Book Reviews

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

Reviews

PURCHASING POWER: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929. By Dana Frank. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, like other sub-fields in U.S. History, labor history underwent an intellectual revolution. Long dominated by economic historians who had concentrated their attention on trade unions, the field opened up to social historians who focused their sights on work and working people. Relying on case studies, a new generation of scholars explored the experiences of working men and women—immigrants as well as native-born, women as well as men, black as well as white, unskilled as well as skilled, unorganized as well as union members—who had never been incorporated into the narrative history of the making, unmaking, and re-making of the American working-class.

In the last decade, a new generation of labor historians has drawn upon the insights of women's and gender studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies, as they have sought not only to synthesize the contributions of their predecessors but also to rethink the relationship of working men and women to the larger narrative of U.S. History. The impact of their work has not merely expanded the scope and parameters of labor history, but has also begun to reorient our understanding of the American experience as a whole.

Dana Frank's *Purchasing Power* provides a vantage point from which scholars can appreciate the progress of this process. While it remains within the field's typical paradigm of a microcosmic case study, it also reflects the rich evolution of the field. Frank has drawn effectively on women's and gender studies, critical race studies, and cultural studies in her effort to explain first the expansion of the Seattle labor movement in 1919-1921 and then its implosion over the course of the 1920s.

Seattle is well known to labor historians for its impressive general strike in early 1919. In the most dramatic display of solidarity in American labor history, some 65,000 workers struck in February to support the demands of 35,000 shipyards workers for a postwar wage increase. Frank begins her book by explaining how this was possible, how a variety of forces were woven together by the Seattle Central Labor Council into this stunning expression of working-class power.

In the next two years, the Seattle labor movement broadened and deepened its base. Frank offers a gendered analysis of this process, highlighting the movement's expansion from the point of production to the realm of consumption, where working-class women played the key role. "Purchasing power" took its place alongside workplace power at the heart of the labor movement. Producers' and consumer's cooperatives, together with an array of labor-owned businesses, joined trade unions as its institutional base. Boycotts and support for union labels joined strikes as the movement's key tactics. These developments reflected the possibilities of a new sort of labor movement, one able to move beyond its traditional white male parameters and, perhaps, able to look beyond capitalism itself.

But, as Frank shows in great detail, this was all too fragile. A combination of economic depression and employer opposition rapidly turned the tide against the labor movement. The collapse was not merely sudden and sweeping. It also prompted internal changes within the labor movement away from the promise of 1919-1921. Business unionism, conservatism, exclusion of women and workers of color, expulsion of communists and isolation of socialists reshaped the Seattle labor movement by the mid-1920s. Not the least of these changes, Frank demonstrates, was the repudiation of the politics of consumption which had been so hopeful in the early 1920s. What was left of the AFL sought its legitimacy and security in its ever closer relationship with a handful of local employers. The labor movement had not merely been defeated; it had been transformed.

Purchasing Power calls our attention to the consequences of this transformation for Seattle working men and women in the 1920s and 1930s—and for the future development of the American labor movement. In a provocative conclusion, she argues for a reconsideration of the 1919-1921 experience as we explore the crisis and possible rebuilding of the labor movement in the years ahead. The effectiveness of her argument suggests that the insights of women's and gender studies, critical race studies, and cultural studies are valuable not merely for understanding labor's past but also for getting a handle on labor's future.

Macalester College Peter Rachleff

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE: The American West in Popular Culture. Edited by Richard Aquila. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1996.

Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture, edited by Richard Aquila, reaffirms that the academic world remains as fascinated by the power of western motifs as the general public. Aquila, adding the considerable talents of nine other scholars to his own, has compiled a learned and readable collection of essays.

The American West, despite its enormous popularity as both a scholarly field and an entertainment/commercial arena, is still dismissed by those who see it as a frivolous national icon. The essays in *Wanted Dead or Alive* attack that sentiment head-on, dissecting and assessing the elements that constitute the most apparent venues for popular culture and demonstrating their usefulness as a collective compass pointing to the American mind and heart.

Fiction, entertainment, movies and television, music, and commercial art represent the major headings for the contents. This proves an effective strategy, for one problem that makes writing about western popular culture so difficult concerns the struggle to harness its many subtopics. Aquila's format allows authors to probe the celebratory and the grimy in their respective subjects.

In the fiction segment, Christine Bold directs her attention to the dime novel, while William Bloodworth looks at the more literary works about the West. The essays are marvelously complementary, underscoring the complex intertwining of fiction writing, publication marketing, and fanciful thinking—all on a national scale.

Turning to live entertainment, Thomas L. Altherr begins his excellent account with the history of the Wild West shows, traces the evolution of the rodeo, and concludes with an engaging analysis of the modern rendezvous fad. Altherr sees that across time the enthusiasm for these make-believe Wests has found its roots in thinking that succumbs to commercial allures and neglects historical veracity.

In solid, comprehensive chapters, John H. Lenihan, Ray White, and Gary A. Yoggy tackle the daunting subject of the impact of movies and television on the maturation of western popular culture. Lenihan stands alone in his ability to illuminate the political and cultural subtleties of Western films and this piece is no exception. White examines the B Western against the backdrop of race, class, and gender imperatives, thereby adding substantive meaning to this art form. Yoggy surveys the history of the Western on television in an essay that is as delightfully nostalgic as it is intellectually perceptive.

The placing of music within western popular culture falls to Richard Aquila with an essay on pop and rock and Kenneth J. Bindas with one on the country stars and their lyrics. Both chapters are thoughtful, but some overlapping of content lends a slightly, perhaps appropriate, repetitious refrain.

Chapters by Joni L. Kinsey on western painting and Elliott West on advertising comprise the final section on art. Each demonstrates that visual images have been closely connected to mythic values. Further, these authors convincingly portray the growing power of western popular culture.

The second and third sections of the book are not exactly parallel in length with the other segments and the suggested readings for some sections seem oddly brief. These are small complaints. The ten chapters of *Wanted Dead or Alive* blend together with admirable intellectual balance, a rare accomplishment in an anthology. Each tries to address the contradictions between cultural ideals and historical reality. The affection of these authors for the West is clear but so is their ability to produce insightful critiques of a cultural phenomenon that is both lovable and objectionable, inspired and flawed. Suitable for a wide readership, *Wanted Dead or Alive* is a valuable addition to our understanding of the myriad forces that shape the national love affair with the American West.

Utah State University Anne M. Butler

A TOWN ABANDONED: Flint, Michigan, Confronts Deindustrialization. By Stephen P. Dandaneau. Albany: State University of New York Press. 1996.

Vacant houses, boarded-up downtowns, shuttered factories, and rusting mills-the debris of "economic restructuring" and "downsizing" litter the North American landscape. Corporate decisions, usually rendered from sleek, far-distant offices, have exiled many older centers of manufacturing to capitalism's periphery. How does an urban area which has lost tens of thousands of jobs assess its past, face its bleak present, and imagine its future? In *A Town Abandoned: Flint, Michigan, Confronts Deindustrialization* sociologist Steven P. Dandaneau examines one city's efforts to grapple with these questions.

A volume in the SUNY Press series in Popular Culture and Political Change, *A Town Abandoned* extends into the late twentieth century the story begun by series co-editor

Ronald Edsforth in his book *Class Conflict and Cultural Census: The Making of a Mass Consumer Society in Flint, Michigan* (1987). Dandaneau takes Edsforth's thesis on the contour of class relations in Flint into the 1990s: the radical conflict pitting the fledgling United Automobile Workers (UAW) against the hometown giant, General Motors (GM), in the famous 1937 sit-down strike gave way to a postwar contractual peace of full employment. Flint workers thus purchased the trappings of the American Dream until, in the mid-1970s, GM reneged on its part of the labor-relations bargain with lay-offs and large-scale removal of jobs.

An exercise in charting ideological formation, Dandaneau's well-written account eschews discussion of how "dependent deindustrialization" (xx) affected the city's residents, portraying instead the "most significant public responses" to this process (xi) as examples of how "dependency distorts consciousness" (100). Of these, *Roger and Me*, the surprising hit film of 1989 directed by and starring Flint native Michael Moore, garners some praise from Dandaneau as a clever, biting, and accessible, but moralizing, critique. The dissident UAW faction, the New Directions Movement, similarly gets credit for opposing both GM and conciliatory labor leaders but, in yearning for a new New Deal, does not embrace a transforming ideology, Dandaneau's benchmark. In his view, two educational efforts targeted at labor and management (one sponsored jointly by the UAW and GM and the other launched by local academics) and two revitalization strategies (one enshrined in a glitzy technology center and the other a planning document crafted by area bigwigs) constitute more misguided responses. Dandaneau's scrutiny of these endeavors yields refreshing (if occasionally self-righteous) insights, demonstrating the usefulness of attending to such diverse representations.

Yet Dandaneau employs a theoretical framework, derived in part from Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987), which often obscures more than it clarifies. Moreover, he provides few opportunities for the actors in these ventures to speak for themselves. In chapter notes interviewees are listed only by number, with the bibliography identifying those numbered—a documentation device that detaches those quoted from historical situation and demographic circumstance. Tellingly, Dandaneau criticizes *Roger and Me* for incorporating issues of race and gender at the expense (in his view) of class analysis. But, to the contrary, such elements—as embodied in real persons—endow the film with authenticity, while clearly aware of the ways in which different systems of inequality combine in late twentieth-century capitalism. Dandaneau nonetheless excludes these interconnections from his narrative. This omission distorts how consciousness has emerged and evolved in Flint (whose population is, after all, more than half African American).

In the end, having reviewed others' responses to the crisis, Dandaneau confesses that he, too, has no magic wand for this city whose fate may be overdetermined by structural forces. Still, his book illuminates some of the ideological dimensions of the deindustrial dilemma. A native son, Dandaneau brings a sophisticated outsider's view to his former hometown, a place that Ben Hamper, ex-autoworker-cum-author, ruefully has dubbed "Cog Butcher of the world" (1991).

University of Michigan-Flint Nora Faires

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture. By Lawrence Buell. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1995.

Environmental concern did not arise in the 1970s. Although many commentators date the beginning of environmentalism with Earth Day, the four decades before Earth Day also saw significant action over issues of land reclamation, park improvement, and cleaner water. What typified the concern of the pre-Earth Day was the centrality of the belief in science and technology's role in environmental improvement. Sewage system developments, higher smoke stacks, improved engines, and even nuclear energy were seen as the means towards reducing smoke and water pollution, and improving the quality of life for many Americans. Technology was seen as the means by which Americans could live with the amenities of modern western life, while at the same time enjoying clean air, clean water, and relatively unspoiled parks and recreational facilities. A clean and unspoiled environment was seen as another good to be purchased privately by accumulating a large enough income to purchase a second home in the country, a suburban retreat, or at the least a summer vacation out of the city. Or a good purchased collectively by society generally investing in newer technology to protect the environment or setting aside reservations of unspoiled areas. In both the private and the public approach, environmental quality became another commodity, something we could purchase if we were successful enough as a society or as individuals. Like the March of Dimes campaign to find a cure for polio, the quest for environmental quality would involve the investment of resources and the commitment to continue the march of progress. Conservation and progress were seen as complementary goals.

What distinguished the post-Earth Day from the pre-Earth Day environmental movement was, among other things, an increased concern not only about improving the environment by newer and better technology, i.e. better mileage automobiles, but also a concern about how the way we live our lives might affect the environment. The new concern was symbolized by the destruction of an automobile in one of the Earth Day demonstrations. This new concern required Americans to look at the environment not as a purchasable commodity, or as an outcome to be affected by input factors such as new technology or greater expenditures on water purification, but as intimately linked to us as beings in ways we affect not only by our inputs, but also by our resource utilization. While environmental quality was seen as another "more" in the pre-Earth Day world, increasingly those concerned about the environment were suggesting after Earth Day that environmental quality should be better seen in terms of using "less;" that is, less resource exploitation, less energy consumption, less food and packaging waste, less water use, and less pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer use. These concerns, although never completely dominant among conservationists, increasingly became part of the environmental discourse. With this new concern about how we live our lives and interact with our environment, Americans began to speculate about living differently—differently not in terms of more of, but differently in terms of different than.

Environmentalists started to think outside the paradigm. To do so required an imaginative leap. As a historian I believe that even imaginative leaps are helped by an understanding of the past. Past imagining of different ways of thinking about nature and how we might interact with it is the topic of Lawrence Buell's, *The Environmental Imagination.*

Taking Henry David Thoreau as his central imaginer, Buell shows us how non-fiction nature writers have, in looking at and writing about the natural world, encouraged us all

to rethink our centeredness and encouraged a move from a human centric to an ecocentric perspective. Buell does this by intensely exploring the works of Thoreau (mostly *Walden* and his *Journals*) and other important nature writers such as Susan Cooper and Aldo Leopold, using the question of the human relationship to the environment as the vehicle for getting into the works. Buell also looks to the works themselves as texts for providing clues to the author's understanding of the environment and the human place in that world.

Buell's interest are multiple. Using non-fiction nature writing, he addresses a number of issues of importance to critical and literary theory: the relationship between author and text, the canonization of author and text, the role of the audience and institutions (i.e. the publisher and markets) in that process, etc. But for this reviewer, Buell's concern over how his nature writers came to understand the world they live in and, in turn, to provide us, the readers, with the imagination to rethink our relationship to the natural world was the most rewarding aspect of his work.

Central to this project was Buell's concern for the movement from an egocentric perspective to an ecocentric one. Environmental writing helps the reader in that movement by dramatizing that place matters. Using primarily Thoreau, Buell shows us how the naturalist's thinking moved beyond traditional pastoralism to a more profound imagined world where human concerns were no longer central.

Although at the end of the day, this reader was not convinced that the human centric perspective is at odds with a commitment to active environmentalism, or that the ecocentric perspective, where human concerns are no longer central, is likely to produce a better environmental world. I want to protect the whales because I think it enriches the human condition to live in a world with whales—that is certainly a human centric position. I can see a certain defeatism or indifference arising out of an ecocentric view which is indifferent to the human condition. But regardless of this skepticism about the ecocentric perspective, reading the works of those who have imagined the world differently than I have encourages me to think about how I imagine the world.

The way we have understood the world we live in has not produced a particularly healthy or even happy way to live with our world. Pollution, global warming, deforestation, desertification and ozone depletion are symptoms of a soiled nest. To deal with these symptoms we need to think about how we are living in our "nest." That requires an imaginative rethinking. Buell's readings of others' imaginative rethinking about the natural world is an important help for all of us in our own imaginative rethinking.

University of Louisville John Cumbler

THE REVISIONIST STAGE: American Directors Reinvent the Classics. By Amy S. Green. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994.

Theatre in the United States has no classic tradition in the European and Asian sense. Our oldest plays are a scant two centuries old and most of what has been deemed worthy of an American canon is from this century. Our approaches to production, our acting styles, and our tastes are almost exclusively derived from European models and we have attempted to appropriate the European classics for ourselves. In the early nineteenth-century theatre, when England was the dominant cultural influence and Shakespeare was mass entertainment, this approach worked fairly well. But by the late nineteenth century, when culture was divided by class and Shakespeare appropriated for high cultural institutions, the production of classics took on a sacred tone. There was a "correct" way to do the classics and the guardians of high culture knew what it was.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, many directors—Max Reinhardt, Orson Welles, Jacques Copeau, Tairov, Vakhtangov, and Meyerhold—began to appropriate so-called classic texts for particular theatrical, political, and social ends. And in the 1950s, productions by Tyrone Guthrie and Peter Brook began to loosen the classics from their rigid constraints, at least in the English-speaking world. Soon thereafter, critical writings such as Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* and John Russell Brown's *Free Shakespeare* began to encourage a rethinking and re-envisioning of Shakespeare. These productions and books, and many similar works inspired and emboldened a new generation of American directors to tackle the classics. For Americans, lacking the comfortable familiarity with Shakespeare, let alone Moliäre or the Greeks, of their European cousins, the attempt to "reright" the classics, to use author Amy S. Green's clever term, often resulted in overlaying them with contemporary American pop culture or transposing them into more contemporary times and places, in what Robert Brustein calls "simile" productions. While the results could occasionally be startling or entertaining, they more often ran the risk of superficiality and trivialization.

Green, who teaches at the City University of New York, has set out to explore the various approaches to the Greek tragedies, Shakespeare, Moliäre, and Mozart-da Ponte by a range of contemporary directors, including Andrei Serban, Lee Breuer, JoAnne Akalaitis, Richard Schechner, Robert Woodruff, Peter Sellars, Lucien Pintiliä, Liviu Ciulei, and Joseph Papp. The core of the book consists of descriptions of the productions, usually with an overview of critical response. Since Green interviewed several of the directors in the study, there are fascinating details of production and rehearsal not otherwise available. Reading through these accounts can be thrilling, as one realizes the quantity and range of classical production in the United States over the past three decades or so. One is also struck by the fact that some of the most challenging and rewarding productions have been done by the expatriate Romanians: Serban, Ciulei, Pintilié, and Andrei Belgrader. What many, though certainly not all the American-born directors seem to have missed, is that directional inspiration must emanate from a close reading of the original text.

The production accounts vary; the best are those that Green obviously has first-hand knowledge of such as Serban's *The Miser* at A.R.T. Though Green acknowledges the raging debates among those who have a fixed idea of the classics and those who, in Kott's term "collide" with the text, or in Charles Marowitz's phrase have "head-on confrontation with the intellectual substructure of the plays," the theoretical and directorial implications of this debate are not adequately explored. Green provides a historical and critical context for these works, but her scholarship is weak. There are gaps in the history and missed connections. John Russell Brown, for example, does not even make it into the bibliography; deconstruction is explained in a sentence, and the difference between Derridean deconstructionism and the approach to texts of, say, the Wooster Group is conflated and confused. There is also a fundamental flaw in the book's structure. Productions are grouped by author. While there is certainly a convenient logic to this arrangement, it lumps together disparate directorial approaches. If the texts are being "revisioned," then the connecting thread is the director or the theatrical approach, not the playwright. Nonetheless, the book is a worthwhile addition to the study of production.

Columbia University Arnold Aronson

UNCOMMON GROUND: Toward Reinventing Nature. Edited by William Cronon. Norton. 1995.

American Studies has long paid close, critical attention to the meanings and uses of nature in American history, literature, art, philosophy, architecture, popular culture, and folklore. Consider the obvious: Henry Nash Smith, Leo Max, Richard Dorson, Donald Worster, and Annette Kolodny. They and many others, both in print and in oral presentations at regional and national conventions, commonly challenge the taken-for-granted meanings and values clustered around the ideas of Nature, Wilderness, and the West. It is what we do. Consequently, a number of the essays in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, do not break new ground so much as explore again such rich cultural texts as Yosemite, Niagara Falls, Mount Rushmore, urban malls, the iconography of ads, nature as portrayed in theme parks, and nature as warrant for rights in political rhetoric.

Uncommon Ground is the result of a year-long Humanities Institute seminar at the University of California, Irvine, assembled to "explore contemporary environmental problems from a broadly humanistic interdisciplinary perspective." The result is a focus on epistemology and ontology and on social construction; more on Nature in quotation marks, in other words, than on the trees or the forests or the seascapes many Americans identify and value as nature. "Reinventions" of Nature by poets (or painters or mystics) appear here only as objects of study.

Even so, particular essays make the volume well worth the price. Caroline Merchant's explication and then critique of the "myth of regeneration" digests familiar texts and images but finishes with a cogent critique of the grand myth and looks then to a "multiplicity of stories." Michael Barbour's case study of a Kuhnian revolution in ecological thought joins theory and ethnography in a gripping story of the way ecological thinking has changed in this century, and in a way that suggests spin-offs into cultural history. Jeff Ellis's analysis of the "debates over the root cause or causes of environmental problems" is instructive and exquisite. Donna Haraway will blow the reader away with her swirling analysis of race and gender at the end of the millennium and the import of the latest genetic tampering and coding in her essay, "Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture: It's All in the Family: Biological Categories in the Twentieth-Century United States."

Less breathtaking but well-worth reading are essays in the American Studies mode on F. L. Olmstead and nature, the disputes over timber and owls, the Nature Company, and TV ads for Marine World. A feature of the volume that Cronon is proud of and which grows out of a practice within the seminar of attending to found objects is the inclusion of "Albums." The first "Album" consists of eight pages of excerpts from a 1991 scenic wall-calendar put out by "The Nation's Most Ironic Nature Park," the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver. Although they might provoke discussion in a class, the "Albums" are so tendentious as to make genuine, richly ambiguous responses and thoughtful self-critical expressions unlikely.

Cronon set out to address two audiences: to persuade scientists that "there is something profoundly important and useful in recognizing [nature's] cultural constructedness," and to persuade humanists and post-modernists that "there is more to the world than just words." A worthy aim, but rather tightly academic. Two of his authors open a door out, it seems to me. Giovanna De Chiro calls for us to shift our aim to environmental justice. "Environmental justice activists define the environment as 'the place you work, the place you live, the place you play,'" she writes (301). This

phenomenological end run around matters of definition clears the air. "If . . . environmentalism could focus on our work rather than on our leisure," writes Richard White,

> then a whole series of fruitful new angles on the world might be possible. It links us to each other, and it links us to nature. It unites issues as diverse as workplace safety and grazing on public lands; it unites toxic sites and wilderness areas. . . . Work, then, is where we should begin (185).

Outside the academy, on ranch lands and watersheds and other working landscapes, this kind of new environmentalism is already well-underway. It is what Michael Connelly, a rancher friend, calls "just good housekeeping." Di Chiro and White beckon us and our students out into this middle ground. Out there live persons and other creatures making a living in the landscape. *Uncommon Ground* barely speaks to their concerns.

University of California, Davis David Scofield Wilson

THE CAMBRIDGE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, Volume 1. The Colonial Era. Edited by Stanley E. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman. Cambridge UK, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. 1996.

This volume brings together nine substantial essays by authors who are distinguished in their field. No contributor attempts a radical or controversial approach. The aim is to make the reader fully aware of the current debates on the history of Colonial America and to do so in a manner which intrigues, interests or even excites. Full and up to date bibliographical essays provide guidance for those who wish to explore further. In other words, this work is aimed not at the narrow specialist but the general reader, the brighter undergraduate and graduate students. With this in mind, the proportion of formal economic analysis is small; the equation is absent and the use of high powered quantitative techniques eschewed. Some of the contributors are historians rather than economic historians and the latter are careful to present their arguments in jargon free clear English. The decision to ensure that all the contributions to this volume should be intelligible to as wide an audience as possible is to be applauded, as is the emphasis on the British West Indies, Canada and Africa. There is also coverage of Native Americans before and after Columbus, of Africans engaged in trade with Europeans, including the slave trade, and of the European influence. We are presented with a wide vision of Colonial America which is both challenging and intellectually stimulating.

Neil Salisbury's contribution on the early history of Native Americans admirably charts the complex political alliances of the indigenous peoples as well as the impact of disease, alcohol, horses, Christianity and the new opportunities for trade. This is an excellent account of the extraordinary high costs, to Native Americans, of white intrusion. John K. Thornton demonstrates the importance of African history to the development of trade across the Atlantic and to the cultural and economic links between the two continents. E. L. Jones' brisk analysis of what was imported from Europe (especially Britain) as the colonists constructed their economic system, pays particular attention to the complex regional variations which existed in Britain and their profound influence on the transfer of tastes, technologies and constitutions. David Galenson's lengthy essay, which investigates the impact of population and the labor supply on economic development, is an admirable example of how to explain detailed economic relationships without overwhelm-

ing the reader. The role of indentured servants, slavery and hired labor in an economy which suffered from a shortage of workers is explained fully. Labor force changes are also effectively linked to the dramatic population growth which the colonies experienced, an expansion which deeply impressed Thomas Malthus.

Daniel Vickers' investigation of economic and social change in the North reveals the extent of diversification before independence. The northern colonies had merchants, traders, craftsmen and a female labor force which could be mobilized for industrial work if required. The South, analyzed by Russell R. Menard, experienced impressive growth which was of great benefit to many whites but which forced Africans and Native Americans to endure violence, misery and exploitation. A particularly fascinating section of Menard's chapter is devoted to a study of the back country and frontier. The West Indies, though closely linked to North America by trade and culture, differed from the colonies significantly. These tropical islands were reliant on the export trade, dominated by large scale plantations and were dependent upon slavery and sugar. B. W. Higman emphasizes the contemporary British view that saw the islands as ripe for exploitation rather than settlement the result of which was a high degree of absentee ownership and an emphasis on large gangs of slaves producing sugar. John J. McCusker's chapter on British mercantilist policies not only contains a first class analysis of the Navigation Acts it also includes an insightful study of the conflict between the economic strategy which the colonists wished to pursue and the resistance of British businesses to the growing competition from North America. Finally, Cathy Matson explains how colonial merchants became more interested in economic autonomy when the English government attempted to subordinate their economic interests. She also provides a very interesting overview of the economic debates in the early national period.

Any reviewer of this volume will feel guilty offering a few general observations on chapters which are both substantial and of a high standard. Praise must also be extended to the carefully constructed index. The editors and authors are to be congratulated on the production of this excellent volume.

University of Leicester Peter Fearon

CHILDREN AND THE MOVIES: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy. By Garth S. Jowett, Ian C. Jarvie, Kathryn H. Fuller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997.

This is a remarkable book, all the more remarkable for its somewhat idiosyncratic structure.

The first one-hundred pages of this book tells the story of the Payne Fund Studies, a twelve volume examination of the effects of motion picture attendance and viewing on children in general, and delinquents in particular. The final two-hundred pages reproduce for the first time drafts of case studies on urban youth, sponsored by the Payne Fund.

In the early 1920s, an attack on the new moving picture industry that had been underway from the moment the first "flickers" appeared in the peep-show machines accelerated with the entrance of Protestant activists who, as the authors remind us, were fearful of their declining status and authority. The industry responded by naming Warren G. Harding's campaign manager, Will Hays, as watchdog, but, according to the movies' opponents, Hays was not doing enough to protect the innocent, especially children, from the influence of objectionable images and stories.

The chief difficulty the anti-movie activists encountered in making their case was the lack of any "hard" evidence linking movie-going and delinquency. The Reverend William Short, who after serving for a decade as an ordained minister, had become a sort of free-lance intellectual for hire, had worked with the National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading, which was funded by the family that would eventually fund the Payne studies. When, in 1927, Short was contacted by an opponent of the movies who was looking for funding for a study of their influence on youth, he took over the proposed project, secured funding, and set out to establish scientific proof that the movies had a deleterious impact on the young.

Short visited the University of Chicago, where he was introduced to W.W. Charters, who had just accepted a position at Ohio State University. Charters was hired to direct the research project which, it was expected, would result in a multi-volume report detailing the effect of movie-going on youth.

There were tensions from the very beginning between Short, who knew precisely what he wanted from the research, and Charters and his research team, who retained open minds. What was remarkable about the project was the degree to which the social scientists resisted interference from Short, their sponsor. One after another, they discovered that they could not come up with the evidence he was looking for. On the contrary, the evidence they did have was either inconclusive or demonstrated that there was no demonstrable cause-and-effect relationship between movie attendance and delinquency. Short urged the social scientists to redesign their projects and/or rewrite their conclusions. When they resisted doing so, he hired a popular writer to sift through their research and frame a discussion that came to the conclusions he and the philanthropists who funded the project were looking for.

Short then published this study, *Our Movie-Made Children*, by Henry James Foreman, before the rest of the volumes were completed and referred to it publicly as providing scientific proof of the direct effect movies had on turning innocent children into delinquents. When the social scientists published their own reports which reached quite different conclusions, they were by and large ignored by the larger community. Even today—and I too plead guilty to this—researchers look to the Foreman volume as a reliable guide to the research.

Part Two of this volume book rescues some of the preliminary studies by Paul Cressey that were funded by the Payne foundation, but never published by them. They make for fascinating reading and should prove valuable for future generations of social scientists and historians who are doing their own research on youth subcultures in twentieth-century American cities.

As this summary of the book's First Part should make clear, there is a cautionary, yet heroic, tale here of social scientists behaving as we would hope they would; and philanthropists and professional reformers misusing scholarship for their own purposes. It makes for fascinating reading and constitutes an important contribution to our understanding of the history of the social sciences. The authors and Cambridge University Press should be commended.

City University of New York Graduate Center David Nasaw

RECONSIDERING AMERICAN LIBERALISM: The Troubled Odyssey of the Liberal Idea. By James P. Young. Boulder: Westview Press. 1996.

The author is professor emeritus of political science at Binghamton University. His publications include *The Politics of Affluence*. His new book is very important. He traces the idea of liberalism from the Puritans to the congressional election of 1994. All the chapters covering these four centuries present a synthesis of current scholarship in both political science and history. His discussion is enough to make the book worth reading.

But the book is also important because it is written out of a sense of profound national crisis. He believes that a national community can exist only as long as there is substantial consensus about the meaning of the community—a shared vision of its past, present, and future. He believes that liberalism provided that ideological glue for the United States. But now, he writes,

> The United States is at a precarious point in its history. All political systems have some form of consensus. The resilience of a regime is limited by the logic of its world view. The organizational principles of a society limit its capacities to 'learn without losing its identity,' and 'a system loses its identity when later generations do not recognize themselves within the tradition.' When this happens, the very legitimacy of a regime may be called into question. It would be premature to assert that the United States has reached such a condition. But given the discontent with the liberalism so central in both theory and practice in the United States, the threat cannot be dismissed (340).

For Young the key to our current crisis is the loss of the synthesis in liberalism between individual rights and public interest. He argues that from the Puritans to Lincoln there was such a synthesis which expressed a creative balance between the individual and community. He explicitly borrows from several books by Richard Hofstadter in his description of the breakdown of that synthesis after the Civil War when theories of capitalist self-interest rejected the commitment of liberalism to public interest. He then sees Populism, Progressivism, and the New Deal restoring the balance of individual rights and public interest.

The pattern since World War Two, for Young, has been a return to the destructive liberalism of the Gilded Age, to self-interest without the counterweight of public interest. He has no explanation for this change. He does not work with the recent scholarship on nationalism, and he does not consider that bourgeois patterns of nationalism on both sides of the Atlantic, which had posited the existence of a homogenous people with a common interest, collapsed in the 1940s. He does concentrate on the way in which the triumph of self-interest has shifted public discussion from politics to economics. Because of that shift we are constrained to measure everything by marketplace standards.

His desperate hope to stop a future of chaos caused by uncontrolled market forces is "a synthesis of three elements: the theory of a rights-based individuality developed by George Katab; the version of locally based populist democracy theorized by Sheldon Wolin and the Berkeley School; and the social democratic tradition exemplified by Michael Walzer, with his recognition of the need for state action on a broad front tempered by concern for local participation" (340).

The canon of American political theory, like the canon of American literature, has been a body of knowledge and understanding created by male Anglo-Protestants. Young exhibits no awareness of that exclusiveness as he implicitly assumes a single American tradition. He does notice that since World War Two there have been feminist voices and African American voices engaged in the debates about liberalism. But he implicitly ignores those voices when he chooses to conclude with a focus on George Kateb, Sheldon Wolin, and Michael Walzer.

University of Minnesota David W. Noble

GREEK MIND/JEWISH SOUL: The Conflicted Art of Cynthia Ozick. By Victor Strandberg. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1994.

Victor Strandberg employs a tripartite structure in *Greek Mind/Jewish Soul* to explicate Cynthia Ozick's thought and craft. "The Matrix of Art," focuses on the intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic bearings revealed in Ozick's essays as well as biographical details that explain her principal themes. "Readings," cogently analyzes the disparate themes of pagan allure, Jewish identity, and the efficacy of art and the artist in the fiction. "Judgment," offers an overview of the criticism and Strandberg's own high praise for Ozick's mastery of style, intellectual rigor, and dramatization of significant themes and subjects. The Hellenic/Hebraic topology for reading Ozick that Strandberg established in his seminal 1983 essay "The Art of Cynthia Ozick" (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language*) is further developed in this text. Strandberg's own assessment and the prevailing critical view of the dominant Judaic subject and philosophic position of the Ozick oeuvre suggest modification of his title, *Greek Aesthetics/Jewish Mind and Soul.*

Characterization of Ozick's condemnation of Christian anti-Semitism as "a violent hatred for the whole of Western civilization," accompanied by a counter Christian apologia radically departs from Strandberg's otherwise impeccable critical judgment. In his zeal to counter her criticism, he implies that her attack on T.S. Eliot's anti-Semitism is part of the postmodernist *Zeitgeist*, that "has encouraged wholesale disdain toward the authority figures of modernism," rather than reading Ozick in the historic context of Jewish response to literary and political anti-Semitism. Similarly, Strandberg's apparent unfamiliarity with the Judaic redemptive principle of *t'shuvah* (spiritual return) and the associated idea of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) which undergird Ozick's moral voice, results in an overly pessimistic misreading of several stories and mars an otherwise admirable study of Cynthia Ozick's writing.

Of significant interest to the serious student of Ozick is the chapter devoted to scholarship. Here Strandberg evaluates and presents the leading critical writing of a decade, including the erudite Joseph Lowin, whose *Cynthia Ozick*, "brought to bear an uncommon mastery of the Judaic lore relevant to Ozick's writing;" Sanford Pinsker's "brief but usefully intelligent book," *The Uncompromising Fictions of Cynthia Ozick*; Lawrence Friedman's "exemplary criticism" in *Understanding Cynthia Ozick*; an assessment of the essays in Harold Bloom's collection *Modern Critical Views: Cynthia Ozick*; and a detailed analysis of essays and praise for the 1987 book-length special issue of *Studies in American Jewish Literature* called "The World of Cynthia Ozick." Because Strandberg's book was already in press, he did not have opportunity to comment on the important books of 1993-1994, Elaine Kauvar's *Cynthia Ozick's Fiction: Tradition and Invention* and Sarah Blacher Cohen's *Cynthia Ozick's Comic Art: From Levity to Liturgy.*

Strandberg has, in the main, achieved his purpose, "to define the author's intellectual moorings," and discharged this objective with intelligence and grace in his examination of the interplay of Ozick's recurrent themes and rhetorical style. Among the strengths of this book are the illumination derived from the author's correspondence with Cynthia Ozick and astute and cogently written literary analysis.

Kansas State University S. Lillian Kremer

GROWING UP IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA: A History and Reference Guide. By Elliott West. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press. 1996.

Set within the tradition of Greenwood Press's list of reference works, *Growing Up in Twentieth-Century America* is nevertheless a departure. Elliott West provides not only a guide to the major literature pertaining to American children and childhood in the twentieth century but a concise history of major developments as well. West looks at six areas: home, play, work, school, health, and law in four chronological periods: 1900-1920, 1921-1940, 1941-1960, and 1960 to the present. He acknowledges that his areas or topics are not exhaustive but argues that use of such a formal structure makes comparisons over time easier and highlights major developments. Among the most significant developments he notes are changing fashions in children's toys, improvements in child health, the decline (or change) in child labor and the changing dynamics of American families. He shows that preschool children spend more time with babysitters than with parents and that members of families are often separated by great distances, while the families themselves are more isolated from each other. Perhaps the most striking change of all in the twentieth century is the decline in the infant mortality rate. Some authorities estimated the rate at 250 per thousand (25%) live births in 1900 while others put the rate at between 100 and 150 per thousand live births (accurate statistics were not kept at that time). By 1970 the number had declined to 20 per thousand; in 1990 the rate stood at 9 per thousand. Rates for African American children stood higher in every period, stark testimony to the continued impact of racism and poverty on children. Another major change was the amazing growth in school attendance for American children. In 1900 about 72% of children were enrolled in school, but attendance was spotty and school years varied dramatically between urban and rural areas. As late as 1940 high school graduation was still unusual in the United States; by 1990 it had become nearly universal.

West also notes other social trends: the earlier onset of puberty for young people; the decline of the specter of infectious diseases as the great killers of children and youth; the increased autonomy of young women; the earlier onset of sexual activity by American youth; the increasing affluence of American families (and their children); the importance of children and youth as consumers; the changing nature of the work of children and youth (most fast food workers, for example, are teenagers); the expansion (and the foreshadowing of the demise) of federal welfare programs for dependent children (AFDS).

Students of American social history, of the history of American children and childhood, and public policy makers will find in *Growing Up in Twentieth-Century America* a handy guide to recent literature on the subject, a useful reference tool that traces major twentieth-century developments, and a coherent narrative overview of American childhood in the last century. Any part of this work could have been expanded, broadened and deepened, but to do so would have placed this work beyond the means of all but a few libraries. West and Greenwood Press are to be congratulated for this practical and accessible work.

University of Memphis Joseph M. Hawes

MOVIE CENSORSHIP AND AMERICAN CULTURE. Edited by Francis G. Couvares. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1996.

After decades of neglect, film scholars and historians have begun to examine the impact that censorship had on the movie industry. A number of books and scholarly articles have appeared in the last five years detailing the history of the Hollywood Production Code Administration and its alter ego, the Catholic Legion of Decency. This book of eleven separate essays is the latest entry into this growing area of scholarship.

Francis Couvares, a professor of history at Amherst, writes in his introduction that one purpose of the book is to correct a "Hollywood-centered" interpretation of film censorship (viewing film censorship from the point-of-view of industry censors). The wide-ranging essays in the book certainly accomplished that goal. Daniel Czitrom's excellent account of the evolution of the use of the licensing power of states and municipalities from controlling theatrical performances to censoring movies in the early 1900s establishes that communities wanted to control movies from their inception. Alison Parker's "Mothering the Movies" offers an interesting view of the lobbying efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union to have the federal government function as censor. Richard Maltby's discussion of the various forces at work in adapting novels to the screen and Couvares' work on the Catholic Church in the 1920s all work to broaden the perception that a few narrow-minded censors struck blindly at all films. Marybeth Hamilton recounts the problems Mae West had with industry censors but strangely makes no mention of the Catholic Legion of Decency's reaction to West. Ruth Vasey's "Foreign Parts" illustrates the role the foreign market and economics played in altering screen images and Steven Vaughn and Garth Jowett add essays on the HUAC investigations and the role of the Supreme Court in ending film censorship. The last essay by Charles Lyons' deals with feminist, Gay and Lesbian and Christian protests against contemporary images on the screen.

One of the most interesting essays is Charlene Regester's "Black Films, White Censors" which recounts the problems that African American film producer Oscar Micheaux had with city and state censorship boards. Micheaux's films often featured interracial relationships, hypocritical ministers, corrupt politicians, large doses of drinking, prostitution and crime and even poked fun at whites by having black actors don "whiteface" to play Caucasians. White censors in Chicago, New York and Virginia saw no humor in Micheaux's films and forced him to reedit his films, sometimes completely changing the original message, before granting him a license. Even though Micheaux often outwitted the censors, according to Regester, her essay illustrates how tightly movies were controlled during the era of censorship.

The book does succeed at offering a needed tonic to the work that has concentrated on industry censors. It suffers, in my opinion, however, from an overly heavy emphasis on the period from the turn of the century to the early 1950s. Garth Jowett's essay on the Supreme Court's decision to strike down prior censorship in *The Miracle* is an excellent discussion of the issues at stake in that case and does summarize the most important court cases that followed the Miracle decision. Nevertheless, only one essay (Charles Lyon's "The Paradox of Protest, 1980-1992") deals in any significant way with the film industry after 1952.

It was during this period that the industry, the censors, the courts and the public experimented with, and fiercely debated, the role of movies in presenting a more realistic presentation of the moral, political and economic issues facing America society. It is unfortunate that there is no essay covering this important period.

It is also surprising that there is almost no discussion in the various essays of the role of Catholic church and its Legion of Decency in censoring Hollywood films. Francis Couvares' essay "Hollywood, Main Street, and the Church" clearly illustrates the significant role that religious organizations played in censoring films from the 1910s to the 1930s but little is said in the other essays about the Catholic role as censor.

These criticisms aside, the book offers an excellent overview of the issues involved in film censorship and American culture and should be very useful as supplementary reading for American history and culture courses.

University of Missouri-Kansas City Gregory D. Black

LOVERS OF CINEMA: The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945. Edited by Jan-Christopher Horak. University of Wisconsin Press. 1995.

Nearly thirty years ago, in *Visionary Film*, P. Adams Sitney marked the beginnings of American avant-garde filmmaking with Maya Deren and *Meshes in the Afternoon* (1943).[1] That influential history privileged "film artists" who labored from the 1940s through the 1970s, often in isolation and sometimes at great personal cost, to create a singular corpus of decidedly non-commercial "artistic films." Along with others in the 1970s, Sitney accepted Lewis Jacobs's conclusion, first expressed in 1947, that, even if one assumed the existence of an earlier generation of "avant-garde" filmmakers (among which, ironically, Lewis himself could be included), "its individual members remained scattered, its productions sporadic, and of the most part viewed by the few."[2] In *Lovers of Cinema*, Jan-Christopher Horak sets out "to retrieve" that earlier generation from the "black hole of history:" into which it has fallen and to argue that a large corpus of films produced during the 1920s and 1930s constitutes a "first American film avant-garde," significantly different from, yet perhaps no less valuable than, the now canonized "second avant-garde" of the post-World War II years. Despite a lengthy production schedule of six years of more (all but one of the fourteen texts were written specially for the collection), Horak's "labor of love" is remarkably successful: on the whole, the essays are freshly revealing and provocative in the issues they raise. Indeed, *Lovers of Cinema* does more than simply recover and reevaluate a forgotten period of cinema history; Horak's *équipe* of writers mobilizes an array of critical models for writing, explicitly interrogates the very notion of *avant-garde*, and implicitly opens up productive lines of inquiry for further study.

Many of the essays collected in *Lovers of Cinema* focus on individual filmmakers, mapping the trajectory of their careers, and some engage in close readings of specific film texts. A few of those filmmakers, like Robert Florey, Dudley Murphy, and Mary Ellen Bute, worked within or in close relation to the Hollywood industry. Brian Taves analyzes the stylistic techniques associated with German Expressionism and French Surrealism that Florey used for satirical purposes in short fiction films such as *The Life and Death of 9413—A Hollywood Extra* (1928). William Moritiz uncovers a wealth of evidence to argue that Murphy was the principal creator of *Ballet Mécanique* (1924), a film usually attributed to the French painter, Fernande Léger. Lauren Rabinovitz examines a dozen of Bute's abstract visual-audial compositions, the most highly developed being *Spook Sport* (1939), done in collaboration with Norman McClearen and released a full year before Disney's *Fantasia*. Most filmmakers, however, avoided personal contact with Hollywood: their filmmaking was irregular and secondary to other pursuits, and their films often

deviated from Hollywood norms. Lisa Cartwright analyzes the literary context of James Watson and Melville Webber's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), as clarified by the conservative modernism of *The Dial* magazine (which Watson published throughout the 1920s). Tom Gunning explores one of the more unusual of these filmmakers, Douglass Crockwell, whose professional work as a graphic illustrator for *Saturday Evening Post* could hardly have been more opposite to the kind of energetic, often sensual animated films he composed as a "hobby," drawing on turn-of-the-century Mutoscope flip cards and Emile Cohl's early phantasmagoric animation films. Horak himself contributes an incisive shot-by-shot analysis of Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler's "city film," *Manhatta* (1921), especially of the paradoxical (modernist/romantic) principles governing its "narrative" structure. And Scott MacDonald makes a cogent argument in defense of the visual pleasures of photographer Ralph Steiner's experimental films, most notably in a shot-by-shot study of H_2O (1929) demonstrating the dictum: "what we see is a function of how willing we are to 'play with' our senses."

Just as many essays, however, address the theoretical problems of defining or mapping the boundaries of an "American avant-garde," and they do so in a variety of ways. Horak raises the issue in his introduction and historical overview of the 1920s and 1930s, pointing to the conceptual intersection of *avant-garde* with other terms such as *experimental, independent, nonfiction*, and especially *amateur* (to which the book's title alludes). On the one hand, Horak suggests, avant-garde filmmaking can be seen as a set of "discursive practices" developed in opposition to, and funded independently of, classical Hollywood cinema. He himself offers a typology of those practices, synthesizing and refining earlier efforts by Janas Mekas, Sitney, and Dana Polan. Yet, prior to the introduction of sound, Kristin Thompson argues, such "practices" did have limited acceptance in Hollywood, at least to the degree that stylistic "experimentation"—as in von Sternberg's *The Salvation Hunters* (1925) or Paul Fejos's *The Last Moment* (1928)—could be marketed for its "novelty" or "innovation." On the other hand, Horak writes, whatever its relation to Hollywood, the American avant-garde also emerged "out of the *reception* of European avant-garde films *in America*," a reception colored by what he calls "American romanticism" and its fundamental "ambivalence toward modernism." It is this distinctive American position that Charles Wolfe and William Uricchio seek to elucidate in their studies of, respectively, 1930s social documentaries by Steiner and his colleagues and 1930s "city films" by Jay Leyda, Herman Weinberg, and Irving Browning. Perhaps the most interesting theoretical perspective, however, comes in Patricia Zimmerman's essay on the amateur film movement or Amateur Cinema League (ACL) that emerged in the late 1920s. At this historical moment, she argues, amateur filmmaking became synonymous with the avant-garde, especially in its promotion of a personal, artisanal aesthetic (using a newly standardized 16mm technology) and its "celebration of the individual artists. . . unfettered by commerce." Although the ACL soon fell under the spell of Hollywood, both Zimmerman and Horak imply that it was against this conjunction of the avant-garde with amateurism that the second American avant-garde posited its own sense of "professionalism."

In his introduction, Horak insists that any history of the avant-garde has to situate its "individual artistic achievements" and filmmaking practices within "their institutional frameworks and reception." Many of the essays in *Lovers of Cinema* address this demand to contextualize, but they tend to do so secondarily; not make it their primary focus. Horak himself offers an excellent overview of the principal venues for avant-garde film exhibition—the "Little Cinema" movement, the Workers Film and Photo League (WFPL),

and especially local ACL clubs—as well as the journals that promoted avant-garde filmmaking—*Amateur Movie Makers, Close UP, Experimental Cinema* (here Cartwright would add *The Dial*). MacDonald and Wolfe distinguish the leftist arena of the WFPL and *Experimental Cinema* from the generally "apolitical" (and sometimes rightist) arena of the others, yet Zimmerman notes that the best theorist of leftist filmmaking, Harry Alan Potamkin, actually published several important articles in *Amateur Movie Makers* (1929-1930). Chuck Kleinhans maps the institutional links that would most strongly impact the post-war American avant-garde through the figure of Theodore Huff (both Steiner and Crockwell can be seen as parallel figures), whose "career" as a writer of program notes, initially with ACL clubs, led to work in film archives (e.g., the Museum of Modern Art) and universities (e.g., New York University) that would lend crucial support to that second generation of filmmakers. And Rabinovitz shows how Bute could sustain a measure of "independence" by developing her own unique distribution system, first with major New York City cinemas in the 1930s and then with art cinema houses in the 1950s. In other words, even if Horak's mandate is not completely fulfilled, the essays in this collection go a long way toward establishing the "institutional frameworks" within which the first American avant-garde labored and toward delineating how those served to both link and de-link one generation from another.

If *Lovers of Cinema* succeeds most fully in its "recovery" of individual filmmakers, specific film texts, and alternative or oppositional filmmaking practices, Horak also clearly points to the need for further research so that others can write a history of the first American avant-garde "defined in terms of film reception." Who were the audiences for these films, what use value did they have for them, what interpretive frameworks tended to govern their reception, in what ways exactly did avant-garde and amateur filmmaking, as Zimmerman puts it, "refashion the spectator from a passive consumer of entertainment into an active producer of meaning, and even images"?

Drake University Richard Abel

1. P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-1978*, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). See also, Sheldon Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1967); David Curtis, *Experimental Cinema* (New York: Universe Books, 1971); and Sitney, ed., *The Essential Cinema: Essays on the Films in the Collections of anthology Film Archives* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

2. Lewis Jacobs, "Experimental Cinema in America (Part 1)," *Hollywood Quarterly* 3.2 (Winter 1947-1948), 111-124; reprinted as "Avant-Garde Production in America," in Roger Manvell, ed., *Experiment in the Film* (London: Grey Walls Press, 1949), 113-152; and in Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film*, 2nd ed. (New York: State Teachers College Press, 1968), 543-582.

IF YOU'VE SEEN ONE, YOU'VE SEEN THE MALL: Europeans and American Mass Culture. By Rob Kroes. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1996.

Drawing on the observations of Dutch, German, French, and English observers of the United States from Tocqueville to Baudrillard, Rob Kroes, professor and chairman of the Department of American Studies at the University of Amsterdam, presents a lively interpretation of the influences of American culture on Europeans. His basic argument is that while American music, movies, and material goods have been both eagerly consumed and vehemently rejected by different segments of European society, the most pervasive influence has been the American tendency to disassemble its own culture, to borrow, hybridize, and blur distinctions between high and low culture.

Paralleling an argument put forward in greater detail by Reinhold Wangleitner in his *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria, After the Second World War* (University of North Carolina Press, 1994), Kroes suggests that American culture is a creolized European culture returning to cause a new Europeanization. The powerful influences of American media and business have not eliminated the differences between various European countries and the United States so much as recast them. In one of his most interesting examples, Kroes cites the case of the T.R.O.S., a Dutch radio station which broadcasts pop music, much to the consternation of Dutch conservatives who labeled the pernicious influence *vertrossing*. In the context of Holland's own culture wars, and lacking the social-political context of race relations in the United States, rock and roll, blues, and rap were Dutchified.

The final result of 500 years of debate over the meaning of America has been, in Kroes' view, the development of a sense of European exceptionalism. The idea of America was created in Europe as a rhetorical device by which Europeans defined themselves. Metaphorical America is flat and classless in contrast to Europe's verticality and social hierarchy, it lacks a sense of history, and organic cohesion. "America is seen as a country of blithe bricolage, irreverently taking apart and recombining at will what to Europeans appears in the light of wholeness, of not holiness" (xiii).

The first two chapters of this 178 page book examine these metaphors especially in the context of the 1920s, when essays on the United States by Johan Huizinga, Mennoter Braak, Marnix Gijzen, Georges Duhamel echoed the criticisms of American materialism by Van Wyck Brooks, James Oppenheim, Waldo Frank, Walter Lippmann and others calling for cultural standards. Kroes then uses documentary photography, Hollywood movies of the 1920s, advertising, Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, the Vietnam war in the media, and rap music to illustrate his point about American modular culture, a Lego block civilization that constructs meaning from individual pieces of "empty signifiers."

This metaphor, an acknowledged borrowing from Daniel Boorstin and John Blair, serves Kroes well, especially in his interpretation of an ersatz Dutch village shopping mall outside Holland, Michigan, and his analysis of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Kroes is at his best, I think, in his discussion of the ways in which French *nouvelle vague* filmmakers Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard critiqued American narcissism and superficiality using the freedom of cinematic techniques they had learned from Hollywood. Kroes' book abounds in such ironies and paradoxes.

Americans should read *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall* to understand how one intelligent European scholar tries to make sense of American culture. Although the book sometimes reads more like notes for a seminar than a fully developed monograph, and although there are a few errors (Mary for Marion Post Wolcott, Karl for Joseph Schumpeter) which the editors should have caught, this is an important contribution to the discussion of Americanization, mass culture, and national identities.

George Washington University Bernard Mergen

DEAF HISTORY UNVEILED: Interpretations from the New Scholarship. Edited by John Vickrey Van Cleve. Washington, D.C.: Gaulladet University Press. 1993.

This intriguing collection reflects the explosive growth and increasing sophistication of scholarship in deaf history, a field that barely existed before the 1970s. Most of its 16

studies were prepared for the First International Conference on Deaf History, sponsored by Gaulladet University in 1991. Especially taken together, they illustrate the value of such research not only for understanding the experiences of the deaf, but also for addressing issues of central concern to contemporary cultural historians, including the creation of subcultures, the meaning of minority status, and the changing nature of modern identity politics.

Numerous episodes from European and North American history are explored here, ranging from the work of a 16th-century monk, Pedro Ponce de Leon, to the controversies over the latest medical device designed to improve hearing, the cochlear implant. Sources are equally wideranging, from writings of prominent figures to comments in school newspapers, from census data to analyses of annual rituals. The editor's introductory notes are particularly valuable in showing how each essay augments or revises existing scholarship.

Several essays shed light on issues of importance to the deaf community. Among the most controversial was the rise of "oralism"—teaching emphasizing speech and lipreading—and the corresponding suppression of sign language in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While this controversy has been widely documented, evidence gathered here adds new dimensions to understanding its intellectual and social contours. An excellent essay by Douglas Baynton, for instance, links the new faith in oralism to the acceptance of evolutionary theory: sign language, once respected, was reconceptualized as "gesture-language," a vestige of man's ape past suitable only for savages and destined for extinction. In a different vein, Robert Buchanan offers new evidence of resistance to this policy in documenting the firing of teachers and censoring of the school newspaper by the hearing superintendent promoting oralism at the New Jersey School for the Deaf.

In many ways, the histories of these minorities mirror the broader histories of their communities. Thus, like other Hoosiers, students at Indiana's School for the Deaf were passionate about basketball. In 19th-century Montreal, the founding of a deaf order of nuns reflects the broader insularity and church control evident throughout much of Francophone Canada, while historians chronicling Hungary's first school for the deaf founded in 1802, are unclear about whether to credit King Francis of Austria or a Hungarian nobleman—an issue which mirrors the divided identity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In deeper ways as well, these explorations of deaf identity illustrate the larger processes through which all social identities are constructed and reinforced. Thus, in an evocative essay analyzing the elegant deaf banquets held annually in 19th century Paris, Bernard Mottez conveys both the uniqueness of these events and the larger social significance of all such banquets—a form of ritual still widely used by numerous organizations to define and cement group identity.

Perhaps most intriguing are the broader questions raised by these studies about the relationships between majorities and minorities, the forms of cultural oppression and resistance, and the very nature of subcultural differences. These questions are most explicitly addressed in Harlan Lane's essay. Should deafness be conceptualized as a physical disability, a condition analogous to, say, "blindness"? Or, as Lange argues, is it really more analogous to "blackness," a trait marking individuals as visibly distinctive but not disabled? Or perhaps the most appropriate analogue for "deaf" is "Hispanic"—a term describing individuals united largely by a common language. As such comparisons show, the very idea of a common deaf identity, like the identities of "blacks" and "Hispanics," is itself problematic in its assumptions and its implications.

By selecting essays which explore such issues within diverse historical contexts, John Vickrey Van Cleve has produced a volume in which the whole is greater than the parts. His

collection offers a provocative addition to the literature on deaf history and a welcome contribution to the even larger body of scholarship on the creation of community identity.

California State University, Fullerton Leila Zenderland

BEING RELIGIOUS, AMERICAN STYLE: A History of Popular Religiosity in the United States. By Charles H. Lippy. Westport: Greenwood Press. 1994.

In *Being Religious, American Style*, Charles Lippy challenges the reader to think about religion in America in a new light. Rather than trace individual histories of various religious traditions, Lippy cuts across the grain of culture and examines the systems of religious meaning operating primarily outside of formal, institutionalized settings in American history. The identification of "popular" forms of religion or, as Lippy himself insists, "popular religiosity," shifts the focus away from organized patterns of religious authority and toward religious sensibilities in everyday life.

Lippy makes his theoretical position clear in the introduction. Drawing on Edward Shils's discussion of "central zones," Lippy writes: "There is a central zone of religious symbols, values, and beliefs—many of them provided by official, formal religious traditions—that comprises the totality of religion in a culture" (10). The analysis of popular religiosity, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the creative interplay between this zone and alternative, more individualized systems of meaning that have appeared in American society. These views often draw on both central and subsidiary zones, and are used to access perceived supernatural power and make religious sense of the world. Lippy writes, "'Popular religiousty' refers to this dynamic process of creating and maintaining personal worlds of meaning and the interconnectedness of the religiosity of a people within society" (10). While it may address individual, personal concerns, over time popular religiosity can assume a variety of organized forms; despite the variety, however, expressions of this dimension of religion are possible because of the relationship to the common, central religious zones operating in American culture.

At the outset of the analysis is a useful overview of recent works that bear on the category "popular religion," covering a number of scholars in diverse fields, including Peter Williams, Vittorio Lanternari, Robert Wuthnow, Gavin Langmuir, and Robert Redfield. After articulating his own definition of popular religiosity, Lippy then proceeds to the historical task of reconstructing this strand of American religious culture, beginning with the colonial period and following through to the late twentieth century. Each of the chapters trace various forms of popular religious expression; from the widespread presence of occult practices in the Colonial period, to the spread of theosophy in the late nineteenth century, to the appeal of the Nation of Islam in the twentieth, Lippy's investigation ranges far and wide.

The focus of most discussions, however, is the identification of a central characteristic of popular religiosity: the individual experience of some kind of supernatural power, and its employment for practical purposes—like the production of meaning—in everyday life. For example, the formation of a set of practices surrounding the ingestion of peyote can be linked, in Lippy's scheme, to both corporate and individual strategies of empowerment in the Native American community. In this discussion, what counts is not the institutionalization of peyote religion in the Native American Church, but the intermingling of personal experience and more traditional beliefs with Christian symbol systems in the search for power and meaning.

By exploring both individual and collective relationships with supernatural power that fall outside of conventional forms of religious expression, *Being Religious, American Style* opens up new avenues of study for those interested in the myriad dimensions of religious life in America. Indeed, American religious history and culture looks quite different when emphasis is given to various understandings of how the supernatural, in Lippy's own words, "empowers ordinary people to erect and inhabit their own worlds of meaning" (18).

Emory University Gary Laderman

A LIVING OF WORDS: American Women in Print Culture. Edited by Susan Albertine. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. 1994.

The literary world has increasingly become more aware and inclusive of women writers over the past few decades. Most of the works now included in the presentation of women and literature represent women authors who have published novels, short stories, and poetry. This work, *A Living of Words*, is an effort to fill out that record in yet another way. Albertine as editor has included in this work twelve essays that discuss the work of women in different and related areas of the literary field. She does not restrict the choice of subjects to those literary women who were authors only. Rather, she includes as well the wide range of occupations in print culture, among them publishing, editing, journalism, patronage and printing. A few examples will suffice.

Albertine presents the selected women in chronological order beginning with Ann Franklin, colonial printer and bookseller for thirty years, who printed several Rhode Island newspapers, the official papers of the Rhode Island colony, and *The Rhode Island Almanac*. She served as "deputy printer" twice; after the death of her husband James, and then of her son, James, Jr. Initially she handled her printing business as the "Widow Franklin" as was the custom at the time, but before her death she signed her work in her own right: "Printed by Ann Franklin."

Two of the better known women included in the book are Ida B. Wells and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffian, both African Americans, who were owners and publishers of newspapers. Both of them were strong women and intellectually skilled, they used their newspapers for the cause of bettering the cause of African Americans.

Harriet Moody, besides teaching school, established the Home Delicacies Association which provided elegant foods first to the Marshall Field Tea Room and to other fancy restaurants, among them her own establishments. In addition she was a financial supporter of *Poetry* and organized readings in poetry in various institutions of Chicago. She provided "cakes and poetry" in her own restaurants in support of the arts.

Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, editors of *The Little Review*, are also featured. They not only publicized the works of male writers such as Pound, Joyce, Eliot and Lewis, but the work of some of the foremost feminist modernists such as Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson, Djuana Barnes and Mina Loy. Radicals and lesbians, Anderson and Heap struggled always with a world that had not completely left Victorianism behind. Among these struggles were the political and moral responses to some of their publications, especially chapters form Joyce's *Ulysses*. Ultimately Joyce's work was published in France by Sylvia Beach, expatriate publisher and bookseller, also featured in this work.

The other women Albertine presents are Sarah J. Hale, Elizabeth Peabody, Mabel Loomis Tood, Harriet Monroe, Mary Austin, and Caresse Cosby. Albertine's work

presents these women as entrepreneurs who helped further female professionalism in print culture. The work is a highly readable scholarly presentation which helps rediscover women's place in the world of letters in its fullest definition. It prepares the ground for a more comprehensive study of the topic.

Saint Louis University Elizabeth Kolmer

TO SOW ONE ACRE MORE: Childbearing and Farm Productivity in the Antebellum North. By Lee A. Craig. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1993.

There are two striking patterns about childbearing rates in nineteenth-century America. One is the dramatic and persistent drop in these rates. The number of births per 1000 population fell from over 55 in 1800 to only a bit over 30 in 1900. The second notable pattern is that, at any point in time, the birth rate increased significantly as one moved further west, especially within the North. Economic historians have given these patterns considerable attention, developing a wide variety of family fertility decision-making models, and closely examining available census data to test these models. Lee Craig's book, based on his doctoral dissertation, which won the Economic History Association's Allen Nevins Prize in 1989, is a valuable addition to this field. While this book is primarily written for economic historians and historical demographers, it should not be ignored by anyone studying the rural American family of the nineteenth century.

Craig approaches the larger topic by focusing on family farms in the antebellum North in 1860. He divides farm families regionally and then into five life cycle stages (young couples without children, families with children under 13, families with teenagers and younger children, families with only teenagers, and older couples without children). His first surprising finding is that life cycle stage had practically no role in determining the economic activities performed on farms. Within each region, families in different life cycle stages earned revenues in almost exactly the same manner. At every life cycle stage, farm-owning families in the Midwest, for example, earned approximately 30 percent of their gross farm revenue from growing cereal crops; 29 percent from dairy, poultry, and market gardens; 22 percent from land and capital improvements; and 15 percent from hay and livestock.

The next surprise comes in calculating the value of household labor by region. Craig cannot tell exactly how much output each family member produced, but he deduces economic activity by estimating how much the total value of labor output changed in the presence of each type of family member. He finds that children under 7 reduced the value of output, presumably because they reduced parents' economic activity. For each child aged 7 to 12 the family's output increased by about $16—only 7 percent of the income produced by a typical adult male. Teen-aged females boosted family farm income by only about $22, while teenaged males boosted income by $58 (Craig is critical of his sources, explaining that they may underestimate the value of female labor). The biggest surprise is that child labor was most valuable in the Northeast, not in the Midwest or Frontier. These findings should lay to rest simple notions that families had more children in the West because children were so productive there.

Craig's finishing touch is to calculate the present discounted value at birth of children on northern farms. These numbers are almost uniformly negative. Children were a poor "investment." However, "the utility parents derived from parenthood and the value of children as consumption goods subsidized their value as producers" (91). Despite their

lower output, Craig concludes that children were cheaper to raise in the West, making their rate of return less negative. This spurred westerners to have more children. The concluding chapter discusses the implications of these findings for the century-long fertility decline.

Inadequate data and incomplete knowledge about key parameters force Craig to make some simplifying assumptions in his calculations. Many will question his assumptions about the value of children as "old age security" and the role that bequests play in the calculating the value of children, for example. In addition, Craig's economic model of fertility has little to say about the supply side. However, it is doubtful that alternative, plausible assumptions would overturn Craig's principal results.

Wake Forest University Robert Whaples

IN THE TIME OF THE AMERICANS: FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Marshall, MacArthur—The Generation That Changed America's Role in the World. By David Fromkin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1995.

David Fromkin's massive and ambitious tome attempts to provide a narrative account of the collective evolution of the thinking of the generation that, in his words, "changed America's role in the world." The title notwithstanding, this study does not restrict itself to three presidents and three generals; they are merely the most prominent of a cohort which included Dean Acheson, William C. Bullitt, James F. Byrnes, William J. Donovan, the brothers Allen W. and John Foster Dulles, James V. Forrestal, Felix Frankfurter, W. Averell Harriman, Christian A. Herter, Herbert Hoover, Harry Hopkins, George F. Kennan, Walter Lippmann, Robert A. Lovett, Paul Nitze, Robert H. Taft, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Wendell L. Wilkie, and many others. Fromkin describes the evolution of their thinking from the First World War onward, an event which he, like Michael J. Hogan and Charles L. Maier, rightly regards as a crucial experience for the generation which during the 1940s would orchestrate the development of the United States into a world power. The book describes American intervention in the First World War, Woodrow Wilson's negotiation and the Senate's ultimate rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, United States involvement in the Second World War, and the early development of the Cold War. The book is dominated by the commanding, heroic figure of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the leader of "the FDR generation," a man who, though "lacking in depth and intellect, was to see what the United States before others did" (117), and who presciently wished to intervene in the First World War, deftly steered the United States into the Second, and even after his death ensured his country's lasting commitment to international affairs.

Fromkin rightly stresses the influence upon his subjects of both Theodore Roosevelt's assertive big-stick diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson's more high-toned international idealism. His work is also perceptive in stressing the manner in which their opinions fragmented after the First World War, and many were left disillusioned by the war's aftermath and by the failure of the United Sates to ratify the League of Nations. Among major omissions is Fromkin's virtual dismissal of the 1920s, a time he characterized as a decade-long "spree" when Americans drank heavily, played jazz, and enjoyed themselves, while largely forgetting European affairs. In doing so, he ignores the enormous and sophisticated literature on United States economic diplomacy, security, disarmament, and naval policy, as exemplified in the work of, among numerous others, Melvyn P. Leffler,

Frank Costigliola, and Warren I. Cohen. Indeed, despite some discussion of American banker's role in supplying the Allies during the First World War, and of the Marshall Plan, on the whole Fromkin gives economics and bankers rather short shrift, preferring to concentrate upon the practitioners of more traditional politics, war, and diplomacy.

The book has the weakness of its ambition. Often an enthralling read, stuffed with fascinating tidbits on its assorted protagonists, conceptually it is somewhat weak. The wide variety of men studied makes it somewhat difficult to regard them as a coherent group or even generation, while the massive scope of this study, extending over four decades, inevitably makes it superficial at times. Moreover, one must disagree with some of Fromkin's basic theses. While some of those he studied were undoubtedly anti-colonialist, this was by no means the case with all. Equally, though many in FDR's and Truman's administration adopted a 'Europe-first' emphasis, this was emphatically not true of MacArthur and only with qualifications of Marshall. Throughout this study, Fromkin takes an essentially admiring view of his subjects, stressing their high moral principles, relative international selflessness, and lack of realpolitik. Finally, he argues that, whereas the FDR generation, whose last great representative was Eisenhower, was characterized by a relatively modest, Europe-centered outlook, this was not true of their successors in the administration of John F. Kennedy, who "focussed strategic attention on the areas outside of Europe and on the possibility of actually engaging the energy in armed combat in such places" (548). Fromkin is surely wrong to idealize his protagonists at the expense of Kennedy, in the process ignoring the manner in which the youthful president and his advisers consciously regarded themselves as the heirs of the generation before them, carrying out policies first established by their predecessors. Moreover, he underestimates the degree to which members of "the FDR generation" themselves globalized and militarized United States commitments, and paved the way for their country's enmirement in Vietnam and other, less all-absorbing conflicts. To do so is to ignore the continuities of personnel and even more of Cold War ideology which were so marked a feature of American policy for almost three decades after 1945, and whose roots Fromkin so percipiently traces to the First World War.

University of Hong Kong Priscilla Roberts

TO CHANGE THEM FOREVER: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920. By Clyde Ellis. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press. 1996.

Academic scholars who study Native American history recently have shown a strong interest in federally operated boarding schools for American Indians. These institutions were created to assimilate Native Americans during the late 19th century. Although some still exist today, they operated at their peak during the turn-of-the-century. In *To Change Them Forever*, Clyde Ellis adds to this mounting body of scholarship, documenting the history of the Rainy Mountain Boarding School that existed in Western Oklahoma during the turn-of-the-century. Ellis' book explores in depth a particular irony that existed within federal educational policy toward Native Americans. Although government officials expressed in strongly worded language a desire to wipe away American Indian cultures completely through what Ellis calls a "peaceful war of assimilation" (xiii.), they never actually supported their ambitions with the resources necessary to accomplish it. As a result, he argues that the mostly Kiowa and Comanche students who attended Rainy Mountain did not in fact completely assimilate, but instead learned how to survive within 20th century contexts.

Ellis' study of Rainy Mountain is unique, for instead of focusing on the more well publicized and studied off-reservation boarding schools like Carlisle in Pennsylvania or Haskell in Kansas, he examines a reservation boarding school. As he documents, because of the location of these institutions on reservations, many more Native American children attended them. Ellis states in his preface that his focus is on the challenges Rainy Mountain posed to native cultures and the ways such cultures survived. However, most of his book focuses on the contradictory policies that the federal government adopted toward Indian education and the effects of these actions upon the school.

He does explore student experiences in a chapter based upon oral history interviews with former Rainy Mountain students that he conducted and that he collected from archives. However, most of his material reveals the perspectives that characterized the rhetoric and policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, white politicians, school superintendents, and white reformers. He uses well known secondary sources, but also adds a thoroughly researched body of material drawn from annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, conference proceedings, correspondence, and education journal articles from the later 19th century. From these sources, he moves back and forth between chapters providing general history of reservation boarding school policy as created by reformers like Thomas Jefferson Morgan, and ones which focus more specifically upon Rainy Mountain.

The correspondence that he collects from Rainy Mountain provides a vivid case study of federal neglect of the boarding school system that was supposed to uplift future generations of indigenous peoples. Ellis documents how a budget minded Congress and Bureau of Indian Affairs were stubbornly indifferent to the conditions that students lived under at boarding schools. Rainy Mountain superintendents like Cora Dunn were usually met with cold rejection when requesting supplies for even the most rudimentary provisions like plumbing or clothing.

In one of his most important sets of chapters, Ellis argues that the turn-of-the-century marked a key moment in the history of BIA educational policy. He writes that during this time, progressives who saw Native Americans as "racially backward" began to dictate policy. Their approach differed from that of reformers like Morgan who saw American Indians as culturally backward, but capable of assimilating. Progressives used their racial discourse to justify pulling away from funding for Indian education. This ultimately made conditions at Rainy Mountain even worse, foreshadowing its eventual closing in 1920. Ironically, however, this policy shift also meant that the harsh discipline that had once characterized boarding schools, in which students received severe punishments for speaking indigenous languages, were less stringently enforced. As a result, expressions of Native American identities became more tolerated and accepted as a part of boarding school life.

Ellis' documentary evidence and historical narrative are strong, and the book is very well written. However, the author could have provided a more nuanced interpretation of his findings had he engaged more with some kind of cultural theory. For example, Ellis tends to view the creators of the boarding school system as well meaning, but "misguided" reformers who must be viewed accurately within the context of the 19th century "and of the values that determined race relations at the time" (14). This position correctly discourages contemporary readers from feeling as if they are immune from racism by comparing their ideas to those of people who lived in the past. However, it also dismisses an opportunity to critically analyze how Indian educational policy gained ideological prominence, or how it was related to powerful social, economic, and political interests of

the time. Ellis' model of cultural analysis also tends to portray dominant American cultural and Iowa cultural practices as each somewhat static when he asks about the degree to which Kiowa culture was challenged and the degree to which it survived. He clearly knows a great deal about Kiowa life and customs, but he does not really analyze how the processes that have defined it perhaps have changed to accommodate boarding school experiences. Overall, however, Ellis provides an insightful history of a reservation boarding school, a story that resonates in surprising ways with contemporary debates over assimilation, education, and culture "wars."

Dickinson College John Bloom

RACE AND DEMOCRACY: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972. By Adam Fairclough. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1995.

In 1987 Adam Fairclough published *To Redeem the Soul of America*, a well-researched, sympathetic, but critical study of the Southern Christian leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr. His was arguably the best of the Montgomery-to-Selma studies of the southern civil rights movement, studies that emphasized nationally prominent leaders and federal policy. Now Fairclough joins revisionist scholarship in emphasizing grassroots movements and local leaders.

In *Race and Democracy* he challenges the adequacy of the classic model's horizontal, regional focus on such organizations as the SCLC, SNCC, CORE, their nationally-known leaders, and the dramatic insurgency of civil disobedience. Seeking a different angle of vision, he has backed off a half-century selected a Deep South state (Louisiana) unusually rich in racial and cultural ingredients, and reconstructed the narrative of racial politics from 1915, when the New Orleans chapter of the NAACP was chartered, to 1972, when Edwin Edwards was elected governor in a biracial campaign that ended the post-*Brown* era of segregationist dominance in Louisiana.

Concentrating on the role of local leaders and organizations, Fairclough reconstructs the long, uphill, pre-*Brown* struggle of NAACP chapters and litigation through equal-protection claims. He stresses the rise of black militancy in the 1930s, when the depression eroded the thin buffers of interracial comity, and white working-class suffering widened the common ground for biracial coalition. He emphasizes discontinuity between the New Deal and wartime years, when CIO and Communist militancy helped Young Turks displace the Creole elite leaders of the NAACP, and the modern "Movement" dominated by King. In Louisiana, much was suffered and little gained by courageous and persistent local activities until the national victories associated with Birmingham and Selma. Fairclough tells the story of decades of parish-level insurgency in impressive detail, and carries the narrative through the implementation phase of the late 1960s, when national civil rights reforms dismantled the legal underpinnings of segregation, the Black Power movement fragmented CORE, and black voting reordered Louisiana's political landscape.

A price is paid, however, for the richness of this local narrative. By reaching below the great battalions to tell the story of squads and platoons, Fairclough places a heavy burden on his readers. For this reason, I would prefer a different final chapter. The one he wrote is an epilogue, reaching from 1972 to the present, slipping into the sociological present tense. This is an intelligent discussion, marked by Fairclough's unfailingly fair-minded judgments. But I felt a stronger need for a retrospective analysis, reaching back to 1915 and sorting out the major themes of continuity and change.

Fairclough has now written two important books on the black-led crusade for equal rights, both of them grounded in impressive archival scholarship—especially for a scholar operating out of Britain. One book stressed the horizontal, regional dimensions of the Montgomery-to-Selma saga, the other the vertical, state-and-local dimension of the long war against Jim Crow. What does the story in Louisiana tell us about our greatest national fault line and the mighty battles of the 1960s that destroyed the Jim Crow South, but left us with no national peace?

Vanderbilt University Hugh Davis Graham

SOCIETY ON THE RUN: A European View of Life in America. By Werner Peters. New York: M.E. Sharpe. 1996.

This knowledgeable European view of life in America is the updated translation of a 1992 book by a German political consultant and lecturer who studied at Harvard University and was a Congressional Fellow on the staffs of Congressman Lee Hamilton and Senator Eugene McCarthy. His model is Alex de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. His intent is to analyze the problems of the society whose power, culture, and democratic ideal are Americanizing the world.

The problems which the United States faces lie in the unresolved contradictions of American life. The essence of democratic society is self-government, individual freedom, self-fulfillment, and change. Its greatest problems are a loss of moderation and balance, the decline of civic commitment, the monetarization of happiness and value, and the destructive potential for excess. Tocqueville's public participation democracy is in danger of turning inward to excessive consumerism, search for pleasure, TV focused passivity, greed, and the identification of freedom with freedom from government and public responsibility.

Peters briefly toys with pairing positive Jeffersonian idealism and negative Hamiltonian materialism and civic religion with pragmatism (which he believes is necessarily atomistic), before setting off on a dash through American culture, politics, social problems, and an imperial foreign policy. Pop culture failed to live up to its potential. Television, "astocracy" (leadership by experts and stars, including the President as superstar), and a public desire for entertainment from the media, rather than news, are making Americans passive consumers. American constitutionalism and judicial review are good, but lawyers are a new parasitic class, and foreign policy is driven by interventionism, paranoia, and a military-industrial complex. America is "the most open and mobile of all nations in the world," but it is no "end of history."

Overall, Dr. Peters has written a fast moving American civics lesson, replete with illustrations and cartoons, for German magazine readers, which Americans, with reservations, could read with profit. They will not find a comparison with German society or of Dr. Peter's findings with those of his admired example Alexis de Tocqueville. Robert Bellah's writing also informs Dr. Peter's thinking, and Dave Barry and P.J. O'Rourke are quoted almost as often as Tocqueville. There is no index.

University of Florida David Chalmers

HOODED KNIGHTS ON THE NIAGARA: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo, New York. By Shawn Lay. New York: New York University Press.

It's a story with some great moments: hooded Klansmen interrupting a Presbyterian service to make a speech and donation to the church, a bomb exploding on the porch of a pro-Klan minister, a government break-in at Klan headquarters, and shootout between KKK leaders and a cop working undercover with the Klan. It's these kind of details which stand out in Shawn Lay's study of the KKK in Buffalo. While the tale he uncovers is fascinating, Lay's analysis of these events leaves something to be desired.

This study focuses on what is known as the "Second Klan," not the infamous Reconstruction-era organization, but the political movement which became a significant force in American public life from 1922-1924. Past studies may have drawn few distinctions between the KKK in these different eras, but Lay is part of a group of contemporary historians who emphasize crucial differences in the latter movement. "To characterize the [second Klan] as a hopelessly aberrant and lawless fringe group would be manifestly inaccurate. Indeed, the most frightening aspect of the Invisible Empire was its ability to attract ordinary, law-abiding citizens."

Buffalo in the 1920s was a city undergoing change. Not only was it an ethnically divided city which had just undergone the unrest of a nationwide steel strike, but the establishment of Prohibition in 1920 sharpened lines separating the largely "dry" Protestant population from the mostly "wet" Catholics. The election of the anti-Prohibition Republican Francis Schwab (Buffalos' first Catholic mayor) only further enforced this division.

While Klan organizing began before Schwab was elected, it intensified after his inauguration, owning partly to the new Mayor's lackluster enforcement of vice and prohibition laws. At its peak, the KKK in Buffalo had as many as 2000 members in city and another 2000 in the outlying suburbs. Lay goes to great lengths to show that the recruits into the Klan had relatively high-status and well-paying jobs. Compared to the male population at large, Klan members tended to be young and lived in outlying wards of the city, but they were spread throughout Protestant denominations.

Aside from occasional cross-burnings and raids on speakeasies, the Klan engaged in few extralegal activities. In fact, the picture of the KKK which emerges in this study differs little from fraternal lodges and political clubs of the 1920s. It is one of Lay's central points that the religious and racial bigotry of the Klan did not mark it as unusual at this time. "Similar sentiments, almost surely, were at that time routinely expressed in lodge halls, private clubs, executive board rooms, and around Protestant family dinner tables."

The Klan never became the kind of force in Buffalo that it did elsewhere (for a time, the KKK controlled state governments in Oregon, Colorado, and Indiana), largely because a stolen membership list of the Buffalo Klan exposed its members and soon led to the group's demise. As Lay details, Mayor Schwab had planted a spy within the Klan, and arranged for a break-in during which the Klan's membership list was stolen, only to be recovered by police responding to an "anonymous tip." Now that the list (which the Klan unsuccessfully attempted to deny showed their members) could be considered recovered stolen property, the police made an itemized copy which became part of the public record. Over the next few weeks, hundreds and then thousands of people lined up to view and copy the list. With the loss of their secrecy the Klan soon lost membership, fell into infighting, and eventually ceased to be an active political force in the city.

The membership list (the existence of which is a rarity in Klan archives) also provides Lay with the means for the quantitative part of his study. Using the names on the list he

attempts to establish area of residency, religion and occupation of the various members. While the many charts and maps of membership throughout the city are interesting, they do not provide Lay with much analytical assistance, and his conclusions based on this information make up the weakest part of the book. One particularly feeble claim is his assertion that there were a high number of engineers in the Klan because their jobs required a sense of orderliness and precision and that therefore they would have been attracted to the Klan's commitment to reordering society. By this logic, we should now expect to find a high level of accountants among neo-Nazi sympathizers. Overall, while Lay offers convincing evidence for the relatively high socio-economic standing of KKK members, he is on much shakier ground when trying to show occupation as a determinant of Klan membership.

One wishes that Lay would have ventured beyond the archive of KKK materials in order to theorize the Klan in Buffalo. For if the Klan's "normality" at this point in history is what is most frightening about them, it is larger societal conventions which need to be explored as much as unique local conditions. However, the study he presents is important in that it refuses to allow readers to easily marginalize the KKK and its beliefs.

State University of New York at Buffalo Jim O'Loughlin

WHEN THE OLD LEFT WAS YOUNG: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941. By Robert Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press. 1993.

THE OLD LEFT IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE. By Julia Dietrich. New York: Twayne Publishers. 1996.

LEFT INTELLECTUALS AND POPULAR CULTURE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA. By Paul R. Gorman. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1996.

About the only thing these three books have in common is that they all deal with some part of the history of the left. Otherwise they differ both in subject matter and quality. Julia Dietrich's *The Old Left* proposes "to survey the history of the Old Left in all its sectarian variety and to examine a representative selection of literature that came out of and was written about the movement." Admitting that she can only consider a "small portion" of the radical literature, Dietrich wants to look at the "Novel, play, poem, or song" as "not simply an 'art product' of its society but as an active agent in the play of social forces." However, Dietrich's selection of these works is so limited that she is unable to develop what being an "active agent" entails. Occasionally, such as in her use of Agnes Smedley's *Daughters of the Earth* to note the "cultural gulfs" between people's experience and party life, she offers insights. But there are simply too few examples and too many gaps to prove that the writings constituted being an "active agent."

Paul Gorman's *Left Intellectuals and Popular Culture in Twentieth-Century America* argues that there has been a continuity among twentieth-century left critics of mass culture. Rather than being a "sporadic and episodic critique" resulting from "major social shifts or crises," the critique of mass culture, Gorman finds, has been characterized by consistency from "an intellectual cadre" seeking to understand "the explosive growth of entertainment . . . and their own roles in the emerging mass democratic society." His chapters analyze this consistent critique of the dangers of mass culture and popular entertainments to a

public which in its passivity was, in the minds of the critics, excessively susceptible to the negative influences of the new forms of popular culture. Although Gorman expresses sympathy for the social aims of the left critics in trying to improve the lives and social conditions of the public, he nevertheless finds their critique elitist in its cultural hierarchies and simplistic in its psychology which assumed that the effects of mass culture on its audience were "direct and immediate."

Gorman develops his approach consistently. He starts with the conservative defenders of high culture of the late nineteenth century and works his way through the Progressives (with their solicitous, but condescending, sympathy for the "victims of mass culture"). He finds that the cultural radicals of the World War I years, like Randolph Bourne, and the supporters of popular culture in the 1920s, like Gilbert Seldes, shared an enthusiasm for the newer forms of popular entertainment. But he argues that they never could escape the idea of culture as a product of an intellectual elite—in this case an intellectual elite drawing on popular forms. He criticizes the Chicago school of sociologists for viewing urbanization (and the mass culture that went with it) as destructive of an earlier rural community that had provided previous meaning to the now deracinated public. In the latter part of the book, Gorman analyzes and critiques the 1930s Communist resurrection of earlier Progressive "victimization" theories and the high culture/mass culture dichotomies that are associated with the New York intellectuals—most notably Dwight Macdonald—of the late 1930s and which took root in Cold War America.

Gorman's is an informed and strongly-argued critique. Yet there are places where his thesis of continuity leads him to overstress the importance of the commonality. The late nineteenth-century conservative critique of mass culture and Dwight Macdonald's later critique shared an elitism. But what seems important to me is the difference between an elitist defense of modernist "high culture" and the genteel tradition that defended a pseudo-version of high culture which expurgated for moralistic reasons writers that Macdonald and the New York intellectuals would view as the leading creators of high culture.

More bothersome to my mind are the over-generalities about the public's "agency" in the producing and receiving of mass culture. Impressive as Gorman's critique of the history of the left's critique of mass culture is, it rests on generalities and references to the public's agency, its "shaping" of the entertainments, its "tailoring of the arts to meet popular tastes." The reader needs to learn more about such claims in *specific* terms in order to evaluate whether or not we are being offered a truly nuanced theory to replace an older simplistic one or whether much of Gorman's alternative theory amounts ultimately only to the public's ability to say "yes" or "no" to the entrepreneurs of mass culture—surely a truncated version of what constitutes agency.

Robert Cohen's *When the Old Left Was Young* is a major work on student radicalism in the thirties. Thoroughly researched and forcefully written, it tells the dramatic story of the rise of the student left in the depth of the depression; its early engagements in free Speech fights and anti-war activities focusing on anti-R.O.T.C. campaigns and the Oxford Pledge; and its struggles against economic exploitation, such as its role in the expose of conditions in Harlan County, Kentucky. Cohen shows how the need to function within the college student community led the Communist leaders of the National Student League to avoid some of the more doctrinaire positions of their elders; though rivals, the NSL and the Socialist-led Student League for Industrial Democracy operated within the more fluid politics of the college campus. The result was that by the time of the 1935 anti-war strikes on campus, there was what could accurately be described as a mass student movement.

The growth of the student movement led to grass-roots demands for the amalgamation of the participating organizations. The end result of complicated negotiations

between the Communists and Socialists was the American Student Union. Although anti-Popular Front and anti-collective security members of the Young Peoples Socialist League were participants in the American Student Union, the organization soon took its place as a Popular Front organization supporting collective security and the New Deal. This was, in part, because the young Socialist Executive Secretary, Joseph Lash, supported these positions. Cohen stresses the continued power of anti-war sentiment on campus in the late 1930s, but also the role of ASU in leading it toward a collective security position. He also argues that the ASU, as it came into the orbit of the New Deal, did not abandon its criticism of the inadequacies of the New Deal economic program, including its program for students. The end of the book tells the story of the collapse of the American Student Union in the aftermath of the Nazi-Soviet Pact; having done so much to lead the student movement to a position in support of collective security, the Communist leaders of the ASU were left with a skeletal organization when they chose to defend the new Communist isolationism.

One of the great strengths of Cohen's book is that it has an often passionate sympathy for the ideals and activities of the student movement without sacrificing a critical perspective. Cohen shows that the political leadership of the movement was even at its height top-down, that the leaders of the factions made secret, anti-democratic arrangements that divided up national leadership positions. He especially shows how the Communists during the Popular Front period often kept secret their party membership and how this contributed to the disillusionment with and bitterness toward them after the Pact.

Despite my great admiration for the book, I have two reservations. I think Cohen's support for the ASU collective-security position during the Popular Front period lacks the critical perspective he applies to the socialist critics of it. Granted the validity of much of the critique of left-wing "isolationism," the benefits of collective security were more problematic than Cohen makes it appear. With a British government which preferred Franco to the Loyalists, an American President who extended the embargo to cover the Spanish Civil War, and a Russian Premier whose dedication to collective security was far more ambiguous than his defenders believed, those who raised doubts about collective security would seem to have a case that cannot be entirely dismissed. I also believe that Cohen does not emphasize enough the price the student movement paid for moving so firmly into the New Deal orbit during the Popular Front period. While he is correct that the ASU continued criticizing specific deficiencies of the New Deal, these criticisms took place within the context of a support that negated the power of the criticisms to have political consequences. And, while the power of the criticisms was being mitigated, the power of the student movement became increasingly dependent on continued support for the New Deal; whatever influence it had gained in New Deal circles, the price paid in terms of building a long-range independent student movement may well have been more than it was worth. These reservations, however, are differences involving political judgment and in no way detract from the power and force of this important work on left history.

Queens College, City University of New York Frank A. Warren

PURITANS AT PLAY: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England. By Bruce C. Daniels. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1995.

The word puritan has long been synonymous with dour, joyless, and repressed. The best efforts of many historians for the past half-century notwithstanding, H. L. Mencken's

definition of Puritanism as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy" prevails.

With *Puritans At Play*, Bruce C. Daniels has joined the list of those who have sought to debunk the myth reflected in Mencken's quip. He examines leisure and recreation in colonial New England, not only by including what New Englanders did to relax and have fun, but also what they said about both. The conclusions he draws point to a more complex attitude toward leisure and recreation than previously realized. He argues that their attitude contained a profound ambivalence, that resulted from their spiritual leaders' difficulty in articulating an unambiguous ideal of appropriate leisure and recreation.

As early as the 1930s, Puritans scholars such as Samuel Eliot Morison and Perry Miller began to insist that joy, leisure, and recreation had their place in Puritan society, arguing that in such matters, sincerity, consistency, decency, and moderation were better descriptors than fanatic, hypocrite, and ascetic. Daniels concurs, adding that the Puritans were convinced that people needed relaxation to refresh their body and soul, but they were also fearful of what they saw as the natural tendency of people engaged in recreation and leisure to ungodly, unlawful, or unproductive behavior. "As if the very assertion threatened to open the floodgates to Hell," Daniels writes, "almost every endorsement of pleasure and fun was hedged with restrictions of its actual exercise" (16).

Among the many forms of leisure and recreation Daniels finds New England Puritans pursued were reading, that included a surprisingly ample amount of secular literature; music, that soon moved beyond the meetinghouse; theater, at least in urban areas beginning in the eighteenth century; Sabbath socializing with friends and neighbors; and house- and barn-raisings. Men, Daniels finds, may have had more opportunities to socialize due to their military and political obligations, but women were not without their own outlets in quilting, spinning, and sewing bees. Settings for more promiscuous sporting included wedding receptions, dinner parties, and even dances, although New Englanders generally limited themselves to "country dances," wherein physical contact was minimized, if not eliminated altogether.

In an interesting, if brief, concluding chapter, Daniels suggests that a residue of Puritan ambivalence about the pursuit of pleasure may still remain in American society. "To make too much of this residue. . . to single it out and elevate it to a status as a primary determinant of American national character," however, he warns, is equally "absurd" (221). In their insistence on moderation, Puritans held many of their views of pleasure in common with all Christians, he explains. Theirs was a general sense of Christian morality, decency, and restraint, difficult to attribute to the specific thoughts of practice of seventeenth-century Puritans.

Creighton University Bryan F. Le Beau

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE. Volume Two: Prose Writing 1820-1865: Edited by Sacvan Bercovitch. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1995.

If this second volume in a projected eight volumes of the *Cambridge History of American Literature* is representative of the whole, then we indeed do have—and should applaud—a new kind of literary history, one neither, in the words of the introduction, "totalizing [nor] encyclopedic." That is, whereas previous histories of American literature have consisted of either "the magisterial sweep of a single vision of a multitude of terse accounts," the volumes in the *Cambridge History* each consist of a group of lengthy essays

on significant aspects of the period in question, each by a single author recognized as an expert in the field. This second volume deals with the period given the name "the American renaissance" by F. O. Matthiessen in 1941, and each of the four essays—termed "large-scale narratives" in the Introduction—addresses the fiction, non-fiction, and drama of the period (nineteenth-century poetry is the subject of Volume Four) from a different angle. The essays that delineate American literature from 1820 to 1865 are "conditions of Literary Vocation," by Michael Davitt Bell; "the Literature of Expansion and Race," by Eric J. Sundquist; "The Transcendentalists," by Barbara J. Packer; and "Narrative Forms," by Jonathan Arac.

While these might seem to be narrowly-focused topics, each of the essays (ranging in length from 115 to 274 pages) is a wide-ranging monograph, citing numerous authors and drawing upon the historical, intellectual, political, and economic traditions to which they respond. Bell's analysis of the development of literary professionalism in the antebellum period is a particularly apt beginning for the volume, showing how market forces, concepts of nationalism, and ideologies of gender played a role in developing an "American" literature. Bell's essay recognizes the thorough-going reassessment of nineteenth-century literature currently underway, and constitutes a masterful statement of the way canon formation occurs on the various levels of author, publisher, editor, and critic. Sundquist's essay engages the issues of American empire-building not only in a geographical sense but more importantly as they affected Anglo-American relations with Native Americans and African slaves and thus produced art forms—including literature—that dealt with these encounters, including political documents, novels, and slave narratives. Packer's "The Transcendentalists" is the longest of the essays, which might seem a questionable emphasis, but the real contribution of the essay is its analysis of religious and philosophical currents of the period that resonated far beyond Boston and Cambridge, and affected political and social movements as well as literary production. Finally, Arac's essay on narrative, with its analysis of the emergence of various narrative genres, may seem, in its emphasis on formal characteristics, quite traditional in approach, but Arac's exploration of how local, personal, and literary narratives participated in the development of a "national narrative" by mid-century is actually quite fresh and informative.

Because each of these essays ranges so widely, a number of American authors appear repeatedly—but not repetitiously, because of the different approaches to their work. The result is a rich tapestry in which these four scholars speak to each other to provide a multi-faceted view of a crucial forty-five years of American literary history. The volume includes a year-by-year chronology listing the publication of American prose works along with historical events of significance both in this country and on the continent. A lengthy bibliography of secondary sources and a useful index conclude the volume.

I'm keeping this book within reach as an indispensable resource.

Vanderbilt University Nancy A. Walker

THE NEW NIAGARA: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls 1776-1917. By William Irwin. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1996.

Irwin's book "explores Niagara's significance as an icon of progress and technology. . ." going beyond the scope of previous studies on this topic by "examining how images of the Falls as sublime nature gave way to the Falls as a source of a better or even utopian future based on technology." To this end, Irwin surveys more than a century of

technological and conservationist developments at Niagara Falls, including the history of bridge building at the Falls, the creation of the New York State Reservation at Niagara in 1885, hydroelectrical projects at the Falls, Niagara and the Pan-American Exposition of 1901, and the construction and touristic functions of the Natural Food Company's Shredded Wheat plant on the banks of the Niagara River. From these discussions emerges a compelling account of the American technological sublime in association with a central national landmark.

Niagara Falls has long provoked a divided response in the American imagination. Irwin writes: ". . . for every nature lover who hailed the Niagara region as an eternal spectacle or an Edenic paradise another utilitarian visionary coveted its milling and manufacturing potential." The *New Niagara's* discussion of the New York state reservation at the Falls advances the surprising thesis that "the establishment of the reservation opened the floodgates for power interests and manufacturers to exploit the areas outside the park." The park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as a picturesque frame to the sublimity of the Falls, came about through intensive lobbying and public-relations campaigning by subscribers to Olmsted's preservationist Niagara Falls Association. These subscribers included such Gilded-Age industrialists as J.P. Morgan, John Jacob Astor, and William K. Vanderbilt. Irwin's research demonstrates that only four years after the opening of the reservation these financiers, as well as others who had supported Olmsted's preservationist association, incorporated the Cataract Construction Company, the firm that designed and built Niagara's first significant hydroelectric plant. "For these power developers," Irwin writes, "Niagara's sacred nature seemed to be confined almost exclusively to the reservation."

Irwin's account of tourism and technology at the Falls is solidly contextualized in the history of the periods he discusses. John A. Roebling's construction of the first suspension bridge at the falls in 1855 is located in that climate of nineteenth-century nationalist rhetoric which made engineering successes into "national symbols." Niagara's hydroelectric dynamos are discussed both as features of tourist itineraries at the Falls, and as symbols of the technological future that obsessed people like H.G. Wells and Henry Adams. The rise to wealth and influence of the wonderfully-named Henry Perky, president of the Niagara-based Natural Food Company and father of the Shredded Wheat biscuit, is placed in the context of turn-of-the-century factory management, and consumer anxiety over food purity in the decades before government regulation. *The New Niagara* makes, perhaps, its most important contribution to American environmental history through its discussion of the enactment, and subsequent lapse of the Act in the "wise-use" conservation climate fostered by Roosevelt's chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot.

The New Niagara is extensively illustrated with reproductions from tourist brochures, magazine plates, diagrams and period photography of architectural sites around the Falls. Indeed, Irwin's analysis of the built environment at Niagara is detailed and compelling. The tapered pylons of Roebling's suspension bridge are characteristic, according to Irwin, of the mid-century's Egyptian revival in engineering and architecture. "Egyptian towers suggested learning, engineering, permanence, and harmony with their sites, and engineers hoped these associations would reassume a dubious public of the security of suspension bridges." The first major electrical Power House at the Falls, constructed from a design by Stanford White in 1893, was made of native stone in a neo-Renaissance style that "attempted to monumentalize the power venture and yet subsume it within the natural landscape." Irwin's remarks on the architecture and design of the Pan-American Exposition are particularly striking in the connections they draw between the

City Beautiful Movement and the Niagara thematics of the Exposition.

At the conclusion of his study, Irwin writes that the "Idealism that the New Niagara perpetuated for the humane use of technology makes the real industrial, technological, and touristic development of Niagara . . . appear all the more exploitive and errant." The truth of this observation is undeniable, but Irwin himself too often participates uncritically in the idealistic rhetoric of New Niagara promoters. This comment on the Niagara-powered "Goddess of Light" statue at the Pan-American Exposition is representative: the "statue beckoned electricity, under American stewardship, toward a new golden age of peace, warmth, and mutual trust: electricity and scientific genius—great agents of democracy—would improve the universal condition of humankind." Such lapses into the vocabulary of Niagara boosterism notwithstanding, *The New Niagara* is a most valuable work of American cultural and environmental history.

Lake Forest College Benjamin Goluboff

ALL OF THIS MUSIC BELONGS TO THE NATION: The WPA's Federal Music Project and American Society. By Kenneth J. Bindas. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 1995.

In the 1930s, when economic collapse threatened not only the fiscal fabric of the United States but also the nation's psychological health, collective acceptance of the sanctity of the "American Way of Life" appeared on the verge of unraveling. Much as FDR and other federal officials realized that salvaging the national economy held first priority, they knew as well that the public will would remain fragile if all citizens were not convinced that American society possessed a degree of substance that assured its prolonged survival. One element in this process was the inculcation of the belief that American culture in all its many forms was second to none. In fact, as Warren Sussman argues, it was during the 1930s that the very concept of "culture" took hold in the United States and the terms an "American Way of Life" and "The American Dream" came into vogue. He states that "the more complex effort to seek and to define America as a culture and to create the patterns of a way of life worth understanding," a process begun in the 1920s, gathered force in the 1930s and particularly under the influence of the Depression.[1] It proved a difficult matter to convince the public that it possessed a "usable past" if they did not believe they had a viable future.

One of the primary and most successful means of carrying out this form of what might be seen as national therapy was the inauguration of programs that illustrated the wealth of the nation was cultural as well as economic. FDR believed such efforts might encourage the national will for recovery as well as attract media coverage of the government's efforts at renewal. In 1935, he announced the creation of the Federal Arts Projects, or Federal Project One. Three directors were put in charge of activities that would replace existing arts programs as well as create jobs for those on the relief rolls: Holger Cahill was put in charge of art, Hallie Flanagan of theater, Henry Alsberg of writers and Nikolai Sokoloff of music. The first three of these individuals and their agencies have been the subject of extensive documentation, but the last, Sokoloff's Federal Music Project (FMP), heretofore received only the most cursory of investigation.

Kenneth J. Bindas's *All of This Music Belongs To The Nation* alleviates this gap. It documents the manner in which the Russian-born conductor succeeded in making music "a part of the country's 'accepted civic and cultural system.' He felt, as had others before him, that 'a nation without music is an inert nation'"(5). Sokoloff outlined five major goals

for the FMP: to provide employment for out-of-work musicians, establish rigorous standards for the classification of these musicians, stimulate the public's interest in music, create an informed audience for music, and finally, to demonstrate through the work of the FMP how the government was constructively combating the Depression. Objectively, the FMP succeeded in all of these endeavors, for it employed more individuals than any of the other Art Projects and reached more Americans than them as well through its artists' performances (In its four years of existence, the FMP coordinated 224,968 performances before 148,159,699 individuals of some 6772 compositions, over 60% of which were written by American composers.) The FMP made use of as many arenas for performances as possible, including radio, public celebrations, church groups, and educational institutions. It also inaugurated forums for the presentation of new works by American composers. These included an opera *Gettysburg*, performed on the 75th anniversary and to which Bindas devotes an entire chapter, and the Composers Forum Laboratory, where new works by American composers were debuted and their writers able to discuss them with receptive audiences.

The activities of the FMP were not, however, devoid of ideological and cultural contradictions, and these form the focus of Bindas's study. For all of his devotion to the cause of music in general and American music in particular, Sokoloff's Eurocentric prejudices constrained his endeavors. He stated, "the American composer will get no place playing stupid things," and his notion of stupidity appeared to encompass all music that did not conform to a strict and rigid canon (5). While the FMP did support and promote some forms of vernacular American music, Sokoloff ignored and often denigrated most forms of popular music, jazz in particular. Music was meant, he believed, to be consumed by a passive audience, for he asserted "I like to dance when I am dancing but to compare it with music, why, it is like comparing the funny papers with the work of a painter" (13). Therefore, while the FMP made an effort to hire and promote women, African Americans, and other minority artists, they were made to conform to inflexible criteria for performance as well as repertoire. As Bindas writes,

> the FMP's leadership was essentially conservative. It held high the notion that the positive social benefit of cultivated music, which led to favoritism toward classically trained musicians over the more numerous popular players. This traditionalism tempered many of its seeming gains. Women musicians did receive benefits, for example, but in limited numbers, and the project avoided the question of parity in a field where women represented a significant percentage. Further, the FMP's use of African American and other minority musicians often included their being both segregated and stereotyped (xiii).

All Of This Music Belongs To The Nation is a smoothly written, well-documented and cogently argued addition to the literature on the cultural politics of music in the 1930s and surely should be included in the company of such recent and noteworthy works on the subject as those by Ronnie Lieberman on the music promoted by the Communist Party's Popular Front as well as Burton Peretti and David Stowe's writings on the period's jazz community. One does wish, however, that Bidas might have engaged in some more broad ranging judgments on the ideological dynamics of the work of organizations like the FMP. It constituted, as have the actions of many other bodies, the work of "systematic cultural intervention" that David E. Whisnant has defined as occurring when "someone (or some

institution) consciously and programmatically takes action within a culture with the intent of affecting it in some specific way that the intervener thinks desirable" (3). For all the good that Sokoloff's agency achieved, their endeavors illustrate, Bindas argues, "the fundamental contradiction of the pluralistic vision enunciated by FDR and the FMP. As it mirrored middle-class views concerning community involvement, Americaness, and quality music, the project distanced itself from those musical activities it deemed unworthy or common" (155). Similar contradictions still rule well-intended efforts at "systematic cultural intervention" and render their activities inconsistent and worthy of criticism. Those in a position to pass out federal money continue to assume, as recent attacks over the NEA illustrate, that American artists produce "stupid things."

BMI Archives David Sanjek

1. "The Culture Of The Thirties" in *Culture As History: The Transformation of American Society In The Twentieth Century*, (New York: Pantheon), 157.

2. Ronnie Lieberman, *"My Song Is My Weapon," People's Songs, American Communism, and the Politics of Culture, 1930-50*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 1989. Burton Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz. Music, Race and Culture in Urban America*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 1992. David W. Stowe, *Swing Changes: Big-Band Jazz in New Deal America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1994.

3. David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1983.

PILLARS OF SALT, MONUMENTS OF GRACE: New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860. By Daniel A. Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press. 1993.

Daniel A. Cohen's, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace: New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860* is an invaluable examination of the transformations in popular crime literature. Cohen expertly interweaves a wealth of detail about his fascinating primary sources with careful elaborations of a rich cultural, intellectual, and social context: reigning religious and literary ideologies, rapidly changing demographies and technologies of printing, and a larger (British and European) tradition of mass-produced criminal texts. At the same time, he does not simplify the meanings of the texts that are too easily reduced to only one explicit message. Cohen claims that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the "Puritan communalism" that defined early crime literature had given way to "legal romanticism"; in other words, a relatively coherent theological narrative, bound by a belief in original sin, dissolved into a proliferation of stories variously influenced by sentimental, romantic, evangelical, and legal perspectives on human nature (336). The change in literary form, Cohen persuasively argues, not only reflected but also *effected* broader epistemological changes, as the "certain, unitary, and rigidly patterned" truth of Puritanism ceded to a modern "complex, elusive, and fragmented" truth (248, 251).

Part I of *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace* addresses the predominant forms of 1674-1738, the execution sermon and the conversion narrative. According to Cohen, New England ministers had a "monopoly" on both forms and alone shaped their central messages of warning and salvation, ensuring that their readers never forgot that the sinner's crimes and his or her final acceptance of God were less individual concerns than they were signs of the *community's* sin and hope for redemption. In the conversion narratives of the early eighteenth century (unfortunately Cohen generalizes from only

three), the absolute control of orthodox ministers over the meanings of crime began to break down—ironically because the ministers themselves increasingly integrated the criminal's own last words into the printed text and eroded a previously monologic form. As Cohen neatly puts it, "[i]n their eagerness to exploit the last words of the dying offenders, ministers inadvertently eased the transition toward more secular and at times antiauthoritarian crimes genres" (79). While the general breakdown of "Puritan hegemony" that Cohen sees manifest in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century crime literature is an accepted historical point, his argument that ministers, in their eagerness to reach readers, were complicit in their own demise—and that crime literature did not just evidence but also encouraged the dissolution of ministerial power—is ones of the book's most intriguing claims.

Cohen continues to focus on the variable fortunes of religious authority in Part II, which traces the permutations of the long-lived (and uniquely American) execution sermon from 1674-1825. (An unanswered question is why the genre finally expired when it did.) As in the previous section, Cohen grounds his discussion in the gradual secularization of both literary forms and society, but here he contemplates his earlier discussion of the waning power of New England ministers by recognizing what he calls their "ideological flexibility" (113). Ministers ensured that they did not become "isolated Jeremiahs" by adopting secular rather than religious explanations of crime and punishment in their sermons; instead of collective depravity they began to emphasize new ideas of randomness and contingency or of environmental determinism as explanations of crime—and to ground their justifications of capital punishment in secular notions of deterrence rather than in Scripture.

The orthodox religious strangle hold on criminal genres was over, however, and in Part III Cohen focuses on one group of people who, in the mid to late 1700s, used popular literature to shape views of crime that further undercut theological voices, explanations, and social controls: the criminals themselves. Within the context of a heightened concern for protecting private property (and the corollary fear of theft), Cohen identifies those who made up the new "criminal underworld" and synthesizes the increasingly social reasons that they proffered for their turn to crime. He then looks closely at four criminal autobiographies in order to support his view that post-Revolutionary criminals were less the "penitent sinners" of Puritan days than "suppressed insurgents" (142). These four criminals all defined themselves as the victims of injustice and drew on the potentially antiauthoritarian discourses of sentimentalism, evangelism, and Enlightenment philosophy. By placing these eminently popular writings of criminals squarely within such pervasive ideas and practices, Cohen implicitly shows that even as "Puritan communalism" waned, cultural texts did not conceptualize the criminal as irreducibly "deviant" but continued to understand criminality as imbricated within and understandable through shared values.

In his last section, Cohen turns to the dizzying array of crime genres popular in the antebellum period, all of which he organizes under the rubric of "legal romanticism"—a literary mix of legal and sentimental concepts and forms. While this is Cohen's most provocative idea, it is also his most amorphous—striving as it does to encompass everything from trial reports to sensational fiction. In part the vagueness of "legal romanticism" arises from Cohen's over-immersion in the details and personalities and in the innumerable texts of the two cases he considers. The trials of Jason Fairbanks for the murder of his lover Eliza Fales in 1801 and of Albert J. Tirrell for the murder of prostitute Maria Bickford in 1845 certainly warrant the close attention, but at the same time the

elaborations of cultural, intellectual, and social context—so strong up to this point—are too often left unspoken. The ineffability of "legal romanticism" also springs necessarily from (and at the same time perfectly illustrates) the very point Cohen wants to make about the new openness and plurality of criminal genres; both attributes actively defy the kind of synthesis made so easy by the Puritan orthodoxy, ministerial monopoly, and limited technologies that characterized crime literature prior to the nineteenth century.

An insightful hypothesis that Cohen pursues, however, about the context of antebellum crime literature is the way it served to bring into sharp relief paradoxical attitudes toward sexuality and romantic love. All of the leading players in the Fairbanks and the Tirrell dramas disclose the effects of a society that piously insisted on sexual restraint and self-control at the same time that it glorified romantic passion. The original sin of earlier centuries gave way to a pervasive sense of sexual sin that, as Cohen points out, is still with us. While he ends with one of only few direct references to contemporary America's obsession with crime, Cohen's book is worth reading not only for its acute historical insight but for the uncanny sense of déjà vu that must strike any reader of the late twentieth century.

North Carolina State University Dawn Keetley

SPECIAL SORROWS: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States. By Matthew Frye Jacobson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1995.

This is an engaging work that strives to define a middle road between the two predominant historical interpretations of the immigrant experience as either uprooting, disorienting, and culturally disruptive (Oscar Handlin) or as intentional, planned, largely adaptive, and culturally sustained (John Bodnar). Jacobson emphasizes the immigrant experience "as largely an emigrant experience" (2), building his thesis on the premise that migrants within the three populations vigorously preserved strong ties to their homelands, national aspirations, and traditional political and cultural values; that they developed (or reproduced from Europe) a literature and popular culture suffused with nationalist themes; and that they interpreted and responded to American policies (foreign in particular) through the prism of their own nationalist hopes and objectives.

Although the title does not indicate it, this is principally a study of group experiences between roughly 1870 and 1910, with a final chapter that attempts to compare the immigrants' views and responses with those of the three groups' later generations since the 1960s. And although the title does emphasize diasporic imagination, this work is essentially a foray into the impact of nationalism in the formation of American ethnic identities (the "matrix of ethnicization, migration, and nationalism" [20]), with an ambitious but sometimes strained effort to link various aspects of immigrant cultural expressions to all this by defining them as illustrative of that diasporic imagination: "that sense of undying membership in, and unyielding obligation to, a distant national community" (10).

I do not doubt that many readers of this journal, in particular, will be as impressed as I by Jacobson's immersion into three bodies of cultural works and by his efforts to divine thematic commonalities in the myriad cultural activities of the Irish, Polish, and Jewish newcomers. For example, in Part One, he examines their nationalist movements and the nationalist and diasporic representations in their newspapers, religious organizational activities, theatrical productions, festival celebrations, and poetry. In Part Two, largely within the context of the three groups' nationalist concerns and goals, he takes the unusual

but enlightening tack of exploring their very mixed and complex reactions to America's own mini-war to suppress Filipino rebels seeking their independence. Finally, in his conclusion, he attempts to provide "snapshots" linking the turn-of-the-century ideological struggles within the groups to the "disasporic imagination at work later in the century" in terms of their descendants' respective concerns for Ireland, Poland, and Israel. These ethnic communities emerge not as tiles in the American mosaic, argues Jacobson, but as "wing[s] of a transnational diaspora" (219), expressing nationalist elements more substantial than merely as features of a symbolic ethnicity.

This exploration of the diasporic imagination—which Jacobson eloquently defines as "a sensibility which is embedded in culture yet has political overtones and consequences; a spirit which lays claim to America as home while remaining engaged in the struggles and ideals of a distant homeland" (240) - is a most interesting theme but not one easily tackled because the groups were so varied in their modes of expressing it, in the extent to which they demonstrated it, and in the depth of the internal factionalism spurred by it and its nationalist (or national liberationist) elements. Given those challenges, I do wish the author had confined himself more sharply to those themes and not clouded his work with somewhat tangential discussions (among other broader cultural threads) of masculinization, masculinist romance, masculinist ideals, war as "sexual melodrama," and other gendered aspects of the various topics, not because gender is unimportant (indeed, gender perspectives on the key topics would be most valuable) but because these particular issues become mired in somewhat esoteric discussions that do not sufficiently strengthen Jacobson's main thesis but more often detract from it.

Moreover, the author delves into the literature of the intelligentsia only to note that the English-speaking Irish immigrants produced much less than the Poles and Jews but that, in any event, the mass of Polish immigrants were largely uneducated members of the working class and peasantry and, when all is said and done, even the relationship of Yiddish literature to Jewish nationalism "was deeply mixed" (110). Indeed, just as the reader is about to nail to the wall the criticism that the ultimate significance of Jacobson's extensive literary discussions is uncertain (or, at best, only partially demonstrated) and their impact on the ordinary folk frequently quite amorphous, Jacobson himself hastens to declare that:

> It bears emphasizing here that a great many popular plays had nothing to do with national questions.... By none of the foregoing do I mean to argue that the political fate of their 'nation' constituted the single overriding concern of ordinary immigrants, that immigrant communities were hotbeds of insurrectionary activity, or that the politics of liberation were the object of unceasing and obsessive mediation on the part of transplanted masses (92).

I wish he had stated that in the beginning, not inserted it as the end of Chapter Two. Then, he could have addressed not just the intricacies of the issues in question but the more likely impact of all that cultural productivity on and for the intended audiences. In that way, we might have better weighed the likely relationship of those discussions and activities to the actual behaviors of the immigrants and their children. It is not that Jacobson did not at all do that; quite the contrary. But he has partially obscured his objectives with materials that detract from his key themes, especially when several times he himself felt compelled to qualify the significance of what he has presented (e.g., pp. 110, 112, 125, 144, 214).

Jacobson's study of these "exiles, pilgrims, wanderers"—"refugees from the policies of Anglicization, *Kulturkampf*, and Russification," (137)—is, nonetheless, a provocative one, and even his literature discussions are interesting, though one struggles to determine the exact relevance here of some of it. In the final analysis, his principal argument has much merit and could be extended to the experiences of many other ethnic groups, namely that " the politics embedded in the major voluntary organizations, in the vernacular theatre and the press, in popular religion, and in popular Old and New World literature countervailed the ideology of Americanization. . . . [T]he political *idea* of Ireland, Poland, or Zion retained centrality in each group's culture" (136).

California State University, San Bernardino Elliott Robert Barkan

FREE TO ALL: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920. By Abigail A. Van Slyck. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1995.

Abigail Van Slyck's analysis of Carnegie libraries as cultural signs of the nation in transition is an impressive feat. She has managed to produce a multi-disciplinary analysis of the demise of Victorian culture in America, as seen from the wonderful vantage point of the omnipresent Carnegie library. Van Slyck moves beyond the conventional divisions of architectural analysis into separate vernacular and high style categories. She avoids, as well, the pedestrian practice of placing architects on a pedestal and the tiresome, exclusive analysis of architectural aesthetics. Van Slyck argues that formal architectural designs, as represented here by Carnegie libraries, were not the immaculate conceptions of privileged architects and their benefactors. Instead, she presents the libraries as the complex result of powerful social and cultural cross-currents. Carnegie libraries were, indeed, quite erratic both in their designs and in their social significance. Their final form and function reflected intensive jostling between benefactors, architects, public officials, local elites, and a variety of newly empowered social groups all clawing for their place under the sun in a rapidly changing American cultural landscape.

The book analyzes the libraries in various spatial and chronological contexts. Chronologically, we follow the erection of these libraries from the final phases of Victorian culture in the late nineteenth century toward the restructuring of American society in the aftermath of the great war. Spatially, Van Slyck differentiates between metropolitan America and the nation's small towns. Each chapter begins with a soaring panoramic view of the library site and its relationship to other significant cultural symbols. Upon landing, we gently confront a complex analysis of the library's exterior. Following a careful documentation of the various political and cultural pressures affecting its form, Van Slyck leads us through the doorways and offers a rewarding guided tour of internal designs and features. The ever-changing shapes and placement of service desks, the closing and opening of stacks, the internal division into various reading rooms, are all charted and tied to significant social developments beyond the limited confines of the library. Van Slyck ends her guided tours by directing attention to the human element moving through these physical representations of American culture. Library professionals and their patrons are brought to life through Van Slyck's careful readings of memoirs, official documents and her deciphering of photographs. Van Slyck, who teaches architecture, art history, and women's studies at the University of Arizona, is at her best in her analysis of women and their changing social status as seen through the library alcoves. The feminization of American librarianship and the "engendering" of library design are, perhaps, the most impressive segments of this book.

The study concludes with the boisterous intrusion of immigrant children into these formerly sacrosanct temples of culture. Van Slyck leaves us with a glimpse of an onrush of immigrant offspring "threatening the ordered gentiality that librarians had worked so hard to design" as they attempted to define the library space in accordance with their own understanding of American culture. This transformation of former interlopers into demanding patrons represents a fitting end to a stimulating study. Van Slyck's insights and her smooth transitions from the library building to the broad cultural context surrounding the edifice, offer a fresh perspective on an important and complex period in American history.

University of Haifa, Israel Ron Robin

THEORIZING COMMUNICATION: A History. By Dan Schiller. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996.

FROM GRUNTS TO GIGABYTES: Communications and Society. By Dan Lacy. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1996.

In an essay first published in the *Journal of Communication* collection titled "The Future of the Field," John Durham Peters remarked that "the future [of communication studies] depends in many ways on coming to terms with the past of the field." Such a reckoning would ask "how the institutional field shut down fruitful paths of inquiry into the place of communication in modern life and society." Dan Schiller's *Theorizing Communication: A History* might be seen as a response to that question. Describing his project as "a sustained effort to trace the history of thinking about communication" from the late 19th century to the present, Schiller proposes that beyond the field's "longstanding preoccupation with narrowly instrumental problems" lies a rich tradition of thought that "has converged directly and at many points with analysis and critique of existing society." His aim is to reveal and explore that tradition through analysis of the various thinkers who have shaped the field of communication study, as well as the socio-historical context of their ideas.

This "intellectual topography" traverses a wide range of theoretical perspectives (pragmatism, effects research, Marxism and critical theory, cultural studies, structuralism, poststructuralism) and figures (James Dewey, Walter Lippman, Paul Lazarsfeld, Robert Merton, Theodor Adorno, C. Wright Mills, Daniel Bell, Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault). Schiller analyzes the ways in which successive schools of thought about communication have conceptualized both the nature of society, or the "social totality," and the relationship of communication to social relations. Within these conceptualizations lies the key question for students of communication: that of the "character of communication as a determinative social force." The study of communication and media thus revolves centrally around the question of their power to shape both objective social conditions and subjective experience.

Schiller's thesis—the axis around which his book turns—is that the study of communication, like social theory more generally, has been marked by a particular dualism that has hindered its ability to conceptualize the determinative power of it as an object of inquiry. That dualism is the split between manual and intellectual labor, or between "hand" and "head." Through this polarization, communication was affixed to "humankind's vast and multifarious potential for symbolic action" while "'labor' contracted . . . around a sharply restricted range of human effort: physical toil, or later, wage

work." The result, Schiller argues, is that "successive theorizations of communication came to revolve around variously reified views of 'intellectual labor,' . . . a partial, but seemingly substantial and autonomous, category of human effort." This polarization has haunted the field of communication study, as evidenced by ongoing conceptual and methodological divisions between the study of media institutions and media audiences, between political economy and cultural studies, between sites of production and consumption.

Schiller proposes to overcome this dualism with a concept of labor as "intelligent action," a "species-specific capacity for human self-activity to which speaking and thinking, as well as action and energy, are alike integral." He concludes by examining the later thought of Raymond Williams, which is presented as a way to overcome entrenched "conceptual oppositions" that plague the field. Schiller's desire to return to an "integral concept of human self-activity" has interesting parallels with French anthropologist Maurice Godelier, who similarly argues against the notion that ideas and representations operate apart from the material conditions of human existence. In *The Mental and the Material*, Godelier asserts:

> right at the heart of the most material areas of societies' infrastructure, at the very heart of the productive forces available to them for acting upon nature, we come across a mental element (knowledge or abstract representations of all kinds, with their extension in the form of know-how which is also a system of bodily techniques).

That is, thought is not "any less material than the rest of social life."

While Godelier and Schiller see thought and communication as the products of determinate material conditions, they also understand these as social practices undertaken by human beings to act upon and transform those conditions. From this perspective, history is a dialectic of determination and agency. Dan Lacy, in *From Grunts to Gigabytes: Communication and Society*, offers a quite different conception of history—one driven by the successive development of means and technologies of communication. Lacy proposes to "examine the various systems of communication that society has evolved, from human speech to the computer and the satellite, to consider the effects of each on our society, and to give thought to appropriate public policy." He traces this "evolution" from words through writing, the printing press, the "audiovisual revolution" (photography, telegraphy, telephony, motion pictures, radio, television), and the "electronic era" (computers and digitalization).

Lacy's approach fits within what Joshua Meyrowitz has called "medium theory," which focuses on the particular characteristics of different media of communication. Medium theorists (e.g., Meyrowitz, Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, Neil Postman) tend toward macro-level analyses that attempt to draw connections between means/modes of communication and societal forms. At its best (and here I'm thinking of Innis), medium theory points to general tendencies and raises vital questions about the nature of the relationship of social structures and conditions to forms of consciousness and expression.

Medium theory runs headlong into what Raymond Williams notes are "the most difficult and unresolved historical and philosophical questions" about the place of technology in social change. Any discussion of the impact of technologies in general, or

communication technologies in particular, inevitably faces the problem of causality. That question has most often been resolved, as it is for Lacy, by abstracting the technology in question from the complexity of its socio-historical and political-economic contexts. This move typically occurs through a straightforward "technological determinism," or through positing technologies as "symptomatic" of "change of some other kind." In both cases the technology is seen as self-generating: "it is either a self-acting force which creates new ways of life, or it is a self-acting force which provides materials for new ways of life." Equally characteristic of these approaches is the tendency to equate the history of technologies with the history of "progress" and the creation of the "modern world."

Lacy's account of the history of communication falls wholly within this orbit. He writes that the capacity to accumulate, organize and make available information "has grown with giant and rapidly accelerating leaps" and in so doing "has made possible the advance of civilization by the progressive accumulation of knowledge." Here Lacy offers what Michael Schudson has called a "natural history" approach to the analysis of media—one in which the products of human activity are first accorded origins within nature (rather than culture), and which then become agents of historical change. In this move, social relations, institutions and consciousness become the consequences of technological developments, objects of history rather than its authors. The book's use of passive voice and causal claims are here indicative: "the modern city was a creation of the railroad;" "television helped dissolve structures of formality appropriate to a more tiered society;" the "loss of structure" in American life "may be grounded in a fundamental difference between the representation of the world in print and that in the audiovisual media."

Perhaps the most problematic claim of the book, reflective of its natural history approach, is that "one of the results of developing more effective modes of communication has been the creation of power." To buttress this claim, Lacy holds that human beings who could speak "had advantages" over those who could only "grunt;" that writing enabled Egypt, China, Greece and Rome to "erect empires over those that were illiterate;" that the printing press allowed Europe to "sweep out over the world, mastering societies with limited use of the press;" that 19th century industrialized nations with advanced printing presses "were able to divide and control the rest of the world;" and finally, that contemporary Western Europe and North America, "which integrated computers into their economies, were able clearly to dominate those societies that had failed to do so." In making power a by-product of communication technologies, Lacy naturalizes historical relations of domination and exploitation. Significantly, the role of capitalism in organizing relations between world regions over the past 500 years is barely mentioned, and then is presented as a consequence of "print culture."

Clearly there are complex relationships between social structures and means of communication, between forms of media and ways of knowing, between being and consciousness. The question is, what is the nature of those relationships? Inclinations toward a uni-directional causality between technological developments and the rest of human experience are, as Williams notes, "so deeply established in modern social thought that it is very difficult to think beyond them." But that is precisely what historians of media are called upon to do. For Williams, the way beyond this impasse lies in reinstating the notion of human agency and intention—recognizing that technologies are not simply "discoveries" of pre-existing potentialities of nature, but are rather actively sought in response to perceived social needs. Further, the needs most likely to be met by the development of new technologies are those associated with dominant social groups, and are applied in ways that reinforce and enhance their power. At the same time, new technologies necessarily have unforeseen and unintended consequences; they can be and

have been used by subordinate populations in ways that challenge existing power relations. From this perspective, power is not simply a property of communication technologies—it is a social relationship between historical agents.

By naturalizing power as the outcome of communication, Lacy paints himself into a corner. He concludes that "the nature of the almost overwhelming structure of communication that surrounds us is, of course, determined primarily by the characteristics of the technology that creates it and by the swirl of competitive economic forces." He goes on to argue, however, that "public policies can play an important role in helping to assure that society's enormous new powers of communication are guided to serve the public interest." But in the preceding 162 pages, the determinative power of communication technologies has been so naturalized as to make any thought of acting upon those determinants inconceivable. Thus, there is no way to reconcile Lacy's general thesis that,

> the media of communication may change dramatically from century to century, even decade to decade, but the unrelenting urge to control the content of the media and the methods by which control is attempted seem unending,

with his closing salvo:

> Successive advances in communications technology and skills have given us an almost inconceivable power both to master and shape reality and share that capacity benignly throughout society. How we use that power and how broadly we share it will depend on our wisdom and our will.

There is simply no place within the technological determinism to which Lacy subscribes for a concept of human will that is not itself merely a consequence of technology.

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