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

Reviews

THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN MIND: Canons, Culture, and History. By Lawrence W. Levine. Boston: Beacon Press. 1996.

Lawrence W. Levine's title announces itself as a counter-statement to Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and other similarly conservative or reactionary books. But what cannot be as obvious is Levine's formulation of his response through an analysis of cultural and historical change in the history of the American university. The result of that cultural/historical analysis corrects what Levine reveals as the shoddily-researched and thus mistaken outlines of American higher education which a number of conservatives advance. Levine's correction produces five remarkable points, among others. First, that the current political disputes concerning higher education are not new, but have existed for more than one hundred years. Second, that such disputes must be understood in terms of their historical circumstances, which include the fact that the United States has always been a multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic society. Third, that the "classical" university, the loss of which Levine's opponents lament, is itself a product of its era's own "culture wars," which occurred earlier this century. Fourth, because universities serve the public, universities change as they respond to changing needs of that public. "College curricula," writes Levine, "do not exist apart from the culture in which they develop; they are products of that culture and both reflect and influence it" (67). Fifth, that while universities are functioning as they should, academicians must learn to communicate their roles more clearly to the general public.

The Opening of the American Mind asserts that the strength of the American university tradition rests in its openness to change (90, 101, 110, 112). Levine shows that curricular change, the strength of the American university, is represented in the variety of the canonical texts it has produced. The diversity of the canon, in turn, illustrates the university's dynamic role within a changing culture. Contrary to the nostalgia for an imagined fixed canon, "The only truly permanent element in the classical American canon was a belief in its timelessness" (78). Thus efforts to limit that openness are seen as attacks on the university's vital center, its ability to educate in service of a broad range of American cultural needs.

Other points support and extend Levine's main ones and strengthen his analysis of openness in the American university. For example, countering the conservative critics' contention that Shakespeare is being lost from the current curriculum, Levine reveals that "Of the courses that 80 percent of the English departments [surveyed in 1990] insisted their majors take, the three most frequently required were survey courses in British literature, American literature, and Shakespearean drama" (24). Levine relates one of the more remarkable instances of conservatism's resistance to change in his summary of nineteenth-century curricular debates at Princeton and Yale. "During his inauguration as president of Princeton in 1854, John Maclean declared: 'We shall not aim at innovations. . . . [N]o chimerical experiments in education have ever had the least countenance here'" (39). On the other hand, in 1842 Brown University president Francis Wayland openly advocated change in order to make higher education available to children of "the merchant, the mechanic, the manufacturer" and to insure that Brown would realize its ideal as "a grand centre of intelligence to all classes and conditions of men . . ." (42).

The Opening of the American Mind not only describes the historical tension between conservative and progressive forces in American higher education. It finally celebrates the purpose, health, and integrity of higher education in the United States. More, Levine's style exemplifies the clarity of exposition which itself would go far in countering conservative criticism of the American university, should more academics choose to follow it.

Creighton University

Greg Zacharias

WRITTEN IN STONE: Public Monuments in Changing Societies. By Stanford Levinson. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press. 1998.

Mr. Levinson, Professor of Law at the University of Texas, is a cultural historian at heart who has written extensively about constitutionalism in the United States with particular reference to religion and literature. The title of his new and welcome work is somewhat misleading because it suggests far more comprehensive coverage than it actually contains. It concentrates primarily upon certain controversial symbols and monuments in the South, ones mainly arising from cherished sentiments about the Lost Cause, such as the Confederate Battle Flag that has been flown for many years over certain state capitols, the so-called Liberty Monument in New Orleans, and the Memorial to the Confederate Dead located on the grounds of the state capitol in Austin, Texas. Levinson explains his major concern in this way.

Do we, as a society, have a duty to the past to continue to give pride of sacred place to monuments to our—and what one means by "our" is perhaps the central question of this essay—own "Lost Cause" of the Confederate States of America in spite of altogether persuasive arguments not only that this cause was racist at its core, but also that some of the specific monuments . . . leaving nothing to the imagination in terms of their racism? (32)

Levinson justifies the title of his book, however, by interpolating judicious and fascinating comparisons with controversies (and their solutions) involving public monuments to discredited causes in such places as Russia, Hungary, and Zimbabwe (formerly

Rhodesia). He also serves up some deliciously ambiguous (and hence provocative) examples involving Fillmore Street in San Francisco and Captain John Mason, a figure from Connecticut's early history who helped massacre Pequot Indians in 1637. *Written in Stone* is anecdotally rich. But more important, because Levinson is so fair-minded—combining constitutional scruples with historical sensibilities—he judiciously weighs alternative solutions to problems raised by racist monuments that nonetheless expose and reflect important aspects of our past. His essential solution: remove them to less conspicuous (and less offensive) locations, but do not destroy them. Make them museum relics rather than shrines. Levinson's stance places respect for the past above a strictly legalistic or politically correct position.

Unfortunately, *Written in Stone* is capriciously documented. Citations are presented for some pieces of information but not for many others. Nevertheless, this book is potentially a marvelous teaching assignment: brief, eminently readable, intensely interesting, and chock full of highly debatable issues whose ideal solutions are murkier than the Great Dismal Swamp. It can be used successfully in a whole array of introductory courses—and probably will.

Cornell University

Michael Kammen

BORDER THEORY: The Limits of Culture Politics. Edited by Scott Michaelsen and David E. Johnson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1997.

In the 1990s “borders” and “borderlands” have become among the most used and abused terms in literary and cultural criticism. Like other such buzzwords, popularity has broadened its meaning. Some now write of the “borders” dividing disciplines, racial identities, even genres of literature, as if each were fenced-off geographical frontiers, policed by oppressors and ripe for subversive transgression. The editors of *Border Theory* have mostly avoided this proliferation, and anchored their volume close to the Tex-Mex borderlands from which the buzzword arose. The collection is a response to books such as Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Renato Rosaldo's *Culture and Truth*, and D. Emily Hicks' *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text*. Several of the essays attack these scholars' trendy vision of borderlands as “a place of politically exciting hybridity, intellectual creativity, and moral possibility. . . . *the privileged locus of hope for a better world*” (3).

Russ Castronovo suggests that this utopian vision of the U.S.-Mexico *frontera* betrays a debt to the weltering *translatio impiri* of the Age of Discovery, since both arose from a yearning “for fresh possibilities and innovative communities. . . . the ‘New World’ and later the ‘new’ lands west of the Mississippi” (200). His essay turns to an earlier internal border, the Mason-Dixon line, to show how the slave narrative genre, which sought freedom by crossing this border, was appropriated by Southerners arguing in defense of slavery, and by nationalists seeking to preserve the union through sectional division. Castronovo asserts that “‘Border theory’ and the narratives of resistance and subversion that it supplies, does not travel well; it too readily formulates a perspective that overlooks the force and appeal of the nation-state” (198).

Benjamin Alire Sáenz, assistant professor of English at the University of Texas El Paso, offers a long autobiographical essay which puts the brakes on any notion that border theory has transformed intellectual life in the region. His course on Chicano literature enrolled no white males, he reports, and in another literature class a Chicano undergraduate

declared "I don't read Gringo poets" (69). Sáenz is reluctant to embrace the label Chicano, and bristles at the identity politics offered on the one hand by Richard Rodriguez, and on the other by Gloria Anzaldúa, whom he accuses of "fetishiz[ing] Aztec and Indian culture," a strategy "not so different from Englishmen appropriating the 'classical' culture of the Ancient Greeks as their own" (85). Nonetheless, the influence of Anzaldúa's mixing of critical, autobiographical and poetic discourses may explain why Sáenz interleaves his essay with long passages from his graduate students' responses to the word Chicano, a presentation that proves somewhat tedious.

The most entertaining essay is Louis Kaplan's "On the Border with *the Pilgrim*: Zigzags across a Chapl(a)in's Signature," which examines the 1923 silent film which involves the Tramp impersonating a chaplain and a convict, and ends with him running back and forth across the Texas-Mexico border, fleeing authorities from both sides. Kaplan's letterplay and puns in lines like: "Contra Bunyan's, this is the large-soled pilgrim's egress" (114) recalls the giddy nerdiness of the best deconstructionist writing.

Two essays move north: Elaine Chang's to Vancouver for an analysis of Evelyn Lau's *Runaway: Diary of a Street Kid*, which explores the underside of that booming Pacific Rim city; and Scott Michaelsen's "Resketching Anglo-Amerindian Identity Politics," which explores opposing visions of the Iroquois creation story by David Cusick, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and by contemporary Iroquois scholars. Two others, by Alejandro Lugo and David Johnson, move deeply into theory. A final word by Patricia Seed deploys mathematical concepts of limits and boundary values to further theorize a word and region which has seen too little critical thinking of the caliber found in this volume.

University of Oregon

Gordon M. Sayre

NEW WORLDS FOR ALL: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America. By Colin Calloway. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1997.

In this compact study, Colin Calloway, a prolific and talented historian of American Indians, departs from common trends in the historiography of Native peoples in colonial American history in an attempt to tackle one of the perennial questions of the field: can the history of Indians be integrated with that of the colonizers without getting lost in the shuffle? Not "Indian history," and not the history of "Indian-white relations," Calloway describes his book as a collection of essays in which he underscores the fundamental nature of cultural interaction to early American history (xiv). Although Calloway's work shows the influence of recent scholars of American Indian history, most notably James Axtell, James Merrell, and Richard White, he stakes out new ground for himself in this unique volume, an early entry in the "American Moment" series of the Johns Hopkins University Press.

Organized topically rather than chronologically, Calloway brings his impressive research ethic to bear on key themes in the interaction between Indians and colonists throughout the area bounded by the modern United States from 1492 to 1800. Drawing on a massive evidentiary base, Calloway enlightens the reader on common and contrasting elements of the experiences of various groups of Native Americans with English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, and Swedish intruders in North America. The chapters highlight key phenomena in which European settlers and resident Indians shared with, and transformed one another: disease, religion, trade, warfare, language, intermarriage, the environment, and settlement patterns. Within each chapter, illustrative evidence on the

specific theme in question is provided from all points in the 1492-1800 time span. Eschewing footnotes, the author instead provides a detailed bibliographical essay covering all nine chapters, in which quotations are carefully attributed, and major interpretive works identified.

Calloway is at his best in this book when he dispels and qualifies popular stereotypes of what have traditionally been regarded as key ingredients of "Indianness": the Plains horse culture (13), totem poles (49), tepees and wigwams (55), scalping (103), "half-breeds" (154), and the notion of Iroquois influence on the Constitution of the United States (187-88). The book provides an excellent baseline of information for students and generalists, while raising some provocative suggestions that should get specialists thinking. Why, for example, have we been so slow to comprehend the fundamental importance of migration to Native American population dynamics in the colonial period? Calloway's insightful chapter on the mobility of all peoples in colonial America points to new directions for future research.

Calloway's decision to adopt a topical, rather than strictly chronological approach is refreshing and allows him to offer many vignettes in support of his essential argument: that Indians and Europeans interacted with one another on many different levels, and each changed the other in fundamental ways. The progression of these "snapshots," however, can be moderately disjointing. Reading the narrative, one veers from an incident in which Abenakis mockingly "moon" Giovanni de Verrazano's ships floating off the Maine coast in 1524 (45), to the more taciturn image of Mohawks translating the New Testament into their own language two-and-a-half centuries later (84), and back to the 1536 voyage of the St. Lawrence Iroquoian headman Donnacona to France (165). In his brief Conclusion, however, Calloway makes clear the unbalanced nature of the respective cultural transformations experienced by Indians and Europeans between 1492 and 1800. Both Indians and Europeans were altered by contact with one another, but the Indians changed in a more lasting and profound manner, both culturally and demographically. Nevertheless, Calloway's larger argument of "new worlds for all" successfully integrates the story of cultural interaction between Indians and Europeans in colonial North America into an accessible and highly readable narrative, while pointing out the fallacy of the long-held idea that Indians who adapted their lifestyles in order to survive were no longer truly "Indians." Ideal for classroom use, Calloway's book deserves a wide readership.

University of Michigan

Jon W. Parmenter

JONATHAN EDWARDS'S WRITINGS: Text, Context, Interpretation. Edited by Stephen J. Stein. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1996.

In June of 1994, some one hundred scholars of Jonathan Edwards convened at the University of Indiana for a three-day discussion of Edwards's writings. This book is a compilation of twelve of the papers delivered and discussed at that conference, and it is a very welcome addition to Edwards scholarship. Stephen Stein, one of the volume editors for the Yale *Works of Jonathan Edwards* and a member of that project's Editorial Board, not only convened the Indiana conference but also edited these essays. As Stein notes in the introduction, the distinguishing mark of this collection is its focus on Edwards's texts, an emphasis that apparently governed the 1994 conference. "In an age when academic are increasingly preoccupied with theoretical, deconstructive, and postmodern agendas, scholarship in the field of Edwards studies, with a few notable exceptions, has remained

strikingly traditional in outlook. That may prove both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the positive side, it results in research publications that are relatively free of jargon, not driven by scholarly fads, and readable by a general audience. On the negative side, this traditional caste may hinder conversation with others more venturesome, conversation from both parties might profit" (x). In my view, the Stein volume excels precisely *because all twelve essays examine texts closely*, each sharing discoveries from manuscript and printed sources from which the essay arguments are developed. In a climate when some critics argue that there are no texts, only "cultural contexts and cultural constructs" of language, literature, and theology, it is refreshing to examine a volume of recent American criticism that wholly avoids this pitfall.

The editor's organizational strategy is straightforward and clearly explained. Part I, "Text: Integrating Unpublished manuscripts and Public Texts," contains four essays by younger scholars, all of whom have done remarkable work with the Edwards manuscripts and sermons and two of whom have produced extremely original and informative essays. Gerald McDermott's "The Deist Connection: Jonathan Edwards and Islam" (39-52), explores territory often neglected by Edwards critics, namely, the elusive question of the theologian's obvious contempt for both Deism and Islam. However, "McDermott links Edwards's anti-Muslim views with a more pressing concern that occupied the cleric during the last decade of his life, namely, his defense of scriptural revelation against the sufficiency of reason and against the notion that one is able to arrive at true knowledge of God and divine realities by natural means" (xii-xiii). Similarly, Kenneth Minkema shows how Edwards's attack on the Deists and his defense of the unity and authority of Biblical revelation governed his ambition to produce a "Harmony of the Old and New Testament." Minkema examines closely Miscellany 1069, "Types of the Messiah," (*Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 11) as proof of the theologian's intention to unify scriptural and natural modes of revelation. Like McDermott, Minkema utilizes both manuscript and published sources.

Part II's four essays, "interpreting Texts and Identifying Influences," are authored by more established Edwards scholars (Lucas, Stoeber, Hall, and Proudfoot), and the focus here, while textually based, is on the relationship between Edwards's writings and those of other major religious figures, "The Legacy of Solomon Stoddard;" "Shepard, Edwards, and the Identification of True Godliness;" "Did Berkeley Influence Edwards?" The clearest exposition here is William Stoeber's detailed analysis of the use that Edwards made of Thomas Shepard's *Parable of the Ten Virgins Unfolded* (1660). Possibly the most controversial in this section will be Richard Hall's chapter "Did Berkeley Influence Edwards? Their Common Critique of Moral Sense Theory." (100-122). As Stein notes, "The usual way of engaging this question is to focus on their respective commitments to philosophical idealism. But taking his lead from a recent volume by Edwin Gaustad, Hall argues that the place to look for Berkeley's influence is in Edwards's posthumous publication, *The Nature of True Virtue* (1765)." Again, textual analysis is foregrounded by Wayne Proudfoot in his examination of Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746).

The focus of Part III's essays is the "nature and constituency of the Edwardsian tradition. Who were the authentic successors of Edwards?" The four essays represent a scholarly mix, from Douglas Sweeney's "Nathaniel William Taylor and the Edwardsian Tradition: A Reassessment" to Joseph Conforti's "Edwards A. Park and the Creation of New England Theology." "Sweeney makes his case by arguing that the narrow doctrinal definition of the Edwardsian tradition needs to be scrapped in favor of a definition of

Edwardsianism as a multifaceted ‘theological culture.’” Clearly the most “theoretical” of the volume’s essays, it challenges received opinion concerning Edwards’s legacy in American culture, and it is balanced by Joseph Conforti’s account of the work of Edwards Amasa Park, “whom he identifies as ‘the last major Edwardsian Consistent Calvinist’ and the one who by his historical studies of the tradition gave rise to a historical reality that still is the object of intense scholarly discussion and debate” (xvi). None of the four essays addresses the Edwards legacy posited by Perry Miller’s argument in “From Edwards to Emerson” that American Transcendentalism owes its foundations to English and German Romanticism and to Edwards’s assimilation of natural and scriptural revelation. To the extent that it ignores the literary and philosophical influences in the Edwards tradition, this final section omits a significant element in Edward’s studies. However, the Stein volume is an important and well conceived contribution to contemporary Edwards scholarship, and it reminds us of the vitality and intelligence that may be brought to close textual analysis at a time when the profession seems to have lost much of its focus and has difficulty clarifying its objectives. Stephen Stein et al have done much to restore confidence that valuable intellectual work is alive and well in the academy, and that conferences are still worth attending. If one is inclined to despair, with Prufrock, that “in the halls, the scholars come and go/ talking of Derrida and Foucault,” the Stein volume is a welcome, and healthy, antidote.

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Mason I. Lowance, Jr.

CONVERSING BY SIGNS: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture. By Robert Blair St. George. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1998.

In *Conversing by Signs*, Robert Blair St. George, a folklorist, brings ethnographic methods of investigating local poetics to the study of colonial New England culture. He uses an approach to poetics that covers a variety of symbolic forms and communicative processes, including language, objects, movement, and faith. He resists limiting himself to any particular interpretive approach, which is particularly appropriate for the examination of a culture, which, as the author notes, “was one in which the visual vied with the verbal for semiotic authority, even as it labored to hold the mythic weight of text and image in perfect equipoise” (3).

People in colonial New England lived in a densely metaphoric world. The sermons they heard, St. George shows, and the Bible verses they read aloud, reflected the layers of meanings they shaped on a daily basis. But he also addresses the mundane. Ordinary houses were modeled on the perfect geometry of heaven, he suggests, and may have shown how easily that ordained perfection could be toppled, when they were attacked, as they were during the Era of the American Revolution. Farms, fields, and town plans, he adds, were no less burdened with hidden significance.

Many historians will likely dismiss—or at least minimize—the importance of St. George’s concerns with indirect expression and intertextual reference in their study of colonial New England. St. George argues that they should be included because “they make a productive mess of chronology” (6). Often, he argues, one “culture” simply did not give way quite so quickly or completely to the other. The self-denying strain of Puritan piety often pointed to as representing 17th century New England culture, for example, did not give way to the enlightenment of the 18th century for decades. The two coexisted, even if the former existed increasingly in the shadow of the latter. This, of course, is not news to

historians, but historians may nevertheless find St. George's analysis of 17th and 18th century architecture an interesting way to make the point.

By way of another example, St. George reminds readers—again not really breaking new ground—that the worlds of metaphysics and the market were never quite separate in colonial New England. “The commodification of culture asserted by market forces,” he writes, “was always incomplete and bore an enchantment as intensely metaphysical as any witchcraft narrative” (380-381). Commerce remained symbolically tied to the metaphysical world of death, rebirth, and eternal life, and, the author adds, presented a window on the alluring possibility of transcending oneself through contract and exchange. In sum, St. George adds his voice—and other interesting bits of evidence—to those [e.g. Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture* (1984)] who have as of late challenged the maxim that when Puritan communities encountered commercial capitalism, Puritanism lost, leading inexorably to the decline of Puritan community—the declension model of New England history.

The reader should be warned that *Conversing by Signs* consists of four lengthy chapters, each divided into numerous shorter sections, which are in turn broken down into fragmentary topics that relate to the larger subject of the chapter. At times, such organization may give the impression that the entire work is patched together and the relationship of its many parts coincidental. In the end, however, while the author's conclusions concerning colonial New England culture are not entirely new, his methodology and the sources upon which he draws reward the reader's patience.

Creighton University

Bryan F. Le Beau

CONFLICTING PATHS: Growing Up in America. By Harvey J. Graff. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1995.

THE CHILDREN'S CIVIL WAR. By James Marten. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1998.

The past several years have seen a dramatic increase in the scholarly interest directed toward children: their historical circumstances, their culture, and the multiple meanings which childhood has embraced over time. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* (8-7-98) features a front-page story on “Booming Interest in ‘Children's Studies’” and a similar story, “The Children's Hour,” appeared in the *Washington Post* (11-13-98). National Public Radio's “Talk of the Nation” hosted child-study scholars in a December 1998 broadcast. The new electronic discussion H-Childhood reflects the interdisciplinary scope of childhood studies as well as bringing together scholars from across the globe. The two books reviewed here represent significant, but very different, contributions to this rapidly-expanding field, and through their impressive use of under-utilized sources, illustrate how invisible children's lives have been in the narrative of the American past.

James Marten's thoroughly researched and engagingly written study of how the Civil War affected children's activities, culture, and emotions stands as one of the most exciting studies to emerge in the last dozen years. Using memoirs, autobiography, juvenile periodicals and schoolbooks, toy collections, published and unpublished letters, and newspapers, Marten weaves a compelling story of how actively children experienced this war, and how long they remained marked by it. “Children experienced everything the war threw at northerners and southerners,” he writes, “danger and hardship, exhilaration and

loss, and enhanced opportunities and crushing responsibilities” (185). Building on his previous Civil War research, Marten incorporates knowledge of other childhood studies, and especially childhood trauma, to provide nuance and depth to this research.

In Chapter Two, the author provides the definitive work to date on children’s literature and school texts in the Civil War Era, including numerous short-lived Confederate periodicals and schoolbooks. Of particular interest are the Freedmen’s Bureau publications designed to teach politics, manners, and obedience, as well as literacy, to the newly-emancipated African-American. In fact, he found so much information that he has edited *Lessons of War: the Civil War in Children’s Magazines* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999) as well.

Another chapter explores the impact of the absence of fathers and brothers on Civil War children and also examines the role that children played in the lives of these absent fathers including a poignant examination of father’s grieving for children who died while they were away and the investment that many men had in being good, though absent, parents. Marten illustrates how, although all children tend to conceptualize the world into good and evil, right and wrong, the Civil War’s immediacy exacerbated this tendency to concretize beliefs. Children’s actual involvement in fund-raising (e.g., booths at the Sanitary Fairs), bandage rolling, and letter writing probably enhanced their emotional investment in the outcome of this war.

In his final chapter, Marten shows that “their war did not end when the armies laid down their weapons,” (190) as he examines the writing and political activity of such Civil War children who became prominent authors as Henry Grady, Thomas Nelson Page, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Charles Waddell Chesnut. For researchers, Marten’s bibliography alone is worth the price of the book. James Marten has taken a topic ignored by both Civil War historians and historians of childhood and crafted an engaging, masterful, nuanced, and readable study that will not quickly leave the reader’s mind or heart.

Harvey Graff is no newcomer to childhood studies; he has been teaching and writing about the history of childhood for a least a dozen years. *Conflicting Paths* represents both his critique of previous synthetic interpretations and his own typology for understanding the processes children go through in becoming adults in America. His schema of “conflicting paths” is based on a model of diversity and conflict. Having established this theoretical framework in the first chapter, the bulk of Graff’s book contains mini-profiles of child experiences drawn from an extensive reading of personal memoirs. Though making no claim for a scientifically-collected sample, Graff argues that this broad reading enabled him to discern several dominant “paths” for growing up in each of the five eras he studied, although the “paths” have no fixed chronological boundaries. He delineates these paths as “traditional,” “transitional,” “female,” and “emergent,” although concrete definitions or characteristics are few. For example, he describes the “transitional” path as one marked by “discontinuity, uncertainty, shifting expectations, and shifting locations,” and goes on to say that these paths “occupy the ground that lies, materially and metaphorically, between traditional and newly emergent paths, between apparent stability and continuity on the one hand and manifest opportunities and new rhythms or schedules on the other” (30).

Such a model tells us more about variable temperaments among people than it does about children’s lives, culture, emotions, ethical systems, or the historical context in which they lived. Having a separate category for girls’ experience denies the myriad ways in which women share the desires and burdens of mainstream culture. According to the author, “emergent” paths lean toward “the modern understanding of growing up, a picture

blurring at its edges with the transitional path” (32). His model tends to disguise the impact of region, class, and ethnicity on the growing up experience.

The bulk of the book (Chapter Two-Six) present profiles of children whose experiences seem to support one of the four “paths.” Herein lies both the strength and the weakness of *Conflicting Paths*. These individual profiles, often a mere two or three paragraphs long, can only provide self-interpreted experiences, much as a patient describing symptoms. Certainly the mere descriptive is helpful in recreating historical meaning, but without the interpretive lens of the historian, the reader gains little meaning or insight. Other than Graff’s “paths,” nothing links the dozens and scores of profiles to each other or to their social and cultural context. Minority and ethnic profiles are absent because the author found too little data to fit them into his model. Thus rather than using the lacunae to illustrate the contours of American society or culture, he perpetuates the middle-class, white bias of most childhood studies. For a book based on personal narratives, the text has no narrative strategy at all. As a ten-year research project based on approximately 500 personal narratives, Graff’s effort is impressive. One could only wish that the resulting monograph interfaced more with current studies of American childhood and were more reader-friendly.

Rhodes College

Gail S. Murray

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America. Edited by Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture). 1997.

The editors of *Through a Glass Darkly* have collected for publication thirteen papers presented at a conference sponsored by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture in 1993. The papers draw on a variety of disciplines—history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, material culture, and performance theory—to explore the construction and representation of self in early America. The authors examine dreams, diaries, furniture, clothing, folkstories, acts of murder, penitence, and suicide, and gendered responses to pain. They include whites, Native Americans, and blacks in an attempt to explore the ways people defined themselves, the meanings of those measures of self-definition, and what the process of self-definition and the categories it employed reveal about the character of that society and how it changed over time.

Through a Glass Darkly is a fascinating collection of essays that continues a shift among scholars away from the aggregate studies based in institutions and demography of the new social history to an emphasis on individual life experiences and how they could be probed for deeper meaning—seeking meaning for society from patterns embedded in individual lives. Particularly helpful are the contributions of Greg Dening—brief introductions to the collection and to each of its three sections—which tie the volume together in a thoughtful and integrated manner.

The title, *Through a Glass Darkly*, comes from Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. The Christian Corinthians were marginalized in their own Hellenistic society, uncertain as to their future. Recognizing that uncertainty, Paul told them that it was the human condition to be uncertain, but that they were on the edge of something better, and that they should live by that hope and find their identity in what was to come. Uncertainty, Dening

argues—"edginess" or "liminality," to use his other terms—is the paramount feeling of the human condition: "The self is always on the edge, always contingent, dependent on all the exchanges with otherness around. Identity is an appreciation that 'I' am not now what 'I' was then" (3). Liminality also serves to tie all thirteen essays together into a largely coherent whole.

The editors divide *Through a Glass Darkly* into three parts. The first, "Histories of Self," contain narratives of "the self-describing" in early America. They are written with a sense of the process in, and dialogic nature of, culture. More specifically, authors James Merrell, Mary Beth Norton, T. H. Breen, Alan Taylor, and Donna Merwick address what one author describes as an "unintelligible self," communal definitions of gendered identity, the force of public opinion during the final years of slavery, and episodes of murder and penitence and suicide. The second section, "Texts of Self," offers readings of the ways that selves in early America were represented in writing, in stories told, and in material things. Mechal Sobel, Rhys Isaac, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, and Kenneth Lockridge add slaves to the mix and examine folkstories, diaries, a cupboard, and the construction of genteel identity. The final section, titled "Reflections on Defining Self," presents efforts "to fulfill the historian's obligation not merely to tell the story of self-defining but to explain it" (6). Authors Philip Greven, Elaine Forman Crane, Richard White, and W. Jeffrey Bolster examine the formative experiences of childhood, the "defining force" of pain, the construction of self among Native Americans on the "middle ground," and the making of selves among black sailors.

Creighton University

Bryan F. Le Beau

A TRUE REPUBLICAN: The Life of Paul Revere. By Jayne E. Triber. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1998.

With publication of his poem, "Paul Revere's Ride," in January 1861, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow created an enduring symbol of America's revolutionary ideals in the person of Paul Revere, a daring horseman who, "with a cry of defiance and not fear," rallied his countrymen in defense of liberty. The poet did not explain what attracted Revere to the Revolutionary cause, how Revere interpreted the republican principles of the Revolution, or how those principles shaped his life after his famous ride on the night of April 18, 1775. Those are the questions Jayne Triber sets out to answer in *A True Republication*, and answer them she does in a book that compliments the still classic biography by Esther Forbes, *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* (1942), and the more recent study by David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (1994).

Triber's work is part intellectual biography, part social analysis, and that bifurcated approach is particularly useful in trying to understand the political ideas of an upwardly mobile patriot and master artisan in the era of the American Revolution. The Revere that emerges from Triber's analysis is both a proud and ambitious person whose desire for prosperity, independence, and social distinction drew him to the republican ideals of liberty and equality of opportunity based on individual merit and a man who fervently believed in the necessity of virtue—the sacrifice of private interest to the public good—in order to sustain republicanism.

Revere's story chronicles the historical events and cultural developments that transformed the American colonies into the new republic. Revere's political awakening, Triber shows, occurred in the mid-1760s following passage of the Stamp Act of 1765. His

opposition to the act led to the first of several instances in which the master artisan turned his skills to propaganda in the rebel cause by engraving "A View of The Year 1765." His best known effort in this regard would be "The Bloody Massacre," which he produced following the Boston Massacre of March 1770.

Revere soon established himself as a reliable member of the Sons of Liberty, which in turn led to his being used increasingly as a courier of news between Committees of Correspondence in New England and the southern colonies and as an intelligence agent behind British lines in occupied Boston. Thus his being called upon for his "midnight ride" to Lexington and Concord. Revere gained prominence in Boston political circles, but his artisan status, Triber argues, prevented him from entering the ranks of its leadership with the likes of John and Sam Adams and Joseph Warren. Revere's leadership skills were to be exercised among his fellow artisans and in his lodge of Freemasons.

Revere prospered after the war, and he continued to be involved in public affairs if not ever to hold public office. His support for ratification of the U. S. Constitution—as a frame of government "well calculated to secure the liberties, protect the property, and guard the rights of the citizens of America"—helped attract much needed support in the hard fought battle over ratification in Massachusetts. His support for the Federalist Party, Triber writes, signaled his wish to stand publicly with those "who shared his hopes for the future along with his abiding concern over the self-interest and lack of honor that were infesting the republic" (157).

Creighton University

Bryan F. Le Beau

WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE: Actresses and Audiences, 1790-1870. By Faye E. Dudden. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1994.

Authoritative and challenging, this volume makes a significant contribution to the field of American studies and American theater. It is assiduously researched, lucidly written, and persuasively argued. In this book, author Faye E. Dudden provides new insights into the relations among gender, popular culture, and American society as she explores the various ways women were involved in the American theater—as actresses, managers, playwrights, and audiences—from the earliest years of the republic to the days just after the Civil War.

Theater, as a quintessential public activity, has traditionally been male-dominated. In early American society, the women who associated themselves with the theater jeopardized their and their families' reputations and often had to defend themselves against social and religious biases. However, despite its obvious drawbacks, the theater was one profitable area of enterprise open to women. The vocational possibilities of the stage profession afforded women the opportunity to receive a comparatively good salary, to compete with men on an equal basis of talent and public appeal, and even reach positions of management in the theater. On the other hand, by engaging in a profession that was so loudly and frequently condemned, female performers had to relinquish the most important attributes of 'True Womanhood' by which a woman was judged and appraised in society. Ever since women first appeared onstage they have been associated with immorality and sexuality. Dudden argues that the woman who presents herself in public is inherently liable, whatever her own intent, to become the object of male sexual fantasy and voyeuristic pleasure. Acting is a particularly acute case of the general phenomenon of a woman being reduced to sexual object.

One of the great strengths of the book is that it blends vivid biographical sketches of female performers and managers with a social history of early American theater paying special attention to the contradictory possibilities that it offered women. Starting with American theater in the 1790s, Dudden attempts to explain how entertainment became so intensely commercialized, how it came to be so thoroughly controlled by men, and how it began routinely to display women's bodies for visual pleasure. *Women in the American Theatre* looks closely at the most significant historical developments that transformed early American theater from a predominantly aural experience in the late eighteenth century into a more systematic, profit-seeking, all-male enterprise in the nineteenth century, which eventually led to the objectification and commodification of women in the theater.

According to Dudden, American theater in the early years of the republic—marginal, provincial, and disreputable though it was—offered women the unique opportunity to combine remunerative work with marriage and family as well as air bold talk about gender and republican politics. In the years between 1790 and 1830, there was more attention given on stage to women's voices than to their bodies. Although a pretty face and a comely figure were appreciated, early actresses were particularly admired for their enunciatory skills. However, the expansion of public life in the nineteenth century, due to urbanization and the industrial revolution, brought about a number of changes that greatly affected the entertainment market and encouraged the emergence of a purely commercialized popular entertainment that took to the stage a mass audience, catered principally to men's eyes, and put women performers at increased risk. Dudden traces the beginnings of these changes in the 1830s when Thomas Hamblin became the manager of the Bowery Theater in New York and took a critical turn towards visual rather than aural pleasure. Hamblin profited himself by exploiting young women performers and playwrights both professionally and sexually. This new emphasis on the visual, on the display of women's bodies on stage, had grave implications for women since they themselves were now liable to be taken as visual/sexual objects. The triumph of the visual continued well into the nineteenth century with the appearance of the "model artist" shows in the 1840s that offered men the chance to ogle women's bodies dressed in tights, as well as with the success of the "leg shows," *The Black Crook* and *Mazepa*. Dudden claims that visual entertainment pushed the objectification inherent in stage representation a step further, into commodification, as it converted women's bodies into a realizable asset.

Dudden's *Women in the American Theatre* provides a provocative discussion about what it meant to be a woman in early American theater in a convincing, able and thoroughly engaging manner. The book should be of interest to general readers, students and scholars working in women's studies and early American theater.

Aristotle University of Thessalonki

Zoe Detsi

HEART VERSUS HEAD: Judge-Made Law in Nineteenth-Century America. By Peter Karsten. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1997.

Peter Karsten, a professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, has written a truly distinguished book, one that will continue to inform the debate about the history of American law for decades to come. Karsten writes with clarity, grace, and wit at the same time that he provocatively analyzes the extraordinary range of materials that he has combed. The result is a truly original and singular contribution to the history of nineteenth-century American law.

Karsten directly challenges the arguments of Morton Horwitz and his acolytes that the development of American law in the nineteenth century resulted from pro-business decisions made by judges. Rather, he insists that the central argument during these years was not over the efficient subsidization of business through the law, but instead it was about the conflict between a “jurisprudence of the heart,” which exhibited a willingness to alter harsh rules when they were unfair, and a “jurisprudence of the head,” which emphasized a strict adherence to precedent, no matter the consequences. This latter view, which Karsten ably explores, suggests that legal historians have given too little attention to the persistence of English common law rules and to the tenaciousness with which judges clung to their roles as independent interpreters rather than makers of the law. Karsten argues that gradually the tradition of the heart triumphed over that of the head, producing a decided change in American law.

That change, however, was fundamentally different from the one described by Horwitz. The shift in American judge-made law away from English precedent benefitted those persons harmed by the rapid industrialization of the American economy, not corporations and business. Horwitz claimed that American judges accommodated new forms of capital by crafting legal rules that indirectly subsidized corporations and placed much of the costs on the persons harmed by change, such as workers in factories and passengers on steamboats and trains. Rather, Karsten insists that American judges when they did agree to change the law of property, contract, and tort almost always did so in ways that benefitted plaintiffs suing corporations. According to Karsten, “‘the poor,’ ‘the weak,’ common laborers, and children were better off under the rules of the common law and equity by the 1890s than they had been in the 1790s because of judicial innovations” (294).

Karsten achieves this insight, in part, because he has painted on a far larger geographical canvas than did Horwitz. Karsten finds that in the Northeast, where Horwitz concentrated his analysis, tradition-minded judges were far more numerous, although even there they acted with a great deal more sympathy for plaintiffs than Horwitz discovered. However, by pushing his analysis South, West, and ultimately to the Pacific, Karsten reveals a rich process of legal experimentation, almost all of which favored labor over capital.

Karsten’s explanation for the populist and pro-plaintiff stance of many judges rests more on speculation than a finished analysis of the evidence. That is, what Karsten reports he cannot altogether explain. What he does do brilliantly, however, is to offer a variety of suggestive insights: procedural reforms that favored plaintiffs, the sweeping trend toward the popular election of appellate court judges, and the powerful impact of religion on both judges personally and the culture as a whole. The last of these is especially provocative, since it fits nicely with work historians of American religion, such as Nathan Hatch, who find a growing concern within American religion for equity, fairness, and individual conscience during these years.

This is a fine book, one that adds significantly to our understanding of nineteenth-century American law at the same time that it provocatively, wisely, and effectively challenges the existing literature.

The Ohio State University

Kermit L. Hall

INVENTING NEW ENGLAND: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century. By Dona Brown. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1995.

Inventing New England is an illuminating exploration of New England's developing tourist industry. Brown's analysis focuses on the market relations of a regional industry that commodified tourist experiences of New England landscape, sharpened class divisions among vacationers in search of summer retreats and diversions, and sold mythic versions of an "Old New England" steeped in a reassuring history of racial "purity." At the heart of Brown's study are six portraits of tourist sites and practices. These include excursions after romantic landscapes in the White Mountains, especially in Crawford's Notch whose developing hotel industry Brown discusses; Martha's Vineyard's Wesleyan Grove, a tent city for Methodist revivalists that became in the 1850s and 60s a carefully secularized community of middle class cottagers; and the promotion of "farm vacations" by a Vermont Board of Agriculture seeking to invigorate a declining segment of the state's economy and to reclaim prestige for farm life.

Brown's analysis is particularly attuned to the ways tourism exposed class lines among vacationing Americans. Through a survey of Bureau of Agriculture documents and the newspapers of Vermont farming communities, Brown demonstrates that transactions between host farmers and their summer boarders often involved ticklish negotiations of class identity. Collating title deeds to the cottages of Wesleyan Grove with the city directories of the vacationers' winter homes (Hartford, New Bedford, Fall River) Brown draws the portrait of an artisanal group "poised at the edge of the middle class." Her discussion of the elite Bostonians who summered in southern Maine reveals a definition of the "Old New England" to which they retreated as predicated on the exclusion of ethnic Americans and "excursionists"—that is, working class tourists travelling on discounted round trip fares. Brown recalls that Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the genteel novelist whose memories of his boyhood Portsmouth set the tone for much Gilded Age nostalgia about the region, was a vocal anti-immigrationist.

Indeed, Brown's chapters are persuasive and engaging because they make wide use of the imaginative literature of the region and period. Her treatment of the Bostonians in Maine draws largely from the fiction and the lived summer experience of William Dean Howells who, from his beloved retreat at Kittery Point, observed his privileged neighbors with an ambivalence born of his own egalitarian politics. Brown's section on Nantucket, where class tensions between natives and summer people were submerged beneath a manufactured and anti-modernist cult of "quaintness," is illustrated through reference to Edward Bellamy's near-forgotten novel, *Six to One: a Nantucket Idyll*. Edith Wharton's 1917 novel *Summer* appears pointedly in Brown's discussion of the institution of Old Home Weeks in many small New England communities where nostalgia for rural simplicity was marketed to urbanites. Brown is especially conversant with female local color writers of New England, like Jewett, Rose Terry Cooke, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Celia Thaxter. These lend special point and finish to Brown's analysis. *Inventing New England* is a most valuable study of a familiar terrain, and of the industry that created there "a mythic region called Old New England—rural, preindustrial, and ethnically 'pure'—a reverse image of all that was most unsettling in late nineteenth-century urban life."

Lake Forest College

Benjamin Goluboff

MELVILLE'S CITY: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York. By Wyn Kelley. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

This book's subtitle appropriately signals that its subject is Melville's relationship to the urban through the qualities and terminology pertaining to one particular city—the one in which he lived for most of his adult life after returning from his years at sea. Kelley uses the facts and implications of nineteenth-century New York history to support historicized readings of Melville's works, even the sea fiction, where she finds a significant nineteenth-century dialectic concerning urban form and the literary forms used by authors to handle the cultural problems of the growing, changing, stimulating, and threatening city of New York.

Focusing on four metaphors or "cultural representations," of urban form: the Capital, the Labyrinth, the City of Man and the City of God, Kelley also chooses four literary forms by means of which authors dealt with urban form. They are the spectator sketch, the sensationalistic novel of the labyrinthine city, the domestic and sentimental novel, and the narrative of Old World travel. Analyzing these literary forms in their Melvillean avatars, from his first book to his last, Kelley argues that Melville's "literary practices . . . borrow their distinctive coloring from the urban culture he lived in and represented in his fiction and poetry." She concludes that in these practices he expresses his own ambivalence about New York and what it represented.

From the spectator narrations in the early novels, through the labyrinths evoked in *White-Jacket* and *Pierre*, to the references in *Billy Budd*, *Sailor* citing "Cain's city" and "cified man," Kelley perceptively highlights and interprets the urban contexts in Melville's prose and poetry. Her contrasts and comparisons with popular "labyrinth" fiction by George Lippard, E. Z. C. Judson, and George Foster are important to readings of "Bartleby, the Scrivener," *The Confidence Man*, and other works. She extends the argument of other recent criticism that the urban, the local, the political, were as much parts of Melville's life and work as they were for other, less skilled and less ambiguous authors.

Kelley's expertise on Melville and her sophistication in reading him are fine, though her thesis seems slippery at times. Some interpretations may wrinkle the reader's brow with unanswered questions or desire for more justification. Preponderantly, however, *Melville's City* is a rich though necessarily narrow addition to the growing critical literature on the role of the urban in nineteenth-century writing. It is perhaps even more valuable as an excavation of the layered and complex site called Melville.

University of Kansas

Haskell Springer

THE TRIALS OF ANTHONY BURNS: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston. By Albert J. von Frank. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1998.

In 1854, Anthony Burns, an escaped slave from Richmond, was seized and tried in Boston under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The antislavery forces in the city recognized the improbability of winning Burns' freedom in a court of law; after all, the last runaway slave, Thomas Sims, had been returned in 1851 after a ruling by Lemuel Shaw that seemed to guarantee the state's acceptance of the federal statute and, as some abolitionists put it, the submission of Massachusetts to the "Slave Power." A meeting organized at Faneuil Hall galvanized a crowd to storm the Court House in an attempt to free Burns: the attempt

failed and one guard was killed, leading to the indictment on both state and federal charges against several people, including Thomas Wentworth Higginson, that were later dropped—probably because the forces of “law and order” wanted no more martyrs in the abolitionist cause. As expected, Burns was finally remanded back into slavery by the presiding judge.

In his preface, Albert von Frank recounts that his initial motive for examining this rich case was to assess how Transcendentalism, “the liberal, emancipatory ideas I admired in Emerson and his associates,” played out on the terrain of slavery—how, and indeed whether, idealism was effective in the world of politics and courts (xiii). Von Frank’s exhaustive research leads him not just to a belief in Transcendentalism’s real-world efficacy but in its virtual identification with the very concept of “revolution.” “Revolution,” after all, involves the constitution of a radically different social body; and in the debate over slavery it was Emersonian idealism that underwrote abolitionists’ conviction that the U.S. government must be re-constructed if all Americans—of *all* races—were to regain their freedom.

Despite von Frank’s intent to test the potency of ideas, he recreates the Burns case in a manner both meticulously concrete and dramatic—including a portentous chapter, for instance, on a solar eclipse that occurred only two days after Burns was arrested: “‘Hung be the heavens in black!’” wrote Charles Sumner (51). Von Frank fully develops the *dramatis personae* in the case and tells a thrilling story, culminating in Richard Henry Dana’s inspired defense of Burns and Edward Greely Loring’s deflated and mechanical judgment that the law gave him no choice but to return the fugitive slave. It is precisely this tension, represented by Dana and Loring, that lies behind—that coheres and impels—the events that unfolded in Boston in 1854 in von Frank’s carefully crafted retelling. On the one hand, men like Loring succumbed to the grinding power of the law; on the other hand, antislavery advocates aspired to surpass and remake that law. Over and over again, von Frank’s abolitionists, heeding the absolute idealism of Emerson, insisted that freedom was commitment to a higher law, demanding a constant self-making and corollary world-making. Subordination to a reified law that was taken as given made slaves of all people. Thus Loring, in his decision to return Burns, intoned that “‘Whether the statute is a harsh one or not, *it is not for us to determine*’”—just as Shaw in the Sims case argued that because slavery pre-existed the Constitution, it was therefore “‘*not responsible* for the origin or continuance of Slavery’”; presumably Shaw too was not responsible for temporizing with freedom and justice when he followed the Constitution is accepting slavery (201). Where Emerson became essential to the fight against slavery, then, was in his uncompromising insistence that one must not slavishly follow the law, eschewing responsibility for it and for oneself, but that one must instead plant oneself “‘indomitably on the truth, defying custom, circumstance, and the whole world besides” (261). In such a way, as von Frank puts it, does Transcendentalism “‘deployed as antislavery, become revolution” (261).

Emerson, von Frank concludes, fundamentally influenced the abolitionist movement: his ideas motivated all those men, from the rabble-rousing Higginson to the lawyerly Dana, who fought for Burns’ (and their own) freedom. But a possibility for change (if not revolution) that von Frank raises at the opening of his book remains a spectral challenge to the efficacy of idealism, however embodied it might be in tangible action: that challenge is the power of incremental, pragmatic, and institutional change *from within*—rarely cataclysmic in its results but productive nonetheless. Indeed, while Dana raised principled objections to the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law in his defense of Burns, he also worked within the rubric of that law—trying to challenge those witnesses for the claimant who testified that Burns was the runaway slave in question; this involved Dana’s arguing

that Burns was *not* a runaway slave, even though his very importance to the antislavery movement *necessitated* that he *be* a runaway slave. It was these arguments about Burns' identity that Loring took most seriously. Most ironically, Burns was finally "freed" when his Boston friends bought him—a direct challenge to abolitionist ideals about owning humans that haunted many a philanthropic purchaser and many a freed slave (famously, Harriet Jacobs). It is impossible to read this book without realizing that Burns' freedom depended on such acts that worked within the system and, however provisionally, acknowledged its inevitability. It is also impossible to read this book without agreeing with von Frank that freedom in the larger sense—a "free point of view"—depended on envisioning and trying to enact a way of living and being not to be *found* but to be created.

North Carolina State University
Dawn Keetley

READING FOR REALISM: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution. 1850-1910. By Nancy Glazener. New Americanists. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press. 1997.

Few scholars produce truly interdisciplinary work as successfully as Nancy Glazener has in this remarkable study. Integrating historical detective work on the American publishing scene of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with careful interpretations of literary works and movements, she constructs an illuminating, complex picture that cannot be achieved without such an American studies approach.

Glazener traces the construction of literary realism in terms of nineteenth-century publishing institutions. She argues that the very concept of realism, and the intellectual establishment's high valuation of its supposed moral effects, emerged from influential periodicals like *The Atlantic Monthly* and the men of letters, such as William Dean Howells and James Russell Lowell, who shaped them. In turn, public understanding of realism influenced not only which works individuals read but also *how* they read them. In fact, Glazener argues, public discourse about genre influenced the structure of specific, contemporary works of fiction. Glazener's approach thus weds elements of *histoire du livre* studies, which tend to focus principally on the world of publishing, and of reception studies, which tend to focus on readers. Ultimately, her book convincingly urges a reconsideration of the dialectic relationship between artistic production and consumption, and demonstrates that genre itself is a social construction, influenced by and "read" within the complex of contemporary assumptions, mores, and values.

As a form touted by establishment periodicals, realism reproduced class-based social relations, despite the genre's claim to render "truthfully" to privileged readers the lives of the less privileged. The brand of realism promoted by *Atlantic*-group periodicals, which emphasized "some combination of philanthropic national citizenship and connoisseurship" (43) based on the values of the upper class that produced those publications, promulgated a sense of *noblesse oblige*. It implicitly asked its readers to help the less fortunate while never questioning their sense of entitlement.

The rise of mass-circulation magazines such as *McClure's*, the artistic "little magazines," and especially universities, as well as the growing internal difficulties among the *Atlantic*-group periodicals themselves, spelled the end of the *Atlantic* group's heyday as the premier arbiters of generic correctness. By providing a sense of continuity from the *Atlantic* group's canon-granting and genre-defining powers to those of today's academic critics, Glazener demonstrates that genres such as realism always—now as then—are

constructed out of shifting, contemporary ideologies and reading practices based largely on race, class, and gender.

With a helpful summary of the principal constituents of the *Atlantic* group in an appendix and nearly a hundred pages of rigorously compiled notes and references, *Reading for Realism* amounts to a prodigious contribution to American literary history. Glazener's clear prose and sound organization of material augment her subtle, forceful argumentation. Bridging idealist and material orientations, the author masterfully scrutinizes the literary, social, political, and economic forces at play in the era of the *Atlantic* group, illuminating not only that period but also our own. Scholars of American studies who seek a model for groundbreaking, interdisciplinary research can do no better than read *Reading for Realism*.

University of Washington, Bothell

David Goldstein-Shirley

WHITMAN, SLAVERY, AND THE EMERGENCE OF *LEAVES OF GRASS*. By Martin Klammer. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1995.

Walt Whitman's thinking about slavery and African Americans has been a complicated and distressing issue in American literary criticism. Sometimes Whitman's expansive poetry stands with slaves and includes African Americans within his democratic vision. Elsewhere he disregards African Americans and questions of racial justice or, worse, explains his ideas about the biological inferiority of black peoples. Some Whitman scholars have simply acknowledged Whitman's "vacillations and inconsistencies" (Newton Arvin qtd. 2) on the subject of slavery, while other critics have ignored the issue altogether.

In the late-1980s and 1990s, a number of more complex, historical examinations of Whitman's attitudes toward slavery, race, and African Americans appeared, thanks to critics such as Michael Moon, Betsy Erkkila, George Hutchinson, David Reynolds, and Christopher Beach among others. Klammer's book is one the very best studies from this recent wave of sophisticated, historicist work on Whitman and African Americans.

Klammer argues that Whitman's evolving ideas about slavery are crucial to the development of the revolutionary poetry of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*. Klammer does not consider race an incidental theme in Whitman's work. Instead, he insists that Whitman's thinking about slavery and African Americans is central to *Leaves of Grass*—its content, form, and purpose. The claim is bold and original, but grounded in competent, insightful historical research and shrewd attention to Whitman's poetry.

Opening with a chapter on Whitman's temperance novel, *Franklin Evans* (1842), Klammer reveals how Whitman's early thinking about slavery is a defense of the proslavery South and a subversion of abolitionist literature. Following the Mexican War and the rise of the Free Soil movement, Whitman's attitudes begin to change, and he adopts an antislavery position grounded in concern for white workers.

During the period between Whitman's Free Soil activism (which peaks in 1847) and a pair of pivotal events in 1854 (the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Anthony Burns case), Whitman starts to experiment with new, more sympathetic ways of thinking about enslaved peoples and their sufferings. This more humanitarian view of African Americans coincides with his development of an innovative poetics, a rhetoric adequate to this emerging egalitarianism and sympathy with black peoples. Indeed Klammer "almost" asserts that Whitman's new antislavery thinking is an essential antecedent to Whitman's

free verse poetics: "It is almost as if the radically sympathetic depiction of blacks compels Whitman toward an equally radical and new poetic form" (100).

In the final two chapters, Klammer reveals what Whitman's development as a writer has produced: a book that "portrays African Americans as equal partners with whites in a democratic future and as . . . the paradigms of a fully realized humanity" (115). Although critics from D. H. Lawrence to the present have been suspicious of Whitman's sympathetic identification with slaves, Klammer wonders if such imaginative entry into the slave's experience is not in fact "the most compassionate response possible" (134), and he demonstrates marked similarities between *Leaves of Grass* and slave narratives. Klammer then illustrates how other poems in the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, "I Sing the Body Electric" and "The Sleepers," move beyond antislavery humanitarianism to emphasize the historical, even cosmic significance of African Americans to American notions of identity and nation. In a denouement reversal of the intellectual development charted by this book, the Epilogue describes Whitman's "almost immediate retreat from these new and radical claims" (159) in the years following the initial publication of *Leaves of Grass*.

Klammer's book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in Whitman's thinking about slavery and African Americans or his growth as a writer.

Kansas State University

Gregory Eiselein

THE STRANGE SAD WAR REVOLVING: Walt Whitman, Reconstruction, and the Emergence of Black Citizenship, 1865-1876. By Luke Mancuso. Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House. 1997.

Walt Whitman repeatedly spoke of the need to historicize his poetry. To do justice to Mancuso's fine book, one needs to hear once more a Whitman refrain, here articulated by him in "An Old Man's Rejoinder": "No great poem or other literary or artistic work of any scope . . . can be essentially consider'd without weighing first the age, politics (or want of politics) and aim, visible forms, unseen soul, and current times, out of the midst of which it rises and is formulated." Luke Mancuso has done just such weighing in *The Strange Sad War Revolving*. Mancuso painstakingly sets Whitman's Reconstruction texts into a historical frame of reference, bringing significant readings to poems that easily could slip by the reader. One such enriched reading is found, for example, in Mancuso's discussion of Whitman's 1867 "Tears."

Mancuso disciplines his focus through the use of phrases which become, in essence, leitmotifs, the most significant of which is the phrase "cultural work." Just as Lincoln performed cultural work, Mancuso says, in his gradualist approach to abolition, so too did Whitman perform cultural work in his poetry as he indirectly represented the presence of unity in the midst of variety. The phrase "cultural work" emphasizes Whitman's *aesthetics* and also emphasizes the interplay between the *actualities* of the post-bellum world and Whitman's poetry. Another recurring phrase is "national household," used effectively when speaking about union in the United States. The "national household" becomes for Mancuso the "renovated national household" after the war. Whitman's "cultural work" in terms of renovation was to enhance more deliberately images representing inclusion. A succinct example of Mancuso's own fusion of the realities of the period with Whitman's poetry occurs when Mancuso refers to the 1867 *Leaves of Grass* as "disheveled raggedness" speaking from the "disheveled days after emancipation" (17-18).

Mancuso departs from what has become a familiar reading of the "Calamus" cluster in terms of its homosexual significance in that he, Mancuso, takes seriously Whitman's

statement in the 1876 Preface to *Leaves of Grass*: “the special meaning of the ‘Calamus’ cluster of ‘Leaves of Grass,’ . . . mainly resides in its political significance.” In the following passage, Mancuso articulates his sense of “comradship” as he sees Whitman using the term:

As images of a national household, forced to renovate the foundation it had built on slavery, the separations and deaths of blood relatives were deployed as representations of such a breakage with the Revolutionary past so that a more racially diverse republic might be constructed out the ‘whirl & deafening din’ in the aftermath of the war. Only then, as the poet of a reconstructed national home, would Whitman make the riskier rhetorical move of reaching out to strangers [comrades], beyond kinsfolk, in a gesture that became the cultural cornerstone of his constructing a consolidated nation out of diverse ethnic racial differences. (6)

Skillfully, Mancuso weaves into his reading of the “Calamus” cluster the thread of what Whitman termed “religious” or “spiritual” democracy. The gestures of friendship or comradship outside family ties became crucial for Whitman in the war years, a “reaching out to strangers,” as Mancuso says. Mancuso expertly assists his readers to contextualize Whitman’s poetry in the inclusivity that Whitman felt was mandatory for a truly “United” States.

Inclusive though Mancuso’s reading of Whitman is, Mancuso has, however, short-changed one important historical aspect: the denial to women of the vote. Mancuso does belatedly mention the political denial of women’s suffrage after the war when the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were being passed, but he narrows his focus to males. For example, he says, “Nonetheless, abolitionists continued to lobby an increasingly reluctant Republican Congress for the franchise for blacks” (51). His not using the phrase “black males” constitutes a strange lapse for a writer who so obviously knows his history.

However, readers and students and teachers of Whitman will find in Luke Mancuso’s book his strong sense of history wedded to his astute readings of Whitman’s words. Mancuso’s courageous readings and the control with which he fuses history and poetry open up yet another Walt Whitman to readers. Mancuso takes hold of Whitman’s “indirections” and convincingly, richly, and inspiringly gives us back a strong sense of the Reconstruction Whitman.

Texas Tech University

Sherry Ceniza

CULTURE AND COMFORT: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930. By Katherine C. Grier. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press: 1998.

Victorian sensibility, long made synonymous with repression, stuffiness and prudery has been revised by contemporary historians who now identify Victorianism as a vibrant, complex and contradictory Anglo-American culture. We now understand that many Victorians had satisfying sexual lives, their arts displayed a vibrant confidence and the twined ideologies of domesticity and progress and the tension between them characterized much of the nineteenth century.

Victorian material culture has been less subject to revisionist interpretation. In part because the domestic interiors of Victorian homes *are* stuffy. It is close to impossible to

look at the overstuffed chairs, heavy drapes and omnipresent animacasters of Victorians parlors and feel anything but claustrophobic. The Victorian parlor has now found its amanuenses in Katherine C. Grier's *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle Class Identity, 1850-1930*, a detailed and brilliant analysis of the meaning of this quintessentially Victorian room and how its objects became infused with cultural meaning. According to Grier, the tension between culture (linked to cosmopolitanism) and comfort (tied to domesticity) found in Victorian life generally is the essence of the parlor. If indeed one of the most important aspects of the nineteenth century is the unquestioned establishment of a hegemonic ideology rooted in the middle class, than the great strength of Grier's book is its proof of the material representation of that ideology within domestic space.

Key to this notion of the parlor as theater is the belief that a sensitive person can discern meaning infused in objects. There though lies a problem (first identified by historian Karen Haltunnen). If the careful student of the parlors displayed by department stores international expositions, magazines, and photographic studios could "learn" the rhetoric of furnishing and manners how did one guarantee that the performance of middle class sensibility was sincere? And as lower priced lines of furniture and consumer credit schemes put the parlor (or at least aspects of parlor gentility) within the grasp of the working man's family how did the parlor remain emblematic of the middle class?

These problems may have contributed to the disappearance of the parlor from the housing plans of American builders by the 1920s. As importantly though, American income was going toward smaller houses and the new found necessity of buying and maintaining a family car. More relaxed rules of etiquette eliminated the need for a formal stage like the parlor and a concern for better domestic hygiene banished the dust catching bibelots of the Victorian parlor to the, well, dust bin.

Culture and Comfort is not a new book. In its present form it's a pared down edition of Grier's far lengthier companion volume to a Strong Museum exhibit. The book suffers in several unfortunate ways from this genesis. First, the three chapters devoted to spring form upholstery are meant to be a case study of Grier's themes of aesthetics, technology and taste but they slow down the narrative with oftentimes tedious detail. Secondly, Grier fails to account for the theoretical insights of Pierre Bourdieu on class and taste and for the proliferation of theoretical insights on the body, all developments of the ten years since the original publication of the book.

Finally, like many cultural historians, Grier conflates British and American Victorianism. An "anxiety" about class status characterized middle class Victorians as Greier and others claim, an anxiety that led to the careful study of objects, consumer ideology, etiquette and behavior—one was middle class because one looked and acted middle class. Yet it would seem that that anxiety is more easily seen in the United States where there was mobility and strong beliefs about mobility than in England with its deferential society and a bourgeois and "respectable" working class secure in their status. In other words, a more sharply defined contrast between the British and American case would be helpful.

Grier's book is a significant accomplishment and one that will stand as a classic study of a time when Americans Victorians negotiated between the discourses of "domesticity's" ethos of anti-consumption and gentility's ethos of pleasurable consumption."

University of Kansas

Ann Schofield

WHY THE AMERICAN CENTURY? By Olivier Zunz. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 1998.

THE AMERICAN CENTURY: The Rise and Decline of the United States as a World Power. By Donald W. White. New Haven: Yale University Press: 1998.

THE AMERICAN CENTURY. By Harold Evans. New York: Alfred Knopf. 1998.

Even though it has to share the spotlight with the portentous and intriguing end of a millennium, the twentieth century seems destined to receive ample attention. Its waning years are bringing forth a variety of retrospective studies trying to tell us what it has been all about. While it is perhaps a little early for truly profound and lasting perspectives, one runaway early favorite has been a notion propounded more than 50 years ago by American publisher Henry Luce. Luce argued in a famous 1941 editorial in *Life* magazine that if Americans had the courage to assume the mantle of world leadership this century could and should become “The American Century.” The three books reviewed here (there are a handful of other books with similar titles, including Studs Terkel’s *My American Century*) suggest that Luce was prescient—his “American Century” theme has struck a responsive chord.

Despite the similar titles Olivier Zunz, Donald White, and Harold Evans have written very different kinds of books. Zunz ignores the overt manifestations of American power to focus on the ideological foundations of American ascendancy. In the first half of the twentieth century an elite of government, business, and intellectual leaders developed a “liberal consensus” ideology that steered the U.S. on a middle road between “laissez-faire” capitalism and socialism and emphasized America’s world leadership role. Zunz’ early chapters examine a “matrix of inquiry,” a unique combination of universities, philanthropic foundations, industrial research laboratories, and the military, that began to turn the “production of knowledge” into economic, political, and military power. Subsequent sections consider how abundance, consumerism, and political pluralism helped to deflect, diffuse, and “de-radicalize” traditional class differences in American society. Zunz is particularly attentive to the role of social science theorists in promoting these processes. One especially original chapter recounts the U.S.’ attempt to remake Japan in the American image in the aftermath of World War II. Finally, events of the 1960s and the rise of identity politics revealed the limitations of white middle class consensus and undermined much of its ideology.

Zunz is an innovative and perceptive social critic. He crosses disciplinary boundaries with ease and felicity, and is particularly adept at illustrating large themes with unusual but telling details. On the negative side, *Why the American Century?* is essentially a collection of loosely related studies of twentieth century American culture. While its chapters work well as individual essays, their relationship to each other and their connections to the “American Century” theme are not always clearly evident.

Like Zunz, Donald White is interested in the origins of America’s superpower status. But in contrast to Zunz’ meticulously detailed, ideologically focused perspective, White gives us a Toynbee-esque birds’-eye geo-political view. His *American Century* is an ambitious attempt to describe and explain the “growth, flourishing, and decline” of the “world role” of the U.S. in the twentieth century (1). White describes and evaluates various theories of America’s rise to world power—explanations that run from environmental determinism to innate racial or cultural characteristics to the unique advantages of our

political and economic system. He details the manifestations of American superpower status—American cultural and economic penetration of the world, foreign aid programs, foreign policy decisions—and offers comparative surveys of world geo-political power. The final sections of *The American Century* examine the decline of America's world role at the end of the twentieth century.

Like Zunz, White is interested in both elite and popular culture versions of “consensus” ideology, is aware of and critical of the limitations of “American Century” thinking, and attends to the emergence of New Left and counter culture challenges to the liberal consensus that supported American hegemony. He contrasts the humane, cosmopolitan internationalism of Henry Wallace's vision of the twentieth century as the “century of the common man” to the imperial nationalism of Luce's “American Century.”

Any book that tries to do so much runs the risk of appearing naive and superficial on many specific topics. White looks for manifestations of American Century ideology, for example, in literature, photographic journalism, music, television, Hollywood, and the globalization of the English language. But these topics receive an average coverage of about two pages each, which does not allow for much depth or subtlety. Equally problematic is the “decline and fall” theme central to the book, which reads like it was written in the late 1970s. There is no discussion of the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union or of the American economic and military resurgence of past two decades.

Harold Evans is a successor to Henry Luce as one of the century's foremost publishers and editors. The time frame of his *American Century* is slightly eccentric: the second century of American society under the Constitution—from 1889 to 1989. Evans' 700-plus over-sized pages are divided into 15 chapters, some with a chronological and others with a topical focus. Each has a similar format—a substantial introductory essay, followed by numerous short subsections and vignettes. The narrative is supported by an excellent collection of photographs, more than 900 in all.

Evans' *American Century* is a book for browsing rather than reading straight through. It has a personal and idiosyncratic flavor, with individual sections and pages overshadowing unifying themes. The focus is predominantly political, the tone by and large an admiring outsider's celebration of America's commitment to freedom and democracy, and the ideological position consistently liberal. But the book's strength is its individual parts, and the photographs. Though based mostly on secondary sources the narrative is surprisingly well done, and even academic specialists are likely to find many sections impressive and informative.

None of these books are traditional American Studies fare. Zunz' social and cultural history perspective will likely be most familiar to AS readers. Despite the fact that White uses periodical, popular culture, and intellectual history sources typical of American Studies works, his general perspective is international relations and diplomatic history. Still, he deals with issues that ought to be of interest to almost any well educated American. At its best his approach is reminiscent of Paul Kennedy's magisterial *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Evan's *American Century* is the least academic of the three, and is in fact intended primarily for a popular audience. But surprisingly (to me), I admired and enjoyed his book at least as much as the other two. It makes great casual or bedside reading, but it also has a serious edge. And there is enough of it to keep the most avid reader occupied for a long time.

None of these books will be the definitive last word in understanding the twentieth century. None makes this century comprehensible in fundamental terms comparable to the Enlightenment and French Revolution of the 18th century or the industrial revolution and

imperialism of the 19th. Still, all three make significant contributions, on very different levels, toward explaining the United States and the twentieth century. That's no small accomplishment.

Wayne State College

Kent Blaser

THE DIALECT OF MODERNISM: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature.
by Michael North. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994.

This book is an engaging, extremely well documented account of how post-WWI modernism begins with a desire for collaboration between black and white writers which soon splits into two distinctly different varieties of modernism. North carefully examines how figures such as T. S. Elliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams saw African American culture and language as a kind of "transfusion" which could vitalize an American literary culture which had been made anemic by the standardized language and conventional values of English and European society. Black intellectuals and artists such as Alain Locke, Claude McKay, and Jean Toomer initially welcomed this interest in black language and culture, sensing it would finally bring both out of the obscurity in which they had previously languished. As Locke observed in *The New Negro*, such a "common effort" promised to "discover and release the national spirit" in literature, resulting in a renaissance for American culture.

North examines in a lucid, convincing way why this "alliance of black and white writers against the academy" (146) soon broke down, producing on the one hand a modernism practiced by white writers which was promised upon a desire to use black vernacular to create fresh literary forms and, on the other hand, a black modernism centered in a deep suspicion of dialect writing and a desire to find alternatives to it. North explains this split in a number of ways. First of all, many white experimental writers of the period like Pound were ambivalent about black culture or like Eliot, essentially hostile to it. Secondly, white writers such as Carl Van Vechten, despite their good intentions, appropriated black folk materials while having only a superficial understanding of them and, as a result, trivialized them, thus reducing them to timeworn stereotypes which were anathema for twentieth-century blacks. Finally, North argues that the racial climate of the post-World War I period was especially restrictive, producing a "fundamental asymmetry" (150) between the races which made serious contact between blacks and whites all but impossible.

Concretizing these ideas, North focuses sharply on three important African American writers of the period, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Zora Neale Hurston, carefully describing how each got caught between the conflicting demands of these two modernisms and how this resulted in creating substantial personal and literary problems for each. North sees McKay as caught in a "trap from which he was never quite to emerge" (102) because his dialect poetry led him to a soft and debilitating romanticism rooted in the stereotypes of the plantation and minstrel traditions while his novels written in standard English reduced him to a condition of *anomie* which ultimately silenced him as a writer. North presents Toomer in a similar way, arguing that his much-discussed denial of blackness and his lapsing into literary silence after the publication of *Cane* were triggered by the fact that he could not be nourished by either modernism. When he wrote fiction and poetry rooted in black folk speech, he became uncomfortable with the label of a "negro writer" who, in Waldo Frank's words, would "do . . . his Negro stuff" (164). Yet when he wrote non-dialect

prose he felt himself personally erased as a modernist writer dispossessed of a cultural roots and a distinctive voice.

North finally argues that Hurston, like McKay and Toomer, was led astray by a number of white patrons who pushed her in two equally unproductive directions. Charlotte Osgood Mason directed her to write stereotypically in the tradition of black dialect literature while British aristocrat Nancy Cunard brought her to leftist politics which had little to do with her most deeply felt experiences as an African American woman. Caught in this trap, Hurston, like McKay and Toomer, was never able to develop her full literary potential and died in obscurity.

The considerably strengths and unfortunate weaknesses of North's book are not hard to discern. He brilliantly describes the classic problems which white intellectuals and a crudely racist society posed for black writers in the twenties and thirties and he does a very good job of assessing the literary damage caused by these influences. But he has all too little say about how literary masterpieces such as *Cane* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as well as important novels like *Banana Bottom* and *Home to Harlem*, for the most part, transcended their cultural context and became landmarks in African American literary tradition. Very late in the book North mentions that the "genius" (194) of Hurston, McKay, and Toomer enabled them to "work past" the dilemmas created by the white avant-garde but, curiously, he fails to develop this critically important point.

The reader is therefore left strangely unsatisfied by this massively researched, sometimes brilliant, but finally incomplete study. Perhaps the real problem can be traced to the book's single-minded methodology. Using New Historicist tools in an altogether skillful way, North can focus sharply on the literary dilemmas faced by black writers in the racially turbulent and repressive decades following World War I in America. But he needs to employ subtler, more penetrating methodologies to go beyond this and examine how three important African American writers could, to varying degrees, effectively cope with these problems and produce fiction of lasting importance.

This broadened critical perspective also would have led North to a more nuanced understanding of how black and white writers interacted with each other during this period. Given the 20/20 hindsight of late twentieth-century America, one can certainly find much to lament about what North calls the "overt racism of writers like Conrad, Stein, Eliot and Williams" (195) and one could surely agree that some of their influence on black writing was clearly harmful. But it is also true that such writers were not unremittingly negative influences and that in many important ways they exerted an extremely beneficial influence on black writing. Richard Wright learned much about the craft of fiction from Conrad and Stein, as well as culturally conservative writers like James and Dostoevski whose political ideas he clearly rejected. And Ralph Ellison was correct in noting throughout his career that Eliot was one of his most important literary "ancestors," a writer who helped to empower him not only by inspiring him to turn from music to literature but also showed him how to use a variety of folk materials, including jazz and black vernacular language, to become a writer who could explore the full range of African American experience in modernistic ways which indeed fulfilled Alain Locke's hopes for meaningful cross-fertilization of black and white American art.

Canisius College

Robert Butler

RE-IMAGINING THE MODERN AMERICAN WEST: A Century of Fiction, History, and Art. By Richard W. Etulain. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1996.

We have witnessed a decade-long debate about how western history should be written, and we inherit a shelfful of titles by authors proposing to “re-invent,” “re-mythologize,” and “re-vision” the American West, each of them understanding the West in different ways. In *Re-Imagining the Modern American West*, Richard Etulain surveys the currents of the “old” and the “new” in history, fiction, and art. It is a daunting undertaking. Although he says he has written a nontheoretical study, Etulain furnishes some useful ideas for handling the intellectual currents of the ongoing dialogue.

The first section on the Pioneer West covers the most recognizable writers and artists—Owen Wister, Frederick Remington, James Fenimore Cooper, Francis Parkman, George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, Alfred Jacob Miller. But the point at which frontier or pioneer west gives way to writers of the “regional west” is more difficult to define. Etulain uses H. G. Meriam’s idea of “inworked substance” to define the transition to regional writing, and he means the point where writers describe the “interplay over time between people and the environment” (83). Thus, Mary Hallock Foote is a frontier writer, but Mary Austin and Willa Cather are regionalists. Some readers may find that line too finely drawn.

Etulain’s ideas are most interesting in the last section, where he writes about “post-regional” fiction, history, and art. If regionalists are writers who give overriding importance to landscape and to the imprint of landscape on human life, then post-regionalists are writers for whom other issues—gender and race and ethnicity—are imposed upon landscape and sometimes take precedence. The question to be addressed is whether a “post-regional” novel is still “western.” In the post-regional western novel, such distinctions are less secure than they seemed fifty years ago. According to Etulain, “post-regional literature has dramatically broken away from major trends in western fiction before 1950” (159). Complexity and change join the west to America’s other regional literatures, and to national traditions. This is not an escape from judgment; on the contrary, it is a wise reading of western culture and expression.

The scope of Etulain’s book is so large that there are bound to be readers who will take exception to some parts of it. I applaud the author’s narrative that includes painting and photography along with history and fiction, even as I find it difficult to understand why there are only a spare three paragraphs devoted to Mary Austin. That reservation aside, Etulain’s work is a good and useful guide through a huge display of western writing. Most readers will find him an astute scholar and a fair man.

Brooklyn College-CUNY

Lillian Schlissel

CULTURE OF INTOLERANCE: Chauvinism, Class and Racism in the United States. By Mark Nathan Cohen. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1998.

It seemed like a good thing to do. I was grounded in Los Angeles due to this past summer’s pilot strike against Northwest Airlines and, despite having lived in Southern California for the better part of a decade, I had never been there. And, indeed, what I saw at the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance helped me get a handle on why I was so disappointed with anthropologist Mark Nathan Cohen’s *Culture of Intolerance*.

Now don’t get me wrong, about either the Museum or Cohen’s book. The Museum, which tells the tragic story of the Holocaust and documents the costs and consequences of

racism and anti-Semitism, makes for a provocative, if deliberately partisan and unsettling, educational experience. Cohen's book, to its credit, shares many of these qualities and concerns. Born out of Cohen's disgust with Herrnstein and Murray's infamous attempt to demonstrate that genetic differences account for inequality and immobility in the U.S., *Culture of Intolerance* argues that human difference and, by extension, social inequality are not rooted in biology but rather constructed in "culture" conceived in the broadest, anthropological sense. Cohen's larger goal is to suggest that *The Bell Curve* represents just one very vulgar and extremist expression of deeply rooted American problems with inequality and cultural diversity. The bulk of Cohen's book, then, is devoted to exposing and (to use a word he wouldn't) deconstructing the belief systems that Cohen believes perpetuate and in fact legitimate many social problems in the U.S. Like the Museum, Cohen is passionate about these important issues, and has produced a volume that invites a general audience to think about them in an intelligent, critical manner. But as much as we need scholarly work that is politically engaged and publicly accessible, I am not convinced that Cohen's conception of social science as a core of timeless knowledge captures the complexities of the phenomena he addresses or offers an adequate rebuttal to the conservative approaches he rightly rejects.

At a very basic level, Cohen systematically conflates forms of inequality based upon class and the economy with those that originate in race and racism. (Not to mention that such a fundamental source of inequality as gender is almost nonexistent or that empirical support is absent altogether). More fundamentally, Cohen never really articulates why or for whom these various forms of inequality are harmful. The problem here is not just that there are different causes and costs associated with different forms of inequality. The deeper problem is that Cohen's adamant cultural relativism would seem to leave little room for the strident condemnations of inequality, racism, and other forms of "chauvinism" that punctuate the entire analysis. It is not that relativists cannot make normative claims; indeed, much of contemporary critical theory—such as Michael Walzer's aptly titled *On Toleration* (1997)—is directed towards such ends. But Cohen is oblivious to this work and its inherent complications, and does little to work through them himself.

Even if we grant the general dilemma posed by inequality, it is by no means clear that intolerance is the sole source of the problem—or, conversely, that increased tolerance holds the key to social transformation. More than a few social scientists would certainly insist that indifference and inattention must also be taken into account. Yet Cohen's undifferentiated conception of culture makes it difficult to even articulate the various social structures and institutions here in effect.

Cohen is also intent on defending cultural difference and diversity. This impulse is important and appropriate, and these passages contain some of Cohen's most thought-provoking discussions and examples. But they are not necessarily consistent with his overarching critique of inequality and intolerance. For one thing, this move requires a shift away from the passive language of tolerance to the active language of recognition *a la* Charles Taylor's well-known lecture on the politics of recognition. Secondly, there is the unfortunate fact that diversity has been inextricably linked with inequality throughout American history. The real challenge is to figure out how—or if—meaningful social differences can be defended and preserved without perpetuating social inequalities.

Culture of Intolerance offers a number of good and important points but, taken as a whole, fails to ground them empirically or situate them in a satisfactory theoretical frame. This does not make it a bad book; but neither does it make a good piece of social science. For a work that purports to synthesize "basic," "common" and "uncontroversial" scholarly

knowledge, this result is particularly unfortunate for its net effect could be to perpetuate the false belief—held by those who need it most—that social science is little more than watered-down political rhetoric or second-rate social philanthropy. If the philosophers, politicians, and popularizers do it better, what is left for social scientists—however well-intended and ultimately correct they may be?

University of Minnesota

Douglas Hartmann

CITY CODES: Reading the Modern Urban Novel. By Hana Wirth-Nesher. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

THE NATURALISTIC INNER-CITY NOVEL IN AMERICA: Encounters With the Fat Man. By James R. Giles. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press. 1995.

Cities are spaces where the public and private intersect, often complexly. They are also the place where one encounters the Other. These complementary ideas are the respective groundings for two fine studies of big city novels that build on the foundations of naturalism and modernism to appreciate the sometimes disruptive force of the postmodern.

Hana Wirth-Nesher is interested in the different discourses that result when setting (as opposed to the more usual character, plot, and theme) becomes a novel's principal motivator. Viewpoints in such settings are obvious signals of contrast. At the beginning Wirth-Nesher establishes her case by analogy, letting readers see the difference between two urban portraits (Hopper's *Room in Brooklyn* and Manet's *The Balcony*) and between two narrative perspectives (Fitzgerald's contrast in *The Crack Up* of New York seen from the Plaza rooftop in the 1920s to the view from the Empire State Building in the 1930s). *City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel* then offers detailed explications of nine major texts (from 1900 to 1972) that emphasize the urban environment differently, centering on the natural, the built, the human, and the verbal. Wirth-Nesher's roster is impressive and each author's contribution is distinctive. Singer and Oz show people disrupted by the urban; Dreiser offers characters constructed by it. Ellison laments the invisibility of self, while James projects it eagerly into new terrain, anticipating Henry Roth's tactic in *Call it Sleep*. Readerly expectations are reversed by Joyce and Woolf, but while *Dubliners* and the *Portrait* find closure in paralysis *Mrs. Dalloway* discovers great enablement in the fact that life can be homier outside the home. Throughout, attention to setting yields exceptionally fresh readings, a reminder that critical dispositions as well as writing styles are matters for development.

That American literary naturalism is still developing even through postmodern times is evident in James R. Giles's exceptionally insightful study. The "fat man" of his subtitle is the minor character encountered famously in the 1893 version of Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, where urban deprivation is fascinating but so repellent that the implied narrator holds the spectacle at arm's length. After presenting one of the best reviews on record of both naturalism's achievements and criticism's response, Giles proceeds with readings of six novels not customarily studied in the same view: *Jews without Money*, *Native Son*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, *City of Night*, and *them*. As he makes his way through them, Giles compares and contrasts these works in a way that shows a growing appreciation of otherness among important American novelists. Michael Gold's characters, for example, are victims of external forces, and hence are easily saved;

Richard Wright's *Bigger* Thomas, however, is locked within a masturbatory prison that is far less easily escaped. With Nelson Algren and Hubert Selby the reader meets characters completely beyond redemption. For people such as these there is no social reformation, but especially for Selby that is not the point; what matters is that the writer now takes the reader inside the experience with no "reassuring distance." A reading of John Rechy's work reveals the humanness of what is otherwise a repressed (and hence unarticulated) subculture, while Joyce Carol Oates actively pursues strategies for giving voice to the voiceless.

Wirth-Nesher's novels are strongly canonical. Giles's are not. But both scholars take a new approach to urban fiction that extends readers' limits of understanding. Character, plot, and theme are interests that lend themselves too easily to intentional misreadings—readings that flatter the critic's presuppositions and reinforce what readers think they already know. Setting resists this, and Wirth-Nesher's attention to it allows classics such as *The Ambassadors* and *Invisible Man* to be understood in new ways. Giles's expansion of the canon is more radical, but is just as necessary for the urban novel's comprehension. Together, *City Codes* and *The Naturalistic Inner-City Novel in America* are essential reading for those who wish to know how such fiction contributes to cultural awareness.

University of Northern Iowa
Jerome Klinkowitz

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY CLUB: Its Origins and Development. By James M. Mayo. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. 1998.

In *The American Country Club* James M. Mayo provides a very useful overview of the history of the American country club from a point of view that is somewhere between that of a historian of architecture and that of an enlightened club manager. Synthesizing material from the histories of many individual clubs and from trade journals with selected materials from social and architectural history, Mayo covers a great deal of ground. He traces the origins of the American country club to the all-male clubs that Americans built on English models after the mid-nineteenth century, to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century athletic clubs, to family-based nineteenth-century summer resorts, to the late nineteenth-century enthusiasm for tennis and then for golf; and to suburbanization. In the twentieth century, he argues, country clubs have been shaped by such forces as the intensification of suburbanization, the rise of the automobile, the increase in wealth and leisure, the women's movement, and the civil rights movement, as filtered through the markets for suburban residential properties and for the revenues essential to club operation. The Great Depression cut club membership by as much as 78%, according to one contemporary source that Mayo cites, but country clubs survived depression and the rationing of wartime and have flourished since the 1950s.

Mayo acknowledges and quotes key sources for all the objections that social critics have raised against city and country clubs: that they are mere sites for conspicuous consumption; that they have consistently discriminated against Jews and African-Americans; that they consign women to subordinate places; that they provide opportunities for the consolidation of power; that they serve as essential venues for the precise definition of social status in the U. S.; that they utilize outdated architectural styles; that they abuse the environment. He suggests that many clubs are now well along in accommodating women and in overcoming their traditions of discrimination on religious and racial grounds. He argues that the architectural and environmental criticisms have been overstated. He notes that for many members, the country club simply facilitates the combination of resources

necessary to procure attractive amenities for those whose household budgets cannot sustain individual recreational facilities on the grand scale. And he urges that in debating criticisms relating to status and power we keep in mind the realities of the American political economy.

It is a real achievement to put all this between the covers of a brief and readable book: criticisms are more appropriately phrased as suggestions for future research that will build on this useful survey. Historians of business and of nonprofit organizations will want to know more about the incorporation and tax status of country clubs. Federal tax laws treat many social clubs as mutual benefit organizations that do not “distribute” profits and thus are not subject to corporate income tax. Does this fact—or do possible changes in state and local tax treatment—account for some of the changes in corporate organization that Mayo notes, and for other changes as well? Mayo describes some regional variations in leisure and sporting activities and in architectural styles: are there other regional variations as well? He quotes accounts that place the clubs of Kansas City and other places into a single status hierarchy, but does not explore the possibility that country clubs fit into distinct or even competing hierarchies. He notes that city clubs often celebrate cultural achievement in part by maintaining libraries and art collections, but that country clubs have never included libraries: does this imply broader changes in American culture, or simply a proliferation of special-purpose organizations? Much more might be done with changing uses of leisure, with the history of architecture and landscape, and with questions about race, class, and gender. And surely it is not best practice to use “elite” as a noun meaning “wealthy person”. Future scholars have much to do, and many reasons to thank Mayo for this introductory study.

Case Western Reserve University

David C. Hammack

THE WHITE SCOURGE: Mexicans, Blacks and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture.
By Neil Foley. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1997.

Neil Foley’s monograph weaves together a wide array of sources into a fascinating narrative that illuminates the construction and application of a racial hierarchy in the rich cotton growing lands of Central Texas. As the work makes abundantly clear, race and class relations in this area are immensely complex and do not fit into the traditional combinations of black-white, Anglo-Mexican and rich-poor interactions. In this locale we encounter a society in which “cultural elements of the South, the West, and Mexico have come together to form a unique borderlands culture” (2).

Standing atop this racial pyramid, racially and economically, were white farm owners (and white tenants who aspired to ownership) followed by Mexicans and African Americans who comprised the laboring base (as tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural workers). Foley’s tome examines the years between Reconstruction and the 1940s and reveals how these “races” interacted against an evolving economic backdrop. Many of Foley’s findings are as expected; individuals of the “dark” groups were primarily confined to the lowest occupational levels and provided little opportunity to move up. As family farms became less commercially viable, however, there is a surprising twist to this story. By the early 1900s “‘whiteness’ itself fissured along race and class lines” (5). This trend led to the creation of a new group of people in Central Texas—the “poor trash” whites.

In recent years scholars in the field of Mexican American history have examined how the “construction” of “whiteness” retarded opportunities for Spanish-surnamed men,

women and children (most notable among these works is Camille Guerin-Gonzalez's *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*). While pathbreaking in many respects, these studies have a crucial limitation; it appears as if almost all whites were invariably linked by their racial and economic status. Foley's research reveals that this is not necessarily the case. As economic conditions changed (and the role of corporate farming increased) farm owners often moved their black and white tenants off their properties and replaced them with Mexican (whom they perceived as more docile and willing to endure harsh conditions). This trend had a twofold impact on Central Texas society. First, movement into tenancy provided some Spanish-speakers with a chance to claim some level of "whiteness." Second, poor displaced whites began a descent down the social ladder. These individuals often wound up working as hired hands alongside "dirty" Mexicans and blacks. In the work's most powerful chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), Foley examines how "elect" whites directed the labors of these agricultural proletarians through Taylorism and the impact of these changes on the lives of women in the various racial groups.

The principal contribution of this work lies in the author's ability to capture and elucidate the complexity of race and class relations. The racial hierarchy may have been constructed to maintain white supremacy and unity, but economic realities altered this goal. Foley's work provides evidence to support the contention that racial construction is not static and that class interests, locale and economic circumstances are crucial variables in understanding how the ranking of individuals and groups in a social hierarchy change over time.

Texas Tech University

Jorge Iber

VICTIMS AND HEROES: Racial Violence in the African American Novel. By Jerry H. Bryant. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

Covering eighty-three novels by sixty-four writers, Bryant's *Victims and Heroes* examines the presence of racial violence in over 150 years of African-American novels. Bryant chronologically canvasses a combination of familiar voices (Douglass, Toomer, Wright, Ellison, Morrison) and novelists who have received scant critical attention (George Washington Lee, Waters Turpin, Sarah E. Wright, Joseph Nazel). The capacious breadth of coverage casts the study less in the conventions of theme-based critical works than in the manner of synthetic surveys like Robert Bone's now-dated *The Negro Novel in American* (1965) or Bernard Bell's *The Afro-American Novel and its Tradition* (1987). The ubiquity of racial violence in African-American novels is so jarring as to make one realize that Bryant's book is long overdue—especially when historians, such as Ronald Takaki and Herbert Shapiro, have ably addressed the topic much earlier.

Bryant is cogently alert to the double-edged nature of violence. It is not only the most visible marker of ongoing oppression, as the multiple literary instances of inter-racial whipping, lynching, torture and rioting attest, it is also a site of potential liberation and redemption, as framed, for example, in the "retaliatory or revolutionary" expressions of Black Power/Black Arts novelists. Where black writers unsurprisingly condemn white violence using an impressive range of artistic devices, they are more ambivalent about representing violent black counterresponses. Bryant's individual readings of novels are, in many cases, unified by his interest in coming to terms with this ambivalence.

Victims and Heroes will probably be less appealing to cover-to-cover readers, since similar points are driven home in novel after novel, than to those interested in the manner

in which violence is manifested in particular periods or texts, especially those not often studied. Bryant rewards such readers with clear prose, as well as a helpful table of contents, in-depth endnotes, a fine index, and a good instinct for allowing individual discussions to stand on their own. Bryant's depth of knowledge and level of detail reflect, as he acknowledges, a writer who has lived with the material for a very long time. The very few omissions—George Wylie Henderson's *Jule* and Curtis Lucus' *The Flour is Dusty* come to mind—are countered by an awareness of writers as obscure as Otis Shackelford and Carl Offord.

I bring up one criticism. Where novels are discussed rather than mentioned in passing, I would have liked some distinctions drawn about their relative merits, which position them as more than formal artifacts from which details and themes about violence are to be drawn. The pages devoted, for example, to Lee's *River George* or Walter White's *The Fire in the Flint* allow for some important respective insights about lynching. But I could not help wishing that Bryant would address, or at least acknowledge, the differences—in the lyrical quality, compositional sophistication, subtlety of craft, general critical regard—between such minor novels and works like *Native Son*, *Invisible Man*, or *Song of Solomon*.

Ultimately the book's most important contribution may be recognized by a point that is everywhere obvious, if never directly stated. Where numerous other critics have recognized the ways in which freedom and literacy are inscribed many times over as core values of the African-American literary tradition, *Victims and Heroes* establishes racial violence as a more conflicted, but no less pervasive trope in this same tradition.

Kansas State University

Lawrence Rodgers

INDIVIDUALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS: Appropriations of Emerson, 1880-1950.
By Charles E. Mitchell. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1997.

Charles Mitchell argues that between 1880 and 1950, cultural critics made a variety of appropriations of Emerson's thought and work, and that these readings became ways of talking about the complexities of individualism as a philosophy in the United States. Emerson became a trope for a trope, his work an entry into thinking about one of the thornier problems of American culture. He still performs that function for us, and Mitchell tells us that his work is in dialogue with that of contemporary scholars such as David Marr, Cornell West, and James Kloppenberg. All of these have engaged the complex topic of individualism using Emerson—or those whom Mitchell claims lived under Emerson's influence—as a focusing lens.

Mitchell's particular take is that individualism need not be seen as necessarily isolating, reductionistic, or anti-social. When married to a pragmatism that values pluralism, both individual and cultural, the Emersonian promise of liberation, creativity, and self-realization is at the heart of the democratic ethos. In this, Mitchell is directly at odds with commentators past and present who have claimed individualism to be the death of community, creativity, and humane culture. He is at his best in his chapters on William James and W. E. B. Du Bois—and to a lesser extent, his chapter on the poet William Carlos Williams—as he shows the potential of one strain of the tradition spawned by Emerson to inspire respect for diversity.

Mitchell believes that we need not think of an intellectual tradition as something linear and continuous. It is more like a beam of light refracted through a number of prisms. Making sense of a tradition such as that exemplified by Emerson should be less a matter

of tracing lineal descent of ideas from one bearer of the torch to the next, and more a matter of seeing the variety of paths, refractions, and reflections produced by the original beam of light. Du Bois, for example, inherits his Emerson through James, and in so doing, builds on James building on Emerson, rather than on Emerson directly. One wonders with Williams, however, how much sense it makes to talk of him as appropriating Emerson when he seems to have read Emerson hardly at all. At times like these, Emerson as trope seems almost to disappear, and the theme of individualism in American life—the metaphor behind the metaphor—becomes the driving impetus of the book.

Finally, Mitchell ends up caught between a significant commentary on the possibilities and problems of American individualism (in its various forms), and a tracing of Emersonian family lines (in a philosophical sense) from 1880 to 1950. To the extent that this book engages us in thinking about the ways in which individualism and pragmatism can exist synergistically as a democratic ethos, it succeeds admirably. To the extent that it purports to add to our knowledge of an Emersonian tradition in America, it succeeds less well. To be fair to the author, it finally seems that the latter is only a vehicle for talking about the former, adopted as a necessary stratagem in a world where the monographic study still reigns. Who can blame Professor Mitchell, an assistant professor of American Studies at Elmira College, for bowing to the demands of academic life? Nevertheless, the result is a work split between the exigencies of moral purpose and narrow scholarly elaboration.

Miami University

Mary Kupiec Cayton

THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE: Women, Work, and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880-1929. By Dee Garceau. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1997.

As historians of women continue to explore the nuances of gender and family life in the American West, western myths and stereotypes continue to be challenged, if not discarded. Dee Garceau, assistant professor of history at Rhodes College, focuses her spotlight on the women of Sweetwater County, Wyoming, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Utilizing a plethora of sources such as interviews, newspapers, correspondence, census data, folk songs, and memoirs, Garceau attempts to construct women's lives and experiences amid the myths and realities of western gender relations.

The book offers a comparison of the ranching and mining environments in southwestern Wyoming and shows how white middle class women (ranching) and working-class immigrant women (mining) adapted their gender roles to ensure survival and success in both the economic and social arenas of the family. Garceau states that for both groups, this adaptation "expanded women's work roles and increased their domestic authority" while demanding that individual achievement and personal desires take second place to group cohesion and cooperation (1). In both milieus, "the necessity for group cooperation mediated the liberalizing effects of such changes" (2). Here, she argues, the similarity of the womens' experience ends.

Highlighting differences in class and ethnicity between the native-born (ranch) and European-born (town) women, Garceau organizes chapters around issues concerning family networks, courtship, marriage, and work to describe the choices, responsibilities, and constraints inherent in the paradox of western gender relations. For example, the reader is told that although immigrant women experienced the disruptive effects of long separations and relocation, these also afforded them the opportunity to "renegotiate the

balance of power with their husbands" once they arrived in Wyoming (74). Likewise, ranching women expanded gender parameters when participating in male-dominated work settings but saw this gendered boundary crossing only as "service to family," not as a challenge to male-dominated work (89). Additionally, ranch women were almost exclusively barred from working with beef cattle, thus maintaining the gendered mystique of the "cowboy" as a male preserve.

One of the most interesting chapters examines the myth of the single woman homesteader as the rural "New Woman," a counterpart to the urban, independent "New Woman." Garceau challenges this myth by stating that Sweetwater County women who asserted their right to homestead often did so with the intent of adding to family property, not as a move to independence or autonomy from family responsibilities.

Although *The Important Things in Life* provides insights and some interesting comparisons of mining women and ranching women, the book is limited by its inability to place these women in the larger context of American women's history or even western women's history. Secondary sources that would have helped create a larger context for the work are noticeably absent in most chapters. For some interpretations, the author relies exclusively on a single primary source that, although interesting and in some cases provocative, provides minimal support for the analysis. In view of the extensive amount of research in western women's history, immigrant women's history and family history over the last twenty years, the lack of secondary sources and a broader context is puzzling.

In summary, Garceau does provide the reader with important threads of information on western women's lives. She expands the research on Wyoming women, immigrant women, mining women, and ranching women. Like many of her colleagues in western women's history, Garceau challenges the myths of the "Old West" and "[t]he assumption that frontier conditions liberated women because they disrupted gender roles" (159). This book further reinforces the importance of family and ethnic networks and gender support systems in women's lives, while demonstrating an alternative to the western mystique of rugged individualism.

Avila College

Carol K. Coburn

NISEI/SANSEI: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics. By Jere Takahashi. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1997.

In previous books on Japanese American history and culture, the political consciousness and strategies of the group have appeared to be simple, sometimes to the point of nonexistence. The Japanese Association of America, the most important organization of the Issei generation, has been viewed as little more than an arm of the government in Tokyo, establishing Japanese language schools, issuing re-entry permits to the U. S., and performing other quasi-consular functions of surveillance and control. The Nisei's Japanese American Citizens League has been treated dismissively by post-sixties scholars for its acquiescence in the internment and its robust Americanism after the Pacific War. Even the more highly politicized Sansei have often been absorbed into the larger protest movements of the era of Civil Rights and the Vietnam War.

Jere Takahashi's *Nisei/Sansei* gives Japanese American politics its due, placing the political styles of the first three generations in their historical context, analyzing the conditions that restricted or enabled political expression, and elaborating these styles and conditions through interviews with politically involved members of the second and third

generations. What emerges is less a radically new view of the group's political history than a careful explication of the continuities and reformulations that have occurred over the past century, the "complex process where intragenerational conflict and intergenerational collaboration have arisen in response to changing historical circumstances"(205).

The Issei bequeathed to the second generation a "defensive politics" born of the fact that they were permanently ineligible to citizenship and so lacked the right to vote, and of the pressure of the exclusion movement on the west coast of the United States. Their quiet use of selective litigation (as in the 1922 Ozawa naturalization case) carried over into the JACL's confidence in and use of the legal system to achieve the rights of citizens.

Takahashi is most complete on Nisei political attitudes, rooting them throughout in shifting economic constraints and possibilities from the 1930s through the 1950s. The young Niseis' confinement to clerical and sales positions usually within the ethnic economy, underemployment for their educational levels, social segregation, and their ambivalent response to Japan's aggression in the thirties gave rise to a variety of political responses. At one extreme were those, like Kibe interviewee Ty Sasaki who rejected America. Schooled in Japan and then feeling a deep sense of alienation upon his return to the U. S., not accepted even by his second-generation peers, Sasaki became a pro-Japan "no-no boy" during his internment at Manzanar. At the other extreme were those young optimists who reacted to their marginalization by promoting the idea that the Nisei were well positioned to be a cultural bridge between the U. S. and Japan, to be interpreters of each society to the other. This position, which gained urgency among this group from the passage of the national Origins Act in 1924 (which excluded Japanese workers from the country), lost credibility from the mid-thirties following Japan's intensified imperialism in Asia.

These two points of view were eclipsed in both the short and long terms by the two positions whose ongoing opposition would form the framework of subsequent Japanese American politics: the conservative Americanism of the JACL and the Progressivism initially represented by the Japanese American Young Democrats. Takahashi details the reasons for the Citizens League's rise to prominence in the Japanese American community, and for the closing down of options for response as internment loomed. His generally sympathetic portrait of the organization minimizes the influence of "traditional" Japanese values and emphasizes the cogency of the Isseis' practical politics of accommodation as well as the Nisei leadership's desire for economic participation and the effects of racial prejudice in the formation of its nonpartisan position of "cooperation and conciliation"(62). The Progressives, taking their cue from thirties labor activism and New Deal ideology, in contrast to the JACL, spoke and worked for labor and racial equality and were quick to condemn Japanese militarism.

Under the stresses of war and internment these latter positions merged, the Progressives' "critical cooperation" gradually giving place to the JACL's policy of "constructive cooperation" with the internment program as the Citizens League, through the effective promotion of its ideas and the U.S. government's overt support, became the dominant voice of the Nisei. And since the camp experience destroyed the authority of the Issei, this was *the* voice of Japanese Americans. Takahashi's discussion of the various ways in which the government advanced the status of the JACL contributes to a more complete understanding of the ideological forces that have influenced the directions of Asian American (and, more generally, minority) politics. These assimilationist forces continued to shape the direction of Japanese American politics in the Cold War period as the group experienced economic advancement, and the League worked for equality initiatives such

as the (flawed) McCarran-Walter immigration law. However, Progressivism survived the war, retaining its commitment to collective solutions to community problems and to diversity, and in a small but significant way opened a political space for Sansei activism in the sixties and after.

The stories of Fred Ichiyama and Linda Miyano, in the most affecting interviews in the text, detail the high optimism and subsequent retrenchment of the Sanseis' moment of radicalization. While, as Takahashi notes, most of the third generation remained loyal to the dominant "reform and gradualism" political style, a significant number of the young, inspired by the Black Power movement and intoxicated with the possibility of Third World solidarity, brought about lasting changes in the politics and sense of identity of Japanese American communities. Working through organizations such as the Asian American Political Alliance, their efforts to achieve both institutional access and an effective community-based politics, as well as to advance pan-Asian understanding and cooperation, resulted in the establishment of ethnic organizations and programs (such as Asian American Studies courses and departments in universities across the nation), and a recovery of the history and identity of the Japanese in the U. S. In the wake of these achievements, Ichiyama and Miyano retain their commitment to community control and an ethnic politics, Miyano the more confident that the Progressive political viewpoint will endure, even thrive.

One finds little to fault in *Nisei/Sansei*. Perhaps the political diversity has not been quite as "rich" as the author claims, having been coterminous with and legitimized by mainstream political passions and strategies. And the impact of the shifting relations between America and Japan, from being wary friends to bitter enemies to Cold War allies and economic rivals, remains uninvestigated. Yet Takahashi's balanced and comprehensive text enlarges our knowledge of continuities in the political thinking of the Japanese Americans in this century, the heavy constraints under which their politics matured, and the intragroup debates that occurred as they responded to an often hostile political and economic environment beyond their communities.

Temple University Japan

William J. Clark

BLACKFACE, WHITE NOISE: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot. By Michael Rogin. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1996.

Michael Rogin's provocative *Blackface, White Noise* is an important, challenging addition to the ever-growing literature on Black-Jewish relations, and a welcome addition to a more recent spate of studies focusing on blackface minstrelsy. Rogin's study focuses largely on what he calls the "racial masquerade" or "racial cross-dressing" within early and classical Hollywood cinema with a nod to more recent American films still working in racialized and racist modes. Even more specifically, his interest lies in the use of blackface by Jewish performers and filmmakers. Ranging across both the predictable cinematic examples, especially *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and other films with and about Al Jolson, and more forgotten films and figures, such as Eddie Cantor, once among the most important Hollywood stars, Rogin draws convincing connections between troubling, long-standing American cultural conundrums revolving around race and racism and their appearance in mainstream popular entertainment.

Rogin's basic thesis is a now-accepted, or at least acceptable, one in historical cultural studies: that white ethnics entered the American mainstream by disavowing ties to

racialized others, and that the American mainstream, the Melting Pot, could accept white ethnics only at the expense, especially, of African Americans (Cf. David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness*). Jews have long occupied a kind of liminal position as a group that is at once religious, ethnic and racial—acceptable or troubling depending on social and historical context. Rogin's point is that Jews both identified with and disavowed connections to America's most troubling Other: Blacks. Thus Jews have both expressed a solidarity with African Americans and have participated in the racialized Othering of African Americans, and the arena where this is expressed both overtly and more covertly is the Hollywood cinema, the special province of American Jews.

In the contemporary era, few deny the racist roots of blackface entertainment and Rogin's study should certainly put to rest any doubts about the essentially exclusionary and harmful effects of that mode. In its day, of course, blackface was not always or even often associated with racism. It was an accepted convention of both the late 19th and early 20th century, so much so that even Black entertainers would apply the burnt cork to "black up." To some performers it may have appeared as an act of solidarity, a homage to Black entertainers denied the kind of attention the white performer enjoyed. Thus Fred Astaire's dazzling, but troubling number "Bojangles of Harlem" in *Swing Time* (1936) or Bing Crosby's blackface number in *Holiday Inn* (1942). Rogin will have none of that. There is little to praise in blackface and much to condemn: earlier critics of blackface "dwell insufficiently both on the exclusion of actual African Americans from their own representations and on the grotesque, demeaning animalistic blackface mask" (37). And unlike earlier analysts, Rogin concentrates on the particular affinity, so to speak, that Jewish entertainers held for blackface. Jolson and Cantor, George Jessel and George Burns, Sophie Tucker and Fanny Brice; and in music, the compositions of Irving Berlin and George Gershwin (strangely forgetting Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II). Furthermore, Rogin shows that a kind of "blackface" retained its power in Hollywood long after actual burnt cork was no longer used, in the performances of Blacks in Hollywood films of the 30s and 40s which amounted to a kind of figurative blackface as they took on roles directly out of the minstrel tradition of the 19th century.

Rogin's most provocative and compelling insight revolves around the contention that Hollywood experienced a number of transformative moments in its history. These are "moments that combine box office success, critical recognition of revolutionary significance, formal innovations, and shifts in the cinematic mode of production," and that such moments "all organized themselves around the surplus symbolic value of blacks, the power to make African Americans represent something beside themselves" (14). For Rogin these moments revolve around the release of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1903), *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939). There is no doubt about the foundational importance of the last three mentioned films and certainly *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, along with Edwin S. Porter's other films of that immediate period, *The Great Train Robbery* and *The Life of An American Fireman* went a good distance to establishing the primacy of the narrative tradition of commercial cinema. Clearly, it is more than coincidental that these films revolve around race in both poignant and troubling manners. Is it a coincidence, however, that the films were released in 12-year increments? I have no answer to that question, and, moreover, it seems to me that similarly momentous events in Hollywood's history do not seem to occur in subsequent dozens of years. Thus, Rogin's strongest arguments are found in the sections of the book examining Hollywood's efforts in the period 1915-1930 to organize itself as an industry charged with delivering American ideals to newly Americanized citizens.

Certainly his strongest chapter is the one from which the book itself derives its title, "Blackface, White Noise." Originally published in *Critical Inquiry* (18 spring 1992), this essay is the most heavily footnoted and the most thoroughly convincing. It is the definitive reading of *The Jazz Singer* through the lens of race and ethnicity, though it would be interesting to juxtapose this essay with Krin Gabbard's psychoanalytic take on the film in his simultaneously published *Jammin' at the Margins: Jazz and the American Cinema* (University of Chicago Press). The Jewish dimensions of blackface entertainment and the stake of the emerging Jewish investment in Hollywood come together in Rogin's reading of one of the most influential films in Hollywood's history.

If there is perhaps more preliminary material than the book needs in the first three chapters, the remaining sections of the book read blackface and minstrelsy as far more pervasive in Hollywood's far from-proud record on race. Rogin's book essentially concludes in the immediate postwar era, though he mentions in passing more recent films like *Made in America*, *Corinna, Corinna* and *Forrest Gump* as continuing a race-based blackface tradition. One wonders what Rogin's take would be on more contemporary films which have achieved blockbuster status in which race is virtually eliminated like *Star Wars* (its sequels notwithstanding), *ET*, and *Titanic* in which the absence of African Americans is as striking as their absence in classical Hollywood? For what Rogin fails to remember is that, despite the perniciousness of blackface entertainment and minstrelsy-derived stereotypes on screen, for the most part as far as classic Hollywood was concerned, America was white. Not Jewish, not Black, certainly not Native and Latino, everyone who was anyone was white. Have things changed?

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

David Desser

MAX LERNER: *Pilgrim in the Promised Land*. By Sanford Lakoff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1998.

YOUNG SIDNEY HOOK: *Marxist and Pragmatist*. By Christopher Phelps. Ithaca London: Cornell University Press. 1997.

As an anti-Stalinist radical in 1939, Sidney Hook wrote a highly critical essay on the Popular Front. The essay, one of Hook's last pieces of radical writing, used Max Lerner's *It is Later Than You Think* to expose the theoretical and political weaknesses of the Popular Front. Twenty years later Hook and Lerner were part of the liberal anti-Communist milieu of the 1950s. In another twenty odd years the two would be supporting Ronald Reagan.

If there is a commonality about where Hook and Lerner ended, there were clear differences in where they started. In *Young Sidney Hook: Marxist and Pragmatist*, Christopher Phelps makes a major contribution to our understanding of Hook and the American Marxist tradition with his extremely insightful analysis of Hook's often brilliant attempt to fuse Marxism and pragmatism. Phelps argues against those critics who have seen Hook's pragmatism as the cause of his desertion of Marxism and radical left politics: "he had . . . drawn on pragmatism . . . defending the revolutionary socialist tradition of action, organization, and workers' control as superior to both social democratic and Stalinist varieties of fatalism." Phelps believes that Hook's interpretation of an activist pragmatism was central to his efforts to develop a non-mechanistic Marxist philosophy of "social action." Through a careful analysis of Hook's writings and his political engagements in the 1920s and early 1930s Phelps is able to show how Hook's synthesis of pragmatism and Marxism provided him with the intellectual framework for radical

political activity. Although Hook's political activism would decline in the late 1930s, Phelps demonstrates that Hook played an important role in uniting the American Workers Party and the Trotskyist Communist League of America in 1934, and, later, in bringing the Trotskyists into the Socialist Party in 1936.

I believe that Phelps is correct in stressing Hook's radical activism. But, whereas Phelps apparently believes the American Workers Party/Trotskyist fusion was a positive move, and whereas he apparently blames the Socialist Party leadership entirely for the failure of Socialist Party/Trotskyist union, I am more skeptical of the benefits of the first fusion and see the expulsion of the Trotskyists from the Socialist Party as not necessarily justified, but as more complicated than the story Phelps tells. However, these are political judgments on the wisdom of Hook's choices, not arguments against Phelps's stress on Hook's radical activism.

Phelps focuses his work on the early Sidney Hook, but he does discuss his later Cold War liberalism and eventual support of Reagan. He locates Hook's turn away from revolutionary socialism not in his pragmatism, but in how Hook chose to meet the crisis for radicals in the late thirties. With the full revelations of the nature of Stalinism, with the rise of fascism abroad, and with setbacks for labor in 1938, it became harder to maintain revolutionary socialist hopes. In this milieu of dashed hopes, Phelps argues, Hook's anti-Stalinism swallowed up his revolutionary socialism. Although there remains work to be done on the "older" Sidney Hook, Phelps's explanation is more convincing than those analyses that would locate Hook's shift in his continued adherence to pragmatism.

Sanford Lakoff's *Max Lerner: Pilgrim in the Promised Land* is a full-scale biography of Lerner. Unlike Hook who left relatively few personal papers, Lerner left many, and Lakoff is as concerned with Lerner's personal pilgrimage as he is with his political pilgrimage. Politically, Lakoff traces Lerner's evolution from his Veblenist, quasi-Marxist writings of the 1920s and early 1930s to his Popular Front/New Deal liberalism of the late 1930s, and then to his emergence as a cold war liberal in the 1950s—and ultimately to his support for Reagan in the 1980s. Personally, Lakoff discusses his unsuccessful first marriage, his numerous early affairs, his more successful second marriage, his continued affairs, and ultimately his friendship with Hugh Hefner and his association with the *Playboy* dimension of the sexual revolution.

In accounting for Lerner's change from a critical left/liberal to a celebrator of American Civilization and supporter of the cold war, Lakoff places a great deal of emphasis on the opening up of American society—particularly the university—to second generation Jewish intellectuals in the post-World War II period. Undoubtedly Lerner believed that this change was symptomatic of a general opening up and democratizing of American society, and that belief goes a long way to explain the difference between the critical edge in Lerner's early writing and even in *It Is Later Than You Think* (1939) and the far more roseate view in his encyclopedia of celebration, *America as Civilization* (1957). While it is important to recognize that there were areas of positive change in post-World War II United States, it is also important to recognize that Lerner's success as a journalist and as a university teacher made such a self-referential person as Lerner a poor judge of the nature of post-war society. Lakoff's failure to stress adequately the analytical inadequacies resulting from Lerner's self-absorption results in a far too positive evaluation of Lerner's intellectual history. Lakoff's study is not uncritical, but in the end, he skirts what I believe is essential in understanding Lerner and his evolution: his tendency to ride with the intellectual tide and, at the same time, to avoid positions that risked completely cutting himself off from the seats of political power. Lerner's early Veblenist/Marxist reading of American society pointed him toward a radical break with liberal reform; yet

he made certain not to become too far removed from New Deal liberalism. He was a Popular Front supporter and a Russian sympathizer when they were strong currents in the liberal intellectual community, but he couched his support and sympathy in terms that protected him from accusations of being too uncritical in his commitments. During the war, he, along with much of the liberal community, was constantly frustrated by Roosevelt's foreign policy, but he took care to avoid a break with Roosevelt. He wavered between the ADA and the PCA in 1947 and between Truman and Wallace in 1948. One can't help but feel he was anxious to see which way the liberal winds were blowing. As the liberal intellectual community moved into the cold war camp in the 1950s, Lerner moved with it. And finally, as the trend within the intellectual community moved to conservatism and neo-conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s, Lerner kept pace, but always making certain he didn't divorce himself too far from liberal values. Even his Hugh Hefner-style sexual rebellion was the stylish rebellion of the trendy—not the risk-taking rebellion of the young, which Lerner continually put down. This desire to be *au courant* with intellectual trends, to be intellectually "advanced," but never to alienate anyone or anything (unless it was the student revolt of the 1960s—and here it appears as if his pique derived from being perceived as an old fogey), can be seen in his obsequious letters to intellectual friends and foes. At one point Lakoff notes this quality, but he does not tie it to the larger dimension of his pilgrimage. To do so would have added a more critical evaluation to what is a thoughtful and solid work. But it is a critical evaluation which, I believe, Lerner fully deserves.

Queens College

Frank Warren

THE TALKIES: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931. By Donald Crafton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1997.

Few historians are capable of addressing the full range of a subject's evolution. In *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931*, Donald Crafton discusses the technological, industrial, and cultural creation and impact of sound in motion pictures. His all-encompassing, multi-linear approach to one of the pivotal turning points in screen history makes this the seminal work in this field and one of the strongest volumes in Scribner's *History of the American Cinema* series.

Crafton argues in his introduction that "it is difficult to think of a more profound discrepancy between popular and academic discourses" in terms of the transition of motion pictures from silent to sound (3). Most Americans either accept the notion of crisis within the film industry as colorfully depicted in the classic film *Singin in the Rain* or they ascribe to the belief that *The Jazz Singer* instantly pushed silent films into obscurity. Crafton rejects both concepts. Instead, he emphasizes "the longevity—not the suddenness—of the transition to sound" (4).

The author does not utilize the business genius/pivotal star approach, which has remained the dominant organizational paradigm in the field and has recently been revisited in Scott Eyman's *The Speed of Sound*. Instead, the author emphasizes the multitude of players involved in the industry's acceptance of sound in film—the technicians and inventors, the studio heads and creative artists, the popular press and film critics and the motion picture audience. It is this complex approach that makes this volume groundbreaking.

After a brief introduction and a helpful chronology of the major cinematic events of the period 1926-1931, Crafton's volume is divided into three major sections. Section One,

“A New Era in Electrical Equipment,” is a detailed industrial and technological history of the medium’s gradual acceptance of sound. One of the author’s major arguments is that motion picture sound technology borrowed from many different electrical industries—telephone, radio, television, and recording. In a chapter entitled “The Big Hedge,” Crafton illustrates the industry’s reluctance to rush wholeheartedly into sound film production. Remakes, goat glands (silent films retrofilled with movie and sound effects), dual silent and sound versions of films, and part talkies all demonstrate that motion pictures mildly flirted with the idea of sound in film in the period 1926-1929. Companies were also dealing with a significant problem; the fact that the majority of theaters across the country were not wired for sound. Quasi-talkie films were therefore pragmatic; they could play in both sound-equipped and silent theaters.

Section Two is an artistic and technical examination of three seasons of filmmaking from 1928-1931. Crafton exquisitely manages to combine several major themes into a fascinating narrative. Foremost, he demonstrates the industry’s early exploitation and mismanagement of sound in film. Early audience reaction was spectacular but soon faded due to filmmakers’ overemphasis on sound and the growing effects of the Depression. This process culminated in the development of the “well-tempered soundtrack,” a maturing of filmmakers’ modulated use of the voice in film production. A second critically important concept is the examination of the major and minor studios’ use of sound in film. The diversity of company policies prove that there was not a unified approach to the new technology.

Section Three addresses Crafton’s concept of audienceship—“the interaction between active and discriminate moviegoers, the film production system and the external pressures affecting the dynamic” (443). His consideration of film spectatorship and historical documentation is important for those working in film studies.

The Talkies is not perfect. Crafton largely ignores the impact of sound upon independent black film production. But his thorough research, impeccable documentation, groundbreaking box office discoveries, well-crafted narrative, and ample illustrations create a volume which is as fascinating and complex as the period of film which it covers.

Gerald R. Butters, Jr.

HOLLYWOOD RENAISSANCE: The Cinema of Democracy in the Era of Ford, Capra, and Kazan. By Sam Girgus. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

The tumultuous time period between 1939 and 1966, an era of bloody war and intense ideological battles, also marked a period of renaissance within the Hollywood film industry argues Sam Girgus in his latest book. Girgus, a Professor of English at Vanderbilt University, believes that the great film directors of the Hollywood studio system—Frank Capra, John Ford, Howard Hawks, Elia Kazan, George Stevens, Jr. and Fred Zinnemann, made a series of films which he labels as “a cinema for democracy.”

These auteurs, he argues, worked during a time frame in which American ideals were threatened by anti-democratic forces and films such as *The Searchers*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *High Noon* and *On the Waterfront* helped Americans define values that were the core of the American experience. Girgus selected these particular directors, to the exclusion of others working in the same era, because they were “instrumental in creating a special period of artistic innovation in American cultural and film history” (177).

Girgus begins his book with a discussion of literary critic F. O. Matthiessen who saw in his 1930s study of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville,

Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman an American renaissance of literature. Using Matthiessen as a model, Girgus constructs another renaissance of democracy in Hollywood.

The Hollywood Renaissance begins in 1939 with the release of *Gone With the Wind*, a film “that represents the triumph of the classic Hollywood system,” and ends in 1966 because, the following year films “radically challenged many Hollywood conventions of cast, theme, and presentation to reconsider sexuality, violence, and family in America” (7).

The body of the book consists of individual chapters on each of the key directors. On Ford, Girgus writes a long, critical analysis of *The Searchers*, a film that has fascinated film theorists for decades. To Girgus the film is “Ford’s greatest single example of a cinema for democracy . . .” (55). Capra’s contribution to the renaissance is detailed through yet another revisiting of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Girgus argues that both films need to be reevaluated because they “dramatically contradict that notion of cinema as an art form that predetermines content and subject regarding women and gender.” The strong female characters in both films “challenge the assumption of the inherent bias of the cinema toward the demeaning display of women” (103).

To this reader Girgus’ concept of a Hollywood Renaissance in American culture based on a handful of films by a few directors is highly arbitrary. Whose view of American is represented on the screen? The fact that Capra had a few strong female characters in some of his films does not call into question the overriding historical evidence of the demeaning nature of the presentation of women in film during this era of a so-called Hollywood renaissance.

The book is interesting, even fascinating at times, but it requires a reader who completely buys into Girgus’ pronouncements of opinion. The directors selected, and especially the films chosen for analysis have been studied and re-studied so many times by so many film scholars that the book seems almost out-dated.

The time frame of this renaissance also strikes me as curious and capricious. From 1939 to 1966 was precisely the period of the most severe censorship in Hollywood. While Girgus never mentions censorship, his directors complained bitterly about it.

Girgus may believe, as many film scholars do, that the censorship system was not all that important. Fair enough. But he at least needs to acknowledge that it existed and make an argument for why it had little or no impact on the work of these directors.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Gregory D. Black

WRITING WOMEN’S COMMUNITIES: The Politics and Poetics of Contemporary Multi-Genre Anthologies. By Cynthia G. Franklin. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1997.

Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa’s 1981 anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, marked a signal event in U.S. feminist writing, and a challenge which academic “white”-identified theory has still (seventeen years later) only partially met. Drawing on their own identities as marginalized U.S. women of color, the contributors employ a variety of genres—including journal entries, letters, notes, transcribed conversations, essays, and poetry—both to expose their exclusion from previous definitions of womanhood and to create new forms of oppositional community. In *Writing Women’s Communities* Cynthia G. Franklin explores *This Bridge’s* ongoing significance, as well as its impact on the development of a “new literary movement.”

According to Franklin, the use of multiple genres destabilizes other identity-based boundaries; creates unified communities that acknowledge many (but not all) of the differences among marginalized women; critiques and provides alternatives to academic writing; and exposes readers to conflicting views on a single issue.

Franklin provides close readings of a number of multi-genre anthologies to underscore the paradoxical nature of identity politics: On the one hand, it allows previously excluded groups to create new forms of inclusionary communities; on the other hand, identity politics itself depends on exclusions. Consequently, “any practice of identity politics necessarily ends up excluding, marginalizing, or strategically stabilizing some aspect of identity that it purports to represent.”

Reading paired sets of anthologies, Franklin explores the various ways this paradox impacts community-building efforts. In Chapter Two she reads *This Bridge* in dialogue with *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras* to analyze the strategies marginalized women have developed to create cohesive, identity-based communities by defining themselves *against* dominant (“white,” middle-class, academic) communities which have excluded them. In Chapter Three she puts *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* in conversation with *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* to examine the ways marginalized women define themselves from within their larger, already marginalized communities. In Chapter Four Franklin reads *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writing by and about Asian American Women* and *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women’s Anthology* to explore the possibilities and limitations of creating nonassimilationist inclusionary communities that do not employ oppositional, exclusionary strategies.

In Chapter Five Franklin moves beyond an exclusive focus on U.S. writings to investigate the similarities and differences between U.S. and British working-class women’s community building. Reading *Calling Home: Working Class Women’s Writings* in dialogue with *The Common Thread: Writings by Working-Class Women* and *Charting the Journey: Writings by Black and Third World Women*, she demonstrates that apparent exclusions, such as those of Britain’s rigid class structure, can facilitate the development of inclusionary communities of marginalized women.

In the final chapter Franklin presents both a critique and an expansion of the identity politics described in the previous chapters. Charting the shift to a politics of location, she demonstrates the increasingly important roles nation and location play in more recent anthologies. Through an analysis of *The Very Inside: An Anthology of Writing by Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Women* and *Returning the Gift: Poetry and Prose from the First North American Native Writers’ Festival*, Franklin argues for the importance of developing “coalitional communities” that draw on yet go beyond identity-based politics to create new forms of volitional alliances that acknowledge without reifying identity categories such as color, class, sexuality, and gender.

The subject of *Writing Women’s Communities* is innovative and timely. These anthologies have played a crucial role in redefining academic, “white”-identified feminism. Yet as Franklin points out, scholars have not sufficiently examined the inner dynamics of the anthologies themselves. Thus her analysis performs an important service for other scholars. And although Franklin does not focus on pedagogical issues, throughout *Writing Women’s Communities* she reminds readers of the role identity politics and other identity-based issues continue to play in the classroom. These reminders underscore the political implications and the relevance of Franklin’s argument.

Eastern New Mexico University

AnaLouise Keating

BLACK CHANT: Languages of African-American Postmodernism. By Aldon Lynn Nielsen. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

Critic Aldon Lynn Nielsen, a professor of English at San Jose State University, has written a complex modern study which examines the transformation of African American literature, and especially the contributions and roles of black poets, in the period from World War II to the present. Nielsen's major goal is to capture the essence of black writers from the areas known as modernism and postmodernism, by focusing critical attention on various groups of avant-garde poets. Namely, in Washington, D.C.—the Howard/Dasein poets (LeRoy Stone, Percy Johnston, Dolores Kendrick, Lance Jeffers, Oswald Govan, Joseph White, and others); from Cleveland, Ohio—the Free Lance Group (including Russell Atkins, Helen Collins, Casper LeRoy Jordan, Adelaide Simon, a white woman, and others); and among others, the New York City group—the Umbra poets (with such key writers as Lloyd Addison, Calvin Hernton, David Henderson, Raymond Patterson, Tom Dent, Askia Muhammed Toure, Jane Logan, Lorenzo Thomas, and Brenda Walcott, among others). Other poets who also play a prominent role in modern black poetry appear in this book, with the author's assessment of such ground breaking writers as A. B. Spellman, Amiri Baraka, Elouise Loftin, Eugene Redmond, Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, Melvin B. Tolson, Bob Kaufman, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Harryette Mullen.

Nielsen's work closely studies the experimental and radical nature of the new writing produced by modern black poets, and relates these developments with other currents in American literature, such as the Beat Generation, and especially the influence of black music (with an emphasis on jazz) on the poetics of black and other American writers. A large segment of the book explores the poetry recordings by black avant-garde poets, such as Amiri Baraka, Elouise Loftin, and Jayne Cortez, who, along with such figures as Nikki Giovanni, Gil Scott-Heron, and the Last Poets, helped to greatly expand the poetic and musical combinations of the recorded word and records in the modern era.

Black Chant also highlights the tremendous achievements of modern black poetry to American life, as witnessed with the creative energies of the Black Arts Movement, the dozens of outstanding black literary magazines of the period, the work of over a hundred significant editors, such as Dudley Randall at Broadside Press, Haki R. Madhubuti, Carolyn Rodgers and Johari A. Amini-Hudson at Third World Press, and among so many others, Hoyt W. Fuller and Carole A. Parks at Negro Digest/Black World. Nielsen also points out, however, the general lack of appreciation by many critics, readers, and the public for this creative work. Nonetheless, the author offers contemporary readers and students alike a grand opportunity to capture in one book, a profound examination of modern currents in black poetry in America. *Black Chant* is a well researched book, and a welcome addition to the critical studies available on modern black literature.

University of Missouri, Columbia

Julius E. Thompson

TRADE AND THE AMERICAN DREAM: A Social History of Postwar Trade Policy. By Susan Ariel Aaronson. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 1996.

In the aftermath of the Cold War and the much heralded triumph of market economics, Americans as well as the rest of the world must confront the realities of an international economy subject to impersonal (and extra national) market forces. The Asian economic crisis and subsequent meltdown of financial markets around the globe have cast doubt in

the minds of many about the advantages of free trade and free financial flows, and have brought the heart of the matter—concerns about sovereignty—to the fore. As a result, understanding how the international trading system moved from a 1930s world of isolated economies protected by tariff walls and a plethora of other barriers to the World Trade Organization of the 1990s is important if we are to avoid a return to conditions that exacerbated the Great Depression.

The story of postwar efforts to reform world trade is told by Susan Ariel Aaronson in *Trade and the American Dream*. Her account begins with the 1934 Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, the foundation for U.S. free trade policies, developed during the depression as a way to keep the American Dream alive. The first two-thirds of Aaronson's work weaves the tale of wartime planning efforts and thinking about the needs of the postwar world to provide an understanding of the forces working within the country to both further and frustrate efforts to free trade from its prewar constraints. Throughout, we are constantly reminded of policy makers' failure to explain to working Americans why free trade was necessary and to involve them in meaningful ways in the policy making process. As a result, reforms envisioned for the international trading system in the immediate postwar years did not materialize while efforts to restructure the international financial system succeeded with the formation of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, now the World Bank.

The failure to establish the International Trade Organization (ITO), however, was not a fatal blow to free trade. The "temporary" General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), through various rounds of negotiations spanning almost fifty years, set the stage for U.S. approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. Aaronson's treatment of NAFTA and the WTO in about thirty pages at the end of her work does little justice to the issues or the debates regarding free trade in the 1990s, yet supports her stress on the importance of cultivating popular support if public policy measures are to succeed.

Although Aaronson proposes to give us *A Social History of Postwar Trade Policies*, her book does not live up to the promise of its subtitle. There is little social history in her tale of the successes and failures of public policy making in the critical years following the end of the Second World War. For example, eight of the book's ten tables list proponents and opponents of various trade measures yet the text makes no meaningful use of this information and the reader is left wondering what to make of the lists, what role various individuals and organizations played, and in what ways, if any, the players changed as the U.S. moved toward rejecting the ITO.

Trade and the American Dream is an insightful and useful study of the public policy making process. Aaronson's work should be read by scholars in American studies, economics, history, public policy and other disciplines to enrich their understanding of the immediate postwar period, and will be a valuable supplement for lectures in courses focusing on the postwar U.S.

College of William and Mary

Clyde Haulman

CANCER FROM BEEF: DES, Federal Food Regulation, and Consumer Confidence. By Alan I. Marcus. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1994.

In *Cancer From Beef: DES, Federal Food Regulation, and Consumer Confidence*, historian Alan I. Marcus tells the story of the rise and fall of a substance central to the history of recent regulation. When DES's efficacy as a cattle growth hormone was

discovered in 1954, the beef industry was revolutionized. By introducing tiny amounts of this chemical into feed, cattlemen significantly increased the weight growth rate of cattle and substantially cut feeding costs. Others, however, warned of an uninvited guest at the chemical feast—cancer. In 1956 physician William E. Smith publicized studies suggesting that DES was a carcinogen. Smith's work caught the attention of Congressman James Delaney (D.-N.Y.), who included a clause in the 1958 Food and Drug Act amendment that prohibited adding artificial carcinogenic substances to food. Shortly thereafter, a beefed up FDA took medicated feeds under its purview and probably expended more resources regulating DES than any other substance. In the 1960s, which were marked by aggressive environmental and consumer movements, advocacy journalism, and lifestyle politics, the DES controversy became linked to critiques of industrial society, concerns about food safety, and medical tragedies such as thalidomide babies and DES-daughter cancers. Given the scientific uncertainties of determining DES's carcinogenicity, all concerned parties (agri-business, pharmaceutical companies, government agencies, agricultural university scientists, consumer advocates, lawyers, and legislators) could invoke studies favorable to their position while dismissing those of opponents. In the FDA's final decision to ban DES as a cattle growth enhancer in 1979, political priorities—rather than scientific agreement about its dangers—were decisive.

The larger meaning of DES's downfall, according to Marcus, resides in the erosion of an earlier style of regulation characterized by "progressive partnership." This partnership between government, academia, industry, and the public (operative from the 1920s to the 1950s) revolved around a faith in scientific expertise and an appreciation for science's material benefits. DES itself illustrated the partnership: "A college scientist uncovered a new technique, pharmaceutical scientists produced the drug, feed-manufacturing scientists compounded the material as a premix, federal scientists approved its use, agricultural scientists publicized it by demonstrating its utility, and farmers made use of it" (25). Elements of the cultural crucible of the late 1950s and the 1960s—individualism, a mistrust of traditional authority, and a culture of entitlement/victimization—dissolved the partnership. The media became a forum for scientific disputes, and regulation became litigious and proactive. Political infighting at governmental agencies also signaled a new era of "regulation as opposition." Eventually a "new synthesis" emerged in the 1970s, enshrined in cost-benefit analysis, which acknowledged "regulatory relativism." Championed by scientists as a way of preserving their regulatory authority, cost-benefit analysis had the opposite effect since costs and benefits could be variously defined, keeping everybody in the regulatory game. (For urban middle-class activists, regulation was a kind of intramural sport—the only losers were the non-participants.)

The strength of Marcus's book is its analysis of the premises and networks of the progressive partnership. The book also provides a valuable account of the transformation of the FDA. Less convincing, however, is Marcus's treatment of the new regulatory synthesis. For example, Marcus neglects the extent to which cost-benefit analysis often served as an industry tool since economic benefits are easier to quantify than social costs. And while Marcus is right to decry the polarization and disregard for scientific truth that often characterizes contemporary regulatory debate, he is perhaps too nostalgic for an earlier era. Negligible health risks such as DES in beef and Alar may have been exaggerated after the demise of the progressive partnership, but real health menaces such as cigarettes and asbestos flourished under it.

On the whole, however, *Cancer From Beef* is judicious and well-written. Moreover, it draws upon an impressive variety of published and archival sources; few readers will be

tempted to ask “Where’s the beef?” The book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the history of recent public health, the consumer movement, and government regulation.

Johns Hopkins University

Keith Barbera

REEL TO REAL: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies. By bell hooks. New York: Routledge. 1996.

For more than two decades now film has provided fertile terrain for feminist critique. With its emphasis on equal rights, the 1970s wave of the women’s movement raised a number of important questions concerning the way cinematic representation reflects and conserves patriarchal myth. Although the movement fostered a consideration of the relationship between aesthetic practices and the subordination of women, its failure to take into account race, class, or ethnic differences limited its appeal for women of color. “History repeats itself,” some might argue, for it wasn’t until Sojourner Truth spoke out in 1851 that white feminists began to seriously consider female difference(s). With *Ain’t I A Woman?* (1981) hooks echoed the refrain from the historic speech Truth presented at the women’s convention in Akron, Ohio. This book along with Angela Davis’s *Women, Race & Class* (1981) raised the ante and set the theoretical foundation for what many critics now refer to as the third wave of women’s resistance in this country. *Reel to Real: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies* (1996) augments the discursive agenda, making it apparent that bell hooks has once again stepped forward to raise the political stakes.

Reel to Real explodes a variety of contemporary concerns by juxtaposing issues related to gender, theory, and genre. The structure and style of this book differs from the typical scholarly or descriptive discussion of film; nevertheless the text addresses a number of the cultural, theoretical, and pedagogical issues of the day. As in her other work hooks actively interrogates culture in personal terms, enticing readers to contemplate “difference” along with the dual concepts of heterogeneity and multiplicity. In many ways “heterogeneity” and “multiplicity” ground and shape this text in that the concepts are repeatedly evoked by every aspect of its production. Aside from its emphasis on race, class, and gender differences, this innovative and integrative book structurally pairs critics with cultural producers, autobiography with criticism, men with women, and blacks with whites. From the cultural commentary of Spike Lee’s *Girl 6* and *Crooklyn* hooks develops an analysis that ruminates on “racial representation” from both sides of the screen considering audience expectations as well as the predicament confronting black filmmakers. She suggests that because, “Audiences are so accustomed to representations that depict the brutal death of black folks in Hollywood films that no one is outraged when our bodies are violently slaughtered.” This book, unlike the typical cinematic critique, moves beyond the screen’s “representation of the image” skillfully surveying the film’s reception. She is, in different terms, actively interpreting the image and the audience’s response to it. Because hooks employs a self-reflexive approach which emphasizes the personal as well as the political, we understand why the cover suggests that she, “comes to film not as a film critic but a cultural critic.” Her analysis of film fills in the dots that allow readers to actually visualize cinematic reverberations and the dialectical relationship between mainstream and oppositional practices and contemplate the spaces and silences that many mainstream critics overlook.

Highlighting a number of films which include but are not limited to *Crooklyn*, *Exotica*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kids*, *Hoop Dreams*, *Leaving Las Vegas*, *Waiting to Exhale*, hooks

amplifies the conventional feminist/womanist approach to film criticism offering bold critiques that challenge both the audience and cultural producers. In "Mock Feminism: Waiting to Exhale," for example, hooks problematizes the appropriation and marketing of black film.

When a film that's basically about the trials and tribulations of four professional heterosexual black women who are willing to do anything to get and keep a man is offered as a "feminist" narrative, it's truly a testament to the power of the mainstream to co-opt progressive social movements and strip them of all political meaning through a series of contemptuous ridiculous representations. (54)

The interviews featured in the second half of the book further illustrate the emphasis on heterogeneity and multiplicity that is so readily apparent in hooks's essays. By interrogating the cultural producers themselves, she is able to substantiate her perspectives and provide readers with a glimpse at the vision from which cinematic representation emerges. In the words of Marie-France Alderman, "hooks goes about piercing 'the wall of denial' with some of the fiercest and sexiest film analyses ever published." With this text, we are once again reminded that hooks's focus as a cultural critic is much larger than the isolated categories of race and gender. She tells us in the first page of her introduction that, "Movies make magic. They change things. They take the real and make it into something else right before our eyes." In *Reel to Real* hooks conjures a magic of her own in order to change things!

University of Delaware

Alvina E. Quintana

YO' MAMA'S DISFUNKTIONAL: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America. By Robin D. G. Kelley. Boston: Beacon Press. 1997.

With *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!* cultural critic and social historian Robin D. G. Kelley weighs into the culture wars. Kelley's contribution is especially distinguished and welcomed because he locates black urban life and culture at the center of this spirited and thoughtful collection. Kelley tackles questions of gender, race, class, politics, social policy, ideology, academic discourse and ideology and in the process he demonstrates just how so much of the debates themselves and the assumptions that organize them depend on (mis) conceptions of black social and cultural life. Hence its provocative title. But the book's attention grabbing title is not simply a clever marketing ploy designed to get the attention of a popular audience. By using the vernacular language of black culture Kelley aims to focus our attention on the cynical and mean-spirited sentiment which characterizes so much of the culture wars. More importantly Kelley uses the title to illuminate the discursive operations, logical assumptions, and professional stakes involved in deriding and demeaning black people. As such the book attacks conservative and liberal discourses, logic, theories, and policies that position black folk as visible expression of the ill effects of the welfare state, identity politics (as if only blacks and people of color have identities) and aberrant cultural practices.

With this deconstructive project, however, Kelley does not simply end up with a knee jerk defense of black culture and social life. For his sights are aimed as well at liberal and conservative discourses among blacks that are invested in myths of romantic nationalism, of boot-strap economic mobility, and individual moral superiority. Since white and black

neo-conservatives make fairly easy pickings for him, the more significant contribution of the volume is the fact that Kelley trains his sights on the quieter and perhaps more insidious forms of attack on black life that comes from left conservatives and liberals. Here Kelley engages the legacy of enlightenment discourse in attacks on identity politics, the (racist) intellectual basis of policy attacks on the welfare state which go back thirty years, and a view of the superiority of western civilization which sees the cultural practices of contemporary black life as morally and aesthetically bankrupt.

Kelley does more than deconstruct and defend here. In a series of quite marvelous and hopeful examples from black urban communities throughout the country, Kelley shows black people involved in multi-racial coalitions, labor movements, community organizations concerned with labor, environment, urban spaces and mass transportation, culture, race, sexuality, family and gender.

Kelley has offered us a smart and engaging book that through its very example demonstrates the complexity of and importance of culture and politics for people on the ground here and now. Motivated by the real injuries inflicted upon black and poor people who are more often than not the objects of debates in the culture wars, Kelley has written a passionate book that shows why and how culture and politics matter in the lives of people.

University of California-Santa Cruz
Herman Gray

SHAKESPEARE, THE MOVIE: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video. Edited by Lynda E. Boose and Richard Burt. New York: Routledge. 1997.

In the opening chapter of their collection of essays, *Shakespeare, the Movie*, editors Lynda E. Boose and Richard Burt offer an observation that might serve as a *raison d'être* for this book: "All in all, the message from the mid-nineties would seem to be that Shakespeare was busting out all over" (15). Indeed, several popular Shakespearean films of the past decade receive extended treatment here—most notably Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*, Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, and Richard Loncraine's *Richard III*. More surprising, however, little of the book is given over to recent films that one might expect to receive discussion in such a collection. For instance, Oliver Parker's *Othello*, Branagh's *Hamlet* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* are discussed only in passing. Instead, the editors have included essays that examine a sweeping scope of films, beginning with the silent age—Gade and Schall's *Hamlet* (1920), starring Danish star Asta Nielsen as the first woman to play Hamlet on film—and continuing to "the age of post-mechanical reproduction"—Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*.

The editors describe the topics of the articles as including "a generic potlatch of what is presently available in filmic (usually video) format to the Shakespeare student or scholar" (1). The range here thus includes a wide variety of texts and critical approaches, a range which appeals to various audiences. Thus, for instance, while Tony Howard examines the historic 1953 made-for-television production of *King Lear* directed by Peter Brook and featuring Orson Welles as Lear, Laurie E. Osborne analyses the various kinds of animation techniques employed in *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* and examines the way these techniques shape their respective texts. The range of texts and critical approaches is revealed even more fully in articles that focus on films which are Shakespearean spinoffs, articles such as Valeris Wayne's "Shakespeare Wallah and Colonial Specularity" and Richard Burt's "The Love That Dare Not Speak Shakespeare's Name: The New Shakesqueer Cinema."

In part, non-Shakespearean films are included because the editors find that Shakespeare is often used in contemporary films as a touchstone for anti-intellectual humor: "The popularization of Shakespeare on film, video, and television—which began inside the stalwartly liberal tradition of *noblesse oblige* attempting to bring culture to the masses—now finds itself, in America at least, in a strictly market-responsive milieu in which *noblesse oblige* attempting to bring culture to the masses—now finds itself, in America at least, in a strictly market-responsive milieu in which literary knowledge is in general a decidedly low capital, frequently mockable commodity, caught within the peculiarly American ambivalence about intellectualism, and therefore to be eschewed at all costs" (12). This explanation accounts for the attention given to films such as *Clueless* and *The Last Action Hero*, which uses disparaging references to Shakespeare simply as markers of hipness in contemporary youth culture. More interesting, however, are the articles about *My Private Idaho* and *Bugsy* that examine how these two films include rich subtexts which incorporate the *Henry IV* plays (*Idaho*) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Bugsy*). While not all Shakespeare scholars and students will find the entire collection to their taste, the breadth and inclusiveness of the collection should interest many.

University of California-Davis

Eric James Schroeder

DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE: The JFK Assassination in Art and Film. By Art Simon. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1996.

Instigated by the recognition of repetition and strategies of appropriation in Bruce Conner's film, *Report*, Simon's analysis of artistic images inspired by the JFK assassination articulates the "varying interpretations of contradictory conclusions" endemic to the visual evidence of the assassination and extends its quality of "shifting illegibility" to art and film. Simon's study, divided into three sections, explores how the assassination debates "became the focal point for a protracted struggle over camera vision and historical authorship and how the images and issues stemming from the case have been inscribed in art and film over the last thirty years." After tracing the assassination's literary history in mainstream and marginal presses, Simon embarks on the various interpretations and manipulations of visible historical artifacts, including the Zapruder film, the slain president's body, and the images and documents providing various interpretations of Oswald's identity. Noting that the assassination exists as a "controversy with images at its core," Simon continues by applying the aspect of varying interpretations to the art and film world's appropriations of historical images and incorporating them in the arena of ongoing assassination debates. In the second section, Simon focuses on pop art's portrayal of JFK as media image and the art's employment of the very modes it critiques, such as repetition and the inundation of images, both characteristics central to the Warhol silkscreens, camp paraphernalia, and alternative cinema, including Bruce Conner's *Report*, Ant Farm/T.R. Uthco's *The Eternal Frame*, and Gary Kibbons' *The Long Take*. Section three, devoted to feature filmic portrayals of the assassination, includes analyses of *The Parallax View* (1974), *Winter Kills* (1978), and *Blow Out* (1981), with emphasis and extended explication applied to *Executive Action* (1974) and *JFK* (1991). Simon's final chapter is dedicated solely to Oliver Stone's controversial film, *JFK*, in which Stone combined a collage of conspiracies within the persona of the lone investigator, former New Orleans District Attorney, Jim Garrison, and created a heavily criticized montage of history derived from the juxtaposition of documentary and fiction. Simon appropriately labels Stone's film as

both a summation of three decades of assassination debates, inquiries, and theories, as well as a continuation of those debates through the film's reification of existing theories and the introduction of a new generation to assassination anxiety propelled by epistemological concern. For each work, Simon establishes a necessary context for the visual text to be analyzed, whether it be placing Andy Warhol's *Jackie* silkscreens amidst the environment of Warhol's different social location and consistent treatment of celebrity and death, or the placement of the assassination films within the context of a seventies cinema that concentrated on conspiracy, pathos, and paranoia. Simon carefully punctuates his discussions by drawing from a disparate collection of theorists, referencing the ideology of such individuals as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Andre Bazin, Gertrude Stein, Sigmund Freud, Linda Williams, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Simon's employment of both cultural and film theory provides enlightening exploration into a seminal, yet elusive moment in history and into a culture that continues to provide revisions of that history through the appropriation of "unintelligible" and "illegible" images. Simon's text provides an event-focused study for those interested in the relationship between art and history, as well as an introduction for readers not aware of discrepancies plaguing the JFK case and the cultural contribution to its historiographic discourse. JFK buffs will find a succinct and unbiased compilation of the assassination's various studies and contradictory evidence in the first section, while students and scholars of art and film will appreciate the attention to theory, form, and content included in Simon's contextual interpretations of a variety of creative works.

Texas Tech University

Jill Talbot

NEW PIONEERS: The Back-to-the-Land Movement and the Search for a Sustainable Future. By Jeffery Jacob. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1997.

Jeffrey Jacob's work is a timely and much needed exploration of a small but persistent part of American society, namely new pioneers, also referred to as back-to-the-landers and neo-homesteaders. In Jacob's nuanced and thoughtful exploration, he raises two important questions. First, can this rather disparate set of individuals be called a movement? Second, can this movement become a political force? In attempting to answer these questions, Jacob sets himself a daunting task.

Though there are no useful data on the population of new pioneers in the United States, Jacob develops a useful characterization of seven sub-categories: weekenders, pensioners, country romantics, country entrepreneurs, purists, micro-farms and apprentices. Having established the seven ways of living back-to-the-land, Jacob takes a chapter each to explore a) neo-homesteader values (self-reliance and the desire to live simply), b) attitudes to soft technology (ecologically sound, renewable sustainable, non-specialized, and labor intensive), and c) how urban pioneers function. He then explores the possibility of new pioneer activism and concludes by speculating on the role of new pioneers in a sustainable future. One of the most thoughtful aspects of this book is the manner in which Jacob lays out the tension between neo-homesteaders' dreams, and the lack of resources and time to invest in fulfilling them. Indeed he concludes that though many only manage a semi-subsistence life, it is the adherence to the philosophy and spirituality of new pioneerism that sustains neo-homesteaders.

Where Jacob's work is at its weakest is in its questionnaire design and sampling, leading to a narrow and ahistorical analysis. This weakness makes itself plain in three areas. First, Jacob began his study with exploratory interviews and questionnaires in both

western Canada and the U.S. in 1983. Using these data he develops a questionnaire that is applied in the early 1990s to a U.S. population. This reader saw problems in a) mixing both Canadian and U.S. data, and b) the ten-year time lag between the development and the application of the questionnaire. This time lag was made more apparent by Jacob's own description of the historical shifts in the "back-to-the-land" movement during this period.

Second, the sampling of the back-to-the-lander population is problematic. Mentioning that he has been asked if he had come into contact with any right-wing groups, Jacob stated he had not. He then briefly sketches his sense of back-to-the-landers: "I believe it will become evident that they are a generally progressive, well-educated group." This bias is amplified in the way Jacob identified his population sample. This reader would suggest that using the mailing lists of *Countryside*, which Jacob characterized as a pragmatic *Mother Earth*, is likely to have precluded a more radically conservative homesteading readership.

Finally, there was no descriptive overview of Jacob's sample in terms of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and marital/cohabiting/communal status. For example, this reader wondered if Jacob's respondents were primarily white. Jacob's discussion of the gendered disparity of homesteader work cried out for a more rigorous analysis as one of Jacob's respondents makes plain: "Please send an additional questionnaire to my husband—you would be amazed at the differences."

This book points to an important but neglected area of study. The sympathetic manner Jacob takes to his subject does indeed give a thoughtful sense of neo-homesteaders life, which this reader appreciated. However, the various methodological problems outlined gave no useful sense of who neo-homesteaders are, and thus this reader is not convinced, by this text, that this group is a movement or that it has activist possibilities.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Amanda Rees

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN CULTURE. By Richard Kyle. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. 1995.

The so-called New Age Movement has spawned many books, but few offer as helpful an overview of the phenomenon as this one. Kyle provides a workmanlike survey of the New Age's antecedents reaching as far back as Hellenistic gnosticism and hermeticism, and spotlights in diverse manifestations in contemporary American religion, philosophy, science, education, psychology, healing, politics, and "the occult." As Kyle acknowledges, the New Age is not easy to define precisely. What he emphasizes is the anti-modern (i.e. anti the world of the Age of Reason and the rationalistic science, social science, and social organization it set in motion) character of what is collectively called the New Age. This perspective, of course, puts it in the same bed with what is more academically called postmodernism. But this critical and credulous stance becomes New Age when it self-consciously manifests in popular culture and, on a more intellectual or spiritual level, is founded on a quasi-religious view of the universe as monistic, impersonal, and dynamic. The dynamic universe view includes concepts of reincarnation and higher intelligences, and presents a cosmos replete with the "correspondences" and "energies" that make for astrology and healing.

When features like these appear, even implicitly, behind religious, psychological, political, or other vogues, one detects another sign that the New Age is dawning. Kyle also stresses New Age individualism and subjectivism: The "I'm spiritual but not religious"

and “It’s true for me if I believe it’s true” mentalities. While it cannot be said that this work holds the scholarly depth of Wouter Hanegraaf’s monumental *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (Leiden, 1996), in my view it actually has a clearer focus on the American cultural setting of the New Age here. Beyond this, his historical and typological paradigms help to bring some order to an exceptionally diffuse social movement.

As Kyle recognizes, the heyday of the New Age movement under that name and with its Shirley McLaine appurtenances of crystals, astrology, channeling, neo-shamanism, and belief in reincarnation was probably the 1970s and 1980s, when it represented something of a routinization and interiorization of the sixties counterculture. By the last decade of the century it seemed to be fading a bit. But the study of the New Age movement is important nonetheless and not only for historical reasons; if, as Harold Bloom has declared, American religion is fundamentally gnostic in character, movements directly related to gnosticism’s Hellenistic, hermetic parentage are likely to keep on emerging alongside the crypto-gnosticism of American-style Christianity. Where once there was Mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, the counterculture and then the New Age, some new secret saving wisdom will doubtless arrive in the new millennium, perhaps a form of the cybermysticism heralded in Erik Davis’ *Techgnosis* (New York, 1998).

Kyle does not conceal his own evangelical Christian position, and sometimes uses other evangelical writers as sources together with numerous New Age authors themselves. But he is eminently fair-minded, and never allows his own creed to intrude on a balanced presentation of the material. At the end of the book, he offers a Christian critique of the New Age, which is his privilege.

Serious students of the New Age movement will not want to overlook the resources this modest-appearing book has to offer. Kyle has done his homework, and his fifty-six pages of notes will themselves be invaluable to future researchers.

Auburn University

Robert Ellwood

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