles between the liberals and the conservative YAF for the soul of the Republican Party with great zeal. One of the more interesting discussions is the uneasy alliance that conservatives made with libertarians and the common ground that libertarians shared with anarchists of the New Left. In 1969, one member of the Radical Libertarian Alliance attacked YAF’s support for extensions of state power and Chicago Mayor Daley’s attacks on antiwar protestors by stating: “let the F in YAF stand for what it has secretly stood for all along—facism.” (133) Abbie Hoffman couldn’t have said it better.

One of the problems with relying on oral interviews is the danger of being captured by your subjects. In one instance, for example, Professor Schneider would have benefitted from interviewing other participants in the 1968 student election at Indiana University. He interviewed conservative activist R. Emmett Tyrell, Jr., who told him that “Indiana University became the first university to toss out the New Left.” (115) However, the party that he categorized as conservative was led by Ted Najam, who said he was inspired by John F. Kennedy, and who put in place many of the reforms that New Leftists had been

promoting (elimination of women's hours, for example). Moreover, two years later, students at I.U. elected a member of the Black Panther Party and the editor of the New Left underground newspaper to head student government. Well, if that's tossing out the New Left then it depends on what the definition of "tossing" is.

Still, this is a valuable contribution to the history of the rise of the conservative political movement and provides interesting insights into the fissures in the Republican Party that have become so prominent today. Perhaps one of the ironies of this debate over sixties history is that New Left issues have been accepted by many Americans (the war in Vietnam was a mistake, college and university parietal rules did not make sense, all Americans, regardless of skin color, should be able to vote, women should have equal opportunities) and now the New Right is left to fight culture wars that most Americans no longer care much about--or at least not enough to roll back the clock to the nineteenth century.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Mary Ann Wynkoop

*A NATION WITHIN A NATION: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) & Black Power Politics.*  
By Komozi Woodard. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1999.

Komozi Woodard, a professor of American history at Sarah Lawrence College (New York), tells a fascinating story on the life and work of writer and activist, Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones], and his association with the development, growth, and impact of the Black Arts Movement interjected with the theme of black cultural nationalism in the modern era of the African American struggle for equality and human rights in the United States. This is a massive study which explores the black nationalist tradition in the American black struggle for freedom, as contrasted with the historical twentieth century movements led by the NAACP (since 1910), the National Urban League (since 1911), the Congress of Racial Equality (since 1942), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (since 1957), and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (since 1960).

Woodard's task is to explore how black nationalism and the Black Power Movement impacted the black struggle in America during the 1960s and 1970s. In essence, he explores how Amiri Baraka, perhaps the leading black writer produced by the Black Arts Movement, influenced black protest from his base in New York City, and especially from his hometown of Newark, New Jersey. Woodard focuses on developments within the Modern Black Convention Movement (national gatherings of black nationalists between the 1960s and 1970s)—to promote the expansion of black cultural nationalism as a central theme in the modern liberation drives of black people.

The work denotes Baraka's personal influence on the times, and his relationships with several key components of the black cultural nationalist school; namely, the Black Panther Party, Maulana Karenga's U.S. Organization, the Republic of New Africa, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Nation of Islam, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and especially the Congress of African People.

Woodard's treatment of these issues is juxtaposed against the urban transformation of the African American people in the twentieth century, when they move from a rural concentration to an urban life in the cities. He is also concerned with how American racism, poverty, and urban life itself represents special challenges to black people and their liberation struggle in America.

The author's overview suggests that the black cultural nationalist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, must be viewed as a major turning point in the black liberation struggle

in America. Although the movement was faced with many different black points of view, government harassment by the FBI and other agencies, and the challenges of traditional politics in America, it did make a difference in the lives of black people, by especially promoting black consciousness, and the spread of Pan-Africanism as a universal black concern.

This is a well researched book, and the author does an excellent job of exploring the complexities of the modern black struggle for freedom in America. It is a task that continues in the 1990s, and will face a new generation in a new century. Indeed, future Americans will have to assess Amiri Baraka, black cultural nationalism, and the late-twentieth century black struggle for freedom as key issues in the modern history of life in America. They can turn to Komozi Woodard's study as one example of the impact of the 1960s and 1970s on the continuing saga of the freedom struggle in America.

University of Missouri, Columbia

Julius E. Thompson

**THE COLOR OF CRIME: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and other Macroaggressions.** By Katheryn K. Russell. New York: New York University Press. 1998.

Crime is an everyday issue, everywhere in the United States. So is race. The two couple insidiously: color infuses crime, and crime infuses color. The result caricatures crime, as the distorted, primary, and pervasive public perception equates black and crime. "Blacks are the repository for the American fear of crime," (xiii) notes University of Maryland criminology and criminal justice professor Katheryn K. Russell.

The color of crime bleeds over to brown-, red-, and yellow-skinned Americans. Yet they escape blacks' generalized criminal image. "The images that are associated with other racial groups tend to be crime-specific," Russell notes. (xiii) Whites altogether elude any taint: The media's continuous racialized treatment of crime diffuses the fact that seven of every ten persons arrested for crime in the United States are whites, as are four of ten persons in prison.

Russell focuses her eight chapters on the color-coordinated images and realities of race and crime. She opens by comparing the image U.S. media project of whose behavior threatens society with the image those persons—young black males—have of themselves and of society. Using focus groups and interviews, Russell shows clearly that who appears dangerous to whom depends unsurprisingly on perception and personal experience. And U.S. history has shaped both, powerfully. The legacy of slave codes and Jim Crow laws continues to bias perceptions and criminal process, she shows.

Russell measures prevalent systemic unfairness in today's criminal justice system. Delineating police abuse and racial targeting, she discounts disproportionate offending as a cause of the problematic relations between police and black men. Rather, she locates as the cause racism evident among police and endemic in society at significant costs in cash and community values, which Russell illustrates by revisiting the O. J. Simpson spectacle of 1995 with its frightful black-white chasm. The criminal case illustrated dichotomous realities and divergent reactions Russell explains as the work of black protectionism and white denial—each a version of rallying round one's own. Russell reinforces her view with reactions to the Million Man March on Washington, D.C., that Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan spearheaded in 1995.

Scapegoating blacks exacerbates racial friction and displaces resistance to real criminal issues, Russell argues. Detailing more than sixty racial hoax cases, she shows that



harrowing consequences of the blame-a-black-man strategy. Society cannot afford for anyone to inflict racial harms or wield negative stereotypes, she warns.

Indicting not merely active hoaxers, Russell proclaims an ethical imperative to respond to misrepresentation of race and crime. Pronouncing a “duty to rebut”, Russell directs researchers “to correct the public record when inaccurate statements about race are paraded as fact.” (xv) In apparent example, she herself shoulders the duty-to-rebut by exposing the faulty logic of political scientist James Q. Wilson’s apology for white racism as the result of high black crime rates.

Russell argues in the end for what she terms affirmative race law to recognize and redress the racial harms law has perpetrated as an agent of repression. She calls for more examination of white crime and for more analysis to break the black-white dichotomy by paying more attention to the perceptions and positions of Asian Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans, and Native Americans. Her voice joins a chorus. The variable refrain is old. One of the dominant intellectuals of the twentieth century sounded the note in 1903: Writing in his *The Souls of Black Folk* of the police system under slavery, W. E. B. Du Bois noted, “It was not then a question of crime, but rather one of color, that settled a man’s conviction on almost at charge.” Russell’s underlying question is, how far has America come from equating race and crime. Her evidence echoes Du Bois’ insight: Not far.

Arizona State University

Thomas J. Davis.

CONTESTING THE SUPER BOWL. By Dona Schwartz. New York: Routledge. 1998.

Dona Schwartz does not like football very much, but she recognizes the importance of that sport to American culture. When the National Football League (NFL) decided to hold its annual Super Bowl (SB) in her hometown of Minneapolis in 1992, she organized a team of photographers to document the “phenomenon behind the media event—the real Super Bowl, live and offscreen” (1). Of course, as an Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota, she knows that there is no “real” Super Bowl. There are many different perspectives on the socio-cultural event known as the Super Bowl. The event itself, the football game, is of relatively minor importance. What she and her team of local photographers (David Rae Morris, Randall Johnson, Steve Schneider, Diane Bush, Donna Kelly, John Haselmann, Michael Branscom, and Amitava Kumar) discovered in the weeklong festivities surrounding the game is that the SB is an opportunity for corporate America to display its wealth and power. Through very conspicuous consumption, the NFL and its corporate sponsors demonstrate who is on top of the economic hierarchy this year. Just as the players vie for being “#1,” corporate teams vie for the largest luxury boxes, most expensive tour packages, and most extravagant parties. Schwartz documents this wretched excess in numerous ways. Her press credentials gave her privileged access to the private parties, back rooms, staging areas, and the field of play itself. She and her crew of photographers made good use of this access to document the SB from the point-of-view of the disenfranchised disbeliever in the hype.

The photographers kept track of their personal observations as they made their photographs. Some of these field notes were printed in tandem with the photographs in the book, giving the reader special insight into what the photographer was thinking as the pictures was made. Schwartz also included many valuable documents in the text Such things as menus, pages from the media kits distributed to the press, memos from the NFL to its players advising them on how to give interviews to the press. These materials, along with letters from VIPs and other important people drive home the point that the SB is a

carefully organized and scripted affair where little is left to chance. Documenting this orchestrated media event is an important undertaking, because much of the hype surrounding the SB aims to convey the impression that the event is a more or less spontaneous happening where everybody manages to have a good time. Football is fun, right?

Schwartz also includes a brief history lesson on the evolution of American football and the formation of the NFL. For those unfamiliar with the history and sociology of sport, this essay will be very revealing. The NFL (and major league baseball) have become enormously successful businesses because of the special protection they have received from Congress. By being granted virtual monopolies of their sports, they have been able to act as good monopolists should. They have found ways to generate more income while restricting access to their products. No one should be surprised at the end result. Wealthy owners lord it over players, fans, and other peons; and remain remarkably insensitive to pleas from the less powerful. Still, Schwartz is disappointed that average Americans tolerate such behavior, and even seem to enjoy the revelry.

After reading her book, perhaps more people will become critical of the power and patriarchy of professional sport. This reviewer highly recommends her text for students interested in American studies, mass communication, sociology, and leisure/sport studies.  
Ohio State University  
Timothy J. Curry

JIMMY CARTER: American Moralizer. By Kenneth E. Morris. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 1996.

Kenneth Morris tries to tell Jimmy Carter's life story and also to describe his moral legacy in this intriguing, yet flawed biography. The book consists of a Christopher Lasch-like diatribe superimposed on a psycho-intellectual biography. As either a cultural polemic or a psycho-biography, the book might have succeeded. As a hybrid, the book fails to satisfy those who want to comprehend the details of Carter's life and those who want a cultural critique of America's apparent malaise in the last quarter of this century. Readers interested in knowing how Carter reorganized Georgia's government or attempted to reform the welfare system *learn* little about those topics here. Readers comfortable with such sentiments as "The real crisis confronting America is thus not one of diminished morality; the real crisis is an excessively individualistic morality that has mushroomed into moral solipsism (316)," might wonder about the relevance of Jimmy Carter to the subject at hand.

In many ways this book reflects some of the deficiencies of recent work in American studies. It foregoes political history for cultural criticism. As such it dismisses historical contingencies as a factor in shaping outcomes in favor of invoking broader, culturally based metaphors to characterize change over time. Yet popular culture represents a very slippery explanatory variable. One cannot be certain what leads what. Does politics influence popular culture or is it the other way around? Is popular culture something monolithic or multi-faceted? One wonders what movie, for example, might express the popular sentiments of 1976, the year of Carter's election. If one checks films nominated for the Academy Award, one finds both *Rocky*, an upbeat tale of determination and grit, and *Taxi Driver*, a dark tale of frustrated desires. From which cultural text should one read the story of Jimmy Carter's nomination and election? Better, I think, to attend to the details of traditional narrative and to learn why Morris Udall failed to win a particular primary. At the very least, political narrative should precede grand cultural criticism of the type attempted by Morris.

Even as cultural criticism, Morris's book leaves gaps. He never quite explains how a president might change "individualistic morality" and convert it into something more communal and hence more constructive. Woodrow Wilson was a president who strived to harness America's moral energy into a collective and uplifting cause, but his effort proved a notable failure. Indeed, the nature of the relationship between a president and his era is an elusive one. John F. Kennedy presided over an optimistic era, yet this optimism owed little to JFK himself. It made little difference, for example, whether Dwight Eisenhower or John F. Kennedy was president. Their presidencies formed a part of a common economic era and might properly be lumped together. Similarly, Carter, whatever his moral vision, presided over an economic era that made for difficult choices. Whether his style of leadership could have modified those choices is far from clear. Morris never comes to grip with the tyranny of economics over politics.

To be sure, the book has much to commend it. To cite just one example, the details of Carter's childhood cited by Morris reveal much about Carter's character. The picture of the Carter family eating dinner, reading books, and failing to talk with one another says a great deal about the inner solitude in which Carter grew up. A book of such details might have produced an arresting portrait. In the end, however, this biography of Jimmy Carter is like a series of improvisational riffs on a theme that never quite gets established: too much sub-text and not enough text.

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Edward D. Berkowitz

**CARRIED TO THE WALL: American Memory and the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial.** By Kristin Ann Hass. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1998.

This book is an intriguing, at times deeply moving, and very accessible cultural analysis of the objects left at the Vietnam War Memorial since its controversial creation in 1982, objects ranging from dog tags and cans of Budweiser to teddy bears and nursing pads. In this first book-length study of these objects, Hass argues convincingly that the "liminal, contested place of the Vietnam War in American culture has disrupted the expectation that dead soldiers can be retired to a stoic, martyred memory of heroism and sacrifice and, in so doing, has disrupted American memorial practices" (3).

Unlike other war memorials, there is in the design of the Wall an absence of any clear government position on the war. Hence, the compromise with the veterans' group that desired a more traditional representation of ideal soldiers representing the nation in the bronze statue, the "Three Fighting Men" (and in response to that, the recent nurses' memorial). The Wall's design highlights instead the individual bodies of the soldiers who died rather than the abstract nation for which those bodies were sacrificed. This is a significant shift in the memorial tradition begun after the Civil War of remembering the heroic individual soldier as an emblem of the nation. The Wall, according to Hass, "comes to us out of a rupture in this history" (35). This larger context invited, argues Hass, the very public and unanticipated participatory response of American citizens who bring gifts by the thousands to the Wall.

This bringing of gifts has a history itself, however. In perhaps the most fascinating chapter of the book, Hass outlines the distinct differences between mainstream Protestant funerary traditions, which at their inception in the 19th century, sought "to remember the lives of Americans collectively as parts of a proud new community," and alternative traditions, "frequently Catholic, [which] seek to sustain the memory of a specific person to guarantee his or her transition into the next world" by bringing gifts to the dead (65).

These two impulses, argues Hass, have shaped the response of many Americans to the Wall, reminding us too of the fact that such a large percentage of soldiers who fought and died in the Vietnam War were members of ethnic minorities. These largely ethnic funerary traditions, then, have changed the way we remember the war dead and contribute to the multiple meanings attached to the war at the Wall.

Hass' analysis of the objects themselves is, of course, speculative, but given the larger historical contexts she so carefully outlines, her suggestions make a great deal of sense. Seen in the light of ongoing disagreement over the war and the design's departure from memorial traditions, "each object is part of a conversation about the nation" (89). Hass divides the objects into five categories: memorials to specific individuals; objects that both affirm and denounce the war; objects that "mediate between the living and the dead;" objects that speak to shared experiences among soldiers; and explicit political speech (99). The most prevalent objects in the collection are those that explicitly address the issue of POW/MIAs. These objects, Hass argues, "keep alive the hope that this war might still be won," a contortionist patriotism in opposition to the American government. These objects are the clearest reminder that there is no singular interpretation of the war or of the meaning of the nation, though there is clearly a deep impulse among those who make the pilgrimage to the Wall to carve out a usable sense of nationalism.

Like any good cultural analyst, Hass at times strays seemingly far afield. But at the beginning of each chapter and subsection, Hass reminds us that her goal is always the objects themselves by listing gifts and quotations from letters. Like the relentless names of the dead on the Wall itself, these lists anchor us poignantly in the important cultural work going on there and here in this excellent book.

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April Schultz