

# Book Reviews

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

## Reviews

THE POWER OF PLACE: Urban Landscapes as Public History. By Dolores Hayden. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. 1995.

More than two decades ago, in a famous exchange with architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable, sociologist Herbert Gans assailed the tendency of preservationists to designate as landmarks only “the stately mansions of the rich and buildings designed by famous architects”—an approach that he said fails to “attend to everyone’s past” (3). Dolores Hayden takes Gans’s complaint as her starting place and then offers a thoughtful and perceptive discussion (informed by feminism and multiculturalism as well as by the class analysis that sparked Gans’s critique) of what it might mean to develop “a socially inclusive urban landscape history” that “can become the basis for new approaches to public history and urban preservation.” In a series of historiographic and theoretical chapters, she grounds her alternative approach in an argument about the ability of “place memory” to connect people to the past and the present (46). For Hayden “the power of place—the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory” is an untapped resource for fostering a “more profound, subtle, and inclusive sense of what it means to be an American (9).”

Although Hayden provides a valuable summary of the case for an expanded view of the urban landscape, the greatest importance of her book is in the way that she combines a statement of the theoretical and political case for a broadened sense of public places with a practical program for bringing that about. This program grows directly out of almost a decade of work with a nonprofit organization she found in Los Angeles, called “The Power of Place.” Individual chapters of the book detail the group’s efforts to commemorate (in a parking lot) the urban homestead of Biddy Mason, and ex-slave and midwife who became a leader of the black community in the second half of the nineteenth century, to reinterpret the Embassy Auditorium, a meeting hall where Latina garment workers often gathered, and to create a historic district at “Little Tokyo,” the center of Japanese immigrant small businesses in the first half of the twentieth century.

Hayden’s concise and beautifully illustrated case studies in public history and urban preservation candidly acknowledge failures (the Embassy Auditorium lacks any perma-

ment marking today and its fate is uncertain) as well as triumphs (the installation of a 81-foot-long wall installation entitled *Biddy Mason: Time and Place*). The practical barriers that she and her collaborators encountered in dealing with landlords and city officials offer particularly valuable lessons to those who seek to do similar work in other cities. Slightly disappointing is the limited amount of information on how these public history ventures were received and perceived by diverse local audiences. Hayden invokes Michael Frisch's notion of "shared authority" and speaks forcefully of the need to respect and "to listen and learn from members of the public of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, and economic circumstances (235)." But she does not give us enough concrete details about how authority was shared and what she learned from collaborative dialogues with the publics engaged by *The Power of Place*. Moreover, whereas she criticizes ethnic public history that is purely celebratory and avoids conflict, she does not tell us how these tendencies toward an uncritical or parochial view of the past were confronted in these cases. For example, did any of these public history efforts deal with tension among African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles? Finally, she argues that public places can "reinforce our sense of common membership in an American, urban society," but she does not tell about how to respond to the preservation of places that might divide as much as unite us. What if residents of South Boston want to mark and preserve public spaces associated with the struggle against busing?

There are, as Hayden knows better than most of us, no easy answers to such questions. And her admirable book—and her admirable efforts to tap "the power of place" in one city in the 1980s—are an important starting point for those searching for the ways to make "everyone's past" part of the public landscape.

George Mason University

Roy Rosenzweig

*GAMES & EMPIRES: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism.* By Allen Guttman. New York: Columbia University Press. 1994.

In *Games & Empires*, Allen Guttman pursues four basic purposes. These are "to insist that the formal structural characteristics of modern sports distinguish them from earlier forms of physical competition, to observe that most modern sports did, in fact, originate in Britain and the United States, to examine the process of ludic diffusion that distributed these sports across the entire globe, and—finally—to hazard some explanations and assessments (4)." In practice, the bulk of Guttman's effort goes to surveying the diffusion of several key modern sports and to challenging often heard claims that the spread of modern at the expense of the traditional sports lands either colonized or otherwise under the sway of the great politico-military powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been an exercise in cultural imperialism.

In chapters on cricket, soccer, baseball, basketball, the Olympic Games, and *Turnen* (German gymnastic calisthenics), Guttman establishes a basis for asserting that cultural imperialism is quite often an unconstructively simplistic notion, one that disregards processes such as the appropriation and transformation of the sport of an imperialist state even to the point of using it as a means to establish anti-colonial and anti-imperialist identity. Guttman does not deny that cultural interpretation takes place, but he questions what weight to put on it. For example, is the use of soccer in cultivating a sense of national identity really an act of subjugation to the foreign state in which the game originated? Can one truly say that Cuba suffers from cultural imperialism at the hands of the United States because the Cuban people show a fondness and aptitude for baseball? In the end, *Games*

& *Empires* offers not so much an anti-Marxists as a post-Marxists perspective. Guttman believes that modern sport generally transcends national boundaries and nationalistic ideological limitations—that they are, in essence, common property in the world at large to be used and adapted as various peoples see fit. Even in cases such as the Olympic Games in which an international sports movement was originally shot through with imperialist ideology, what was happening a century later was an entirely different affair.

Guttman's argument is a sensible one, depending on a certain pragmatic common sense as well as on observation of evidence from around the world. Yet the book is, in a sense, either too long or too short. Disavowals of inclusiveness aside, *Games & Empires* might have been more effective as a highly compressed essay one third the length, or else as a much more thoroughly illustrated argument twice the length or more. Some sports, especially traditional ones upon which the strength of Guttman's argument depends to a substantial degree, appear only briefly, almost parenthetically, lending a slightly facile tone to a work which is, in fact, based on strong evidence and put persuasively into its historiographic context. Also, though far from damning, it is surprising that there are more than a few typographical errors, especially in these days of automatic spellcheckers.

Overall, *Games & Empires* offers a welcome corrective to oversimplified notions about cultural imperialism through sport.

Kansas State University

Donald J. Mrozek

VISIONS OF AMERICA SINCE 1492. Edited by Deborah L. Madsen. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1994.

*Visions of America Since 1492*, which originated as a series of lectures inaugurating the American Studies Program at the University of Leicester in 1992, examines the development of American cultural identities from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries. "Changing representations of what it means to be an American," editor Deborah L. Madsen writes in the introduction, "are assumed to be, in important respects, consequences of shifting cross cultural or trans-Atlantic pressures" (ix). The book juxtaposes a section analyzing encounters between First Nations and Europeans and a second part which explores articulations of the self by "native born" Americans.

Separately, several of the essays are provocative and highly engaging. David Quinn offers an original reading of early European perceptions of American ecology. David Murray finds the traditional distinction between "white" and "Other" problematic as he seeks to incorporate both structural and cultural considerations into his explanation of encounters between Europeans and Northwest Coast Indians. Christopher Rolfe's "Heroes and Anti-heroes: (self-) perceptions of the Québécois" is the most adventurous of the essays, ranging from the first images of explorer Jacques Cartier in the sixteenth century to a fascinating commentary on Jacques Godbout's novel '*Salut Galarneau!*' (1967), which epitomizes the immense transformation of Québécois politics and culture in the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Rolfe argues that two traditions, a "North American way of life" which distinguished Québécois from "old France," and the French language merged in the wake of the Quiet Revolution to provide the basis of a confident and resilient future.

Essays by Andrew Hemingway and Deborah Madsen identify suppressed radical strains in American art and literature respectively. Hemingway's essay is the best commentary available on the left-wing realist artists of the 1930s, while Madsen takes a

post modern perspective on colonial literature, convincingly suggesting that twentieth-century scholars Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch contributed to the modern silencing of radicals like William Pynchon and Roger Williams.

The essays in this volume succeed admirably in expanding the discussion of the origins of American culture beyond the conventional Anglo American framework, but they fall short of a compelling effort to decenter the field of American studies from its long fascination with American exceptionalism. Despite the authors' insistent interrogation of traditional American metanarratives, traces of exceptionalism remain. Madsen's comment that the United States "remains the most self-conscious of world cultures" is largely unexamined and probably would not survive rigorous comparative scrutiny (ix). The decision to begin the story in 1492 leaves no room for an assessment of the enduring significance of native American cultures apart from their encounters with Europeans. In what surely constitutes a stunning omission in this project, moreover, Africans, African Creoles, and modern intellectuals such as W. E. B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, bell hooks, and Cornel West are left out of the conversation entirely. It is perhaps ironic that a book that sets out to explicate transatlantic pressures on the significance of America should confine itself to Europeans and their contacts with the First Nations, thereby skirting the place of Africa in the making of American civilization.

University of Windsor

Bruce Tucker

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. 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 demographics 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 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 by 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 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 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 one 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 complements 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 that “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 a few direct references to contemporary America’s obsession with crime, Cohen’s book is worth reading not only for its acute historical insight but also for the uncanny sense of *deja vu* that must strike any reader of the late twentieth century.

North Carolina State University

Dawn Keetley

MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE AMERICAN FREEMASONS. By John D. Hamilton. Lexington, Massachusetts: Scottish Rite Museum of Our National Heritage. Distributed through the University Press of New England. 1994.

As reported in 1900 by Albert Stevens, Freemasonry had more than one million members while nearly 40 percent of all adult males belonged to at least one fraternal organization. These facts have long been overshadowed by popular misconceptions and parodies of the Shriners, Elks, and Moose. Recent scholarship (Carnes, Clawson, and Dumenil) has looked at the importance of these secret ritual fraternities in Victorian America, while much of Masonic studies, both pro and con, has concentrated on the history of lodges and their initiation rituals. John Hamilton’s book now brings life to the artifacts of Freemasonry: its aprons, regalia, furniture, decorative arts, and ultimately the long lost friendship of the lodge.

John Hamilton has been a curator at the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts since its opening in 1975. The museum, supported primarily by the Northern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite Freemasons, has presented several exhibits on fraternalism including the current: *Initiating America: Three Centuries of Lodge Life*. Having curated all the exhibits, Hamilton has a thorough understanding and knowledge of the field.

The artifacts in this book are primarily from the museum and represent fine examples of its large and unique collections. Beginning the book with a short overview of Freemasonry as “a philosophical fraternal brotherhood deriving its ceremonies and symbolism from the rules and craftsmanship of the ancient stonemason’s guilds,” Hamilton then shows how “The Craft” came from England and adapted to American sensibilities. Images are from the earliest masonic books and pamphlets of the 1700s.

The body of the book explores the many ways Freemasons express their symbols and philosophy. Of most importance to the lodge is its “furniture,” defined simply as the Bible, square, and compasses. Working tools worn or carried by the brethren complement the teachings of the lodge and serve as reminders of Freemason’s origins and purposes. Highly



decorated aprons, jewels, and swords show the artists' expression, but also the owner's beliefs and offices held. Hamilton uses many fine aprons to demonstrate both evolution of the art from and standardization of the symbolism. Silver, pewter, and gold jewels acted as symbols of lodge officers, proof of entry into side degrees, or were given in appreciation to past masters of the lodge.

As lodges grew in members and wealth, other furnishings would fill the lodge hall or the "oblong square." The examples of chair, alters, tracing boards, lighting devices, door knockers, and desks show a love of the lodge, a pride in its principles, and a high skill of craftsmanship. A variety of paraphernalia followed the increasing number and complexity of the rituals and working of the lodge. Staffs, hoodwinks, replicas of the Ark of the Covenant, uniforms and costumes, magic lanterns, collapsing chairs and bucking goats were all used in initiations, either to invoke the seriousness of the ritual, to enhance the drama, or to play a joke on the unsuspecting.

In the final two chapters, Hamilton looks at the social side of Freemasonry through its celebrations or in the burial and remembrances of departed brothers. Lodges acquired large and extensive glassware and flatware for banquets, as well as souvenir ceramic plates and mugs from conventions or as gifts for service. Grave markers, casket clips and mourning badges remind the reader that, for many, Freemasonry was central in their life and an important part of their identity.

Several pages of captions and photographs follow the text of each chapter. Though the reader will get used to the design of separating description and illustrations, it is a bit confusing and often irritating to notice a striking object and then hunt for its description, or visa versa. This is especially true as wonderful color plates appear in the back of the book yet the captions are interspersed throughout the body. One duplication in numbering shows that the author or the designer were themselves slightly confused. Happily, Hamilton provides numerous appendices of engravers, artists, Masonic calendars, and a listing of known fraternal regalia manufacturers and dealers, plus lengthy references.

This large and well produced book is an excellent start in understanding not only Freemasonry, but also the material culture of all fraternal organizations. But like most masonic studies it lacks a broader context for the objects. Masonic writers traditionally labor under three limitations: one, that Freemasonry contains secrets, so one must be careful what they write. Two, they often assume a reader with high knowledge or interest in Freemasonry. And three that, The Craft has remained unchanged and unaffected since the Van Buren presidency. Also, most of the objects are from the 1700s and the first half of the 1800s and originate from New England, if not the East Coast. This is deceptive in two ways: first, the popularity and sheer number of masons did not peak until the 1920s and second, that, as Americans went west so did Freemasonry and other fraternal, such as the Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias. It is understood, however, that the bias comes from the geographical location of the museum Hamilton works in, and a popular preference for Colonial and Federal periods of decorative arts.

Freemasonry and all of its numerous auxiliaries (Shriners, Eastern Star, DeMolay, etc.) are still a major part in many American's lives. It is hoped that future catalogs, books, as well as exhibits, will strengthen this understanding and explore deeper themes within this wonderful American phenomenon and institution. In fact, Freemasonry became the model for many other national institutions such as unions, insurance companies, religious and charitable organizations, and political societies. Perhaps the objects here demonstrate early examples of awards, loving cups and plaques given by corporations and organizations today.

With this book, one can see beyond the craftsmanship and beauty of the jewels, aprons, swords, and decorations of the lodges, to understand the virtues and the aspirations conveyed through the objects. It can also help us understand whole generations of men and women who spent much of their time in the lodge, while reconnecting their old and dear friendships.

Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Mark A. Tabbert

OF CONSUMING INTERESTS: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century. Edited by Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia. 1994.

Conference proceedings usually are a potluck supper of few good dishes mixed in with some half-baked ones and cold hash. Not this volume. The twelve essays in it, presented by distinguished historians to a symposium sponsored by the U.S. Capital Historical Society, provide a gourmet feast guaranteed to stick to scholarly ribs. Most of the pieces have been much expanded far beyond what could have been presented orally.

The subject is the “consumer revolution” of eighteenth-century America; the evidence comes primarily from artifacts of material culture; and the methods vary from those of art and intellectual historians to those of social scientists. A brief review cannot discuss the content of each essay but it can (and should) identify them. Kevin Sweeney examines the lifestyles of the colonial elite, and Lois Green Carr and Lorena Walsh the lifestyles of planters in the Chesapeake. Edward A. Chappell writes of housing; Richard Bushman of shopping and advertising; and Karin Calvert of fashions. Margaret M. Lovell, Cynthia Adams Hoover, and David D. Hall respectively provide essays on painters and their customers, music and theater, and books and reading. Barbara G. Carson writes of travel and leisure; Nancy Struna of sports and leisure. T. H. Breen analyzes the relationship between the consumer and American revolutions; and, in the *piece de resistance* of the collection, Cary Carson ties much of the package together in a two-hundred page monograph entitled: “The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand?”

Before looking at Carson’s answer, it is worthwhile to describe in broad strokes the meaning of the term, “consumer revolution.” Elizabethan Englishmen and the first generation of colonists lived in a hardscrabble world where the poor measured success by survival and the elite measured it by land accumulation. Movable possessions were relatively few and expected to be useful. By the mid-eighteenth century in England and even more so in the American colonies, possessions took on a new meaning: they became social signifiers—visible evidence of status and accomplishment. The modern consumer began to emerge, judging his or her relationship to the colonial Joneses by displaying and comparing clothes, dishes, hobbies, leisure activities, and all the other goods that could serve to define positions in the social pecking order. “Shops went from being places for obtaining supplies to places for realizing aspirations,” Bushman argues (235). And this was not true just for the gentry. “At all levels,” Carr and Walsh write, “Chesapeake planters were learning to use personal possessions to make increasingly sophisticated and elaborate social statements (132).”

Why the consumer revolution? Why the heightened demand for possession and the extraordinary meanings attached to these possessions? Because it happened and we know it happened, the revolution seems inevitable—merely a part of the modernization process

that transformed the foul-smelling, squatting, violent, peasant medieval world into our modern era. But, of course, this is circular reasoning. Partly, the revolution occurred because abundance and wealth generation made it possible. Carson and the others argue, however, that colonists sought possessions in order to mark their place in a new fluid, mobile, uncertain social order that lacked the definitions provide by traditional European society. Thus, these innovative essays into material culture embrace one of the oldest theses in American history: that the absence of a feudal past and an aristocratic class made Americans turn to money and materialism to locate and advertise their place in the social order.

The above bald statement, however, does not do justice to the richness of this volume—to the dozens of nuanced secondary and tertiary conclusions. Of *Consuming Interests* is the most important contribution to early American material-cultural history in print.

University of Winnipeg

Bruce C. Daniels

SIXTY MILES FROM CONTENTMENT: Traveling the Nineteenth-Century American Interior. By M. H. Dunlop. New York. 1995.

M. H. Dunlop has produced a work of great value for students of American literature, antebellum culture, and midwestern American history. *Sixty Miles From Contentment*, a gracefully written and often entertaining work, reconstructs the experience of travel in the plains states from roughly 1810 to 1880. Dunlop's material for this inquiry is the large corpus of American and European travel books on the midwest written in those years. In presenting these books, Dunlop may be said to have reclaimed a literature largely, but not always deservedly forgotten. Dunlop's bibliography holds an accounting of Manifest Destiny as it was experienced in its dailiness—in emigrant wagons, steamboat steerage, and pullman cars through the nation's prairie middle. Travel in the American interior, Dunlop maintains, was a highly ideological business; her analysis proceeds with persuasive attention to the issues of gender, race, and class registered in these travel accounts. And in its reconstruction of the natural terrains that travelers crossed and inscribed, *Sixty Miles From Contentment* is a most compelling application of what has come to be called "ecocriticism" to a region and moment central to the American experience.

Nineteenth-century travel literature, Dunlop understands, is fascinating for its sheer bulk and of its reach across the canon. Frances and Anthony Trollope's tours, Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*, Dickens's *American Notes*, and Caroline Kirkland's *Forest Life* contribute as richly to Dunlop's analysis as do the very many obscure travelers whose Journals and Tours of the interior saw print in what Dunlop describes as "a cultural climate in which . . . these books became a household literature." These long unread figures include George Featherstonhaugh, author of *A Canoe Voyage Up The Minnay Sotor* (1847), the British sportsman who broke into Native American burial mounds at Round Island in Lake Huron; Morris Birkbeck, the British fantasist who tried to establish an English country estate on the prairies around Albion Illinois; Miriam Colt, mother of a vegetarian family lured to Kansas by fraudulent literature about an agricultural community there. There is also James Logan, an Englishman whose funds for a tour of North America ran out in Chicago, compelling him to take deck passage and finally work as a deckhand on a series of riverboats that would ultimately take him to the Ohio. Logan, who discovered a group of Americans gathered beneath peepholes drilled the deck of the Ladies' Promenade, figures in Dunlop's discussion of gendered space and comfort in the interior.

As in her treatment of Logan, Dunlop's conclusions about the ideological dimensions of travel in the interior emerge organically through the recorded minutiae of travelers' itineraries and accommodations. Thus her characterization of the steamboat's Ladies Cabin as "a special locus of decorated discomfort filled with women traveling in pretend luxury toward a comfortless life." Dunlop's analysis of midwestern class constructions places in dialogue British and American texts on those kindred vexations of antebellum American culture: comfort and servants. "No matter who one was or where one had come from, the keeping of a servant in the interior was uncomfortable; a situation elsewhere intended to aid personal comfort produced in the interior intense ideological discomfort." Dunlop elicits from her sources the image of a regional culture which, while proclaiming its classlessness, maintained at the axis of comfort many of the divisions and embarrassments of European class stratification. *Sixty Miles* is equally persuasive in its decipherment of the conventions by which travel writers responded to the vanishing natives of the interior—freezing and subordinating them into works of art or wonders of nature. Dunlop rarely allows the momentum of her ideological arguments to outpace the data from which they are derived. Perhaps only in her discussion of midwestern hotels and their arrangements of "ideological dining" does the argument approach overdevelopment.

The most engrossing sections of *Sixty Miles From Contentment* are those where Dunlop's research has reclaimed the ecology of the antebellum interior and developed the narrative of how it was consumed both by settlement and tourism. We learn the visual experienced of travel on the open prairie, where "travelgoers often felt paradoxically constrained in empty space, an effect caused by the nature and behavior of the prairie horizon; they stood as if in the center of shallow bowl whose rim was the not-too-distant and slightly raised prairie horizon. The rimmed landscape fostered the dismal illusion of movement without progress." We learn how prairie scenery resisted those travelers who would record it through the chief conventions of nineteenth-century landscape writing: the sublime, beautiful and the picturesque. We learn the relation of malaria transmission to clearance, settlement, and travel. And in a tour de force of environmental analysis where Pullman Car menus are collected from half a dozen travelers' accounts, and collated with sources on prairie hunting, Dunlop documents the disappearance of game birds from the interior in the last decades of the century.

Dunlop's style often succumbs to a cataloging tendency, and her sources are presented with an even-handedness that sometimes erases notable individualities among them. (Samuel Bowles, a figure complex enough to merit closer treatment, is introduced merely as an American.) Nevertheless, *Sixty Miles From Contentment* is a fascinating book and one of considerable value for students of American culture.

Lake Forest College

Benjamin Goluboff

GOD AND THE NATURAL WORLD: Religion and Science in Antebellum America. By Walter H. Conser, Jr. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. 1993.

That religion and science were thought to be mutually supportive during the first half of the nineteenth century is relatively well-established historical doctrine. Conser, noting the power of the idea that science was the helpmate of religion, also noted that for the first time, large numbers of the proponents of religion turned their attention to a nagging question in the background: why was it that so many of the conclusions of science seemed to be at odds with historic Christian claims? How a number of high-level thinkers grappled

with this question is the subject of the book. Focus is on nine Protestant theologians who had been influenced by the mediational theology of nineteenth-century Germany (2). These included Horace Bushnell, Charles Hodge, James Marsh, James Warley Miles, Edward Robinson, Philip Schaff, W. G. T. Shedd, Henry Boynton Smith, and James Henley Thornwell.

Showing the influence of nineteenth-century German romanticism, most of these theologians began with the concept of development as the essential characteristic of church history (40), and they looked upon history, which carried moral meaning for human life and had been a witness to divine activity, as a method for the reconciliation of science and religion in this particular culture. Although the scholars differed with one another on many particulars, and some seven disavowed crucial elements of German theology, all appear to have adopted the important idea that theology was a science (e.g., 69), and that unity could therefore be found at the level of method. In this, they were quite close to the Scottish commonsense philosophy, holding that discrepancies between science and religion could be attributed to improper procedures or overly-hasty generalizations and that further study would surely resolve any difficulties. In practice, they also agreed with the Scottish philosophers in generally assuming that the further study must be on the part of science, since the revealed facts were clear.

Also like most Scottish philosophers, the mediational theologians were all unfriendly to Darwinism, for even though they stressed development—even using the term evolution at times—they depicted human history teleologically. Conser correctly stresses the point, however, that the general understanding of scientific method during that period permitted them to dismiss Darwin's claims as unworthy of science because they had not been reached by induction. Scientific controversies therefore played a role along with religious commitments in the responses to Darwin (142).

The work is a contribution to the field in two respects. In the first place, it plugs a big hole (as the dust jacket affirms) in our knowledge of the relations between science and religion by going beyond the more often-studied Baconianism and Scottish philosophy. Conser makes the point that even Charles Hodge, often cited as an exemplar of Scottish philosophy during his 58-year tenure (1820-1878) in the chair of theology at Princeton Seminary, had important influences from his exposure to the German mediational theology. In the second place, it offers a well-crafted and quite interesting case study in the relations between European and American currents of thought during an important period in both the history of science and of religion. Anyone interested in the history of either during the nineteenth century could profit by reading this brief, well-written, and amply documented work.

University of South Alabama

George H. Daniels

**HEALING THE REPUBLIC: The Language of Health and the Culture of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century America.** By Joan Burbick. Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994.

In *Healing the Republic*, Joan Burbick argues that between 1820 and 1880 physicians, reformers, and literary figures addressed the tensions between freedom and authority as well as individualism and civic responsibility in a discourse that used the language of the body as a way not only to establish a renewed sense of community and identify each individual's responsibility to it but also to reestablish the control and authority of men over

women and the middle class over their social inferiors. In essence, she claims that concern expressed about the wellbeing of the individual body on the part of both regular and irregular doctors like Samuel Thomson and S. Weir Mitchell, mental asylum superintendents like Amariah Brigham and Thomas Story Kirkbride, reformers like Sylvester Graham and Catherine Beecher, and a host of literary figures including Whitman, Poe, Melville, and Stowe was their way of relieving their anxiety about the impact of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration on the welfare of the nation.

In the first part of the book, Burbick identifies and discusses two kinds of discourse concerning health in nineteenth-century America. The earliest was a discourse based on the assumption that the nation's citizens were blessed with common sense and were willing and able to accept responsibility for their own wellbeing and by extension that of the nation. The second discourse that emerged was based on confidence in science rather than reliance on common sense, stressed the need to compel obedience to newly discovered laws of physiology, and represented an attempt to confirm the cultural hegemony of the middle class.

Burbick argues in the second part of her book that this new discourse "privileged" certain parts of the body in an attempt to express middle class concern for the need to reimpose social and political order and discipline. Knowledge and control of the brain took on a new immediacy among those who believed that success in the world of business depended on the development of the intellect and management skills. At the same time, the wellbeing of the heart was critical to establishing and preserving the kind of relationships necessary for renewing and sustaining community life. Understanding the role of the nervous system was important since the nerves served as an early warning system by measuring and reflecting the impact of stress on the entire body. And concern for the eye reflected the hope that the gaze could be directed in such a way as to sooth the nerves.

Burbick's argument is convincing when it is applied to those whose written works she examines. But it remains to be seen if ordinary, less publicly articulate members of the middle class infused such meaning into their concern for their own health. Nevertheless, this book is imaginatively conceived, well-written, and an important and welcome addition to the growing body of literature on how Americans expressed their anxiety about change in the nineteenth century.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sylvia D. Hoffert

THE STOWE DEBATE: Rhetorical Strategies in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Edited by Mason I. Lowance, Jr., Ellen E. Westbrook, and R. C. De Prosop. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1994.

This provocative collection of essays assumes that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been established firmly in the canon of significant American literary texts. As a consequence, the individual authors feel free to move beyond explanations and defenses of its sentimentality, racism, and implicit sexism—a major task of previous Stowe scholarship—in order to apply contemporary literary theory to these and other elements of the novel. A common theme of many of these essays is, in the words of Melanie J. Kisthardt, that the novel is major example of "a polyvocal and dialogically open-ended text" that liberates the voices of the "marginalized" and the "Other," thereby undermining "the ostensibly rational language of the fathers" (38). Any critic or scholar who has worked with Stowe's novel

can only commend this approach for, as Henry James recognized long ago, it is indeed a cacophony of contending voices, many of which evade Stowe's effort to contain them within constraints of national republican discourse.

These essays address other aspects of the novel too numerous to discuss here, but the grouping of the essays into four sections conveys their flavor: 1) questions of language and discourse analysis; 2) domestic narratives and sentimentality as discourse strategies; 3) the influence of the Bible on Stowe's construction of narrative; 4) questions of race, gender, and slavery that are raised by the work.

An important feature of the collection is an "Afterword/Afterward" by R. C. De Prosopo which contends that in spite of the assumption of the essayists that the debate over the importance of Stowe's novel has been settled, it still evokes "unstilled, ominous, even bibliocidal, murmurings" (281). In particular, De Prosopo contends, the shadow of James Baldwin's denunciation of the racism of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* haunts the collection as does his conflicted response to Stowe's portrayal of African-American gender. After surveying recent controversies among African-American writers and scholars over gender depictions—specifically disagreements among Ishmael Reed, Alice Walker, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Houston Baker and Joyce Joyce—De Prosopo argues that "the Stowe debate" is hardly over and that if *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were to become a central text in the literature classroom it would bring with it racial conflict and the "gender warfare that already afflicts African-American culture (285)."

In short, this collection of essays and De Prosopo's response indicate that "the Stowe debate" will be evaded by keeping analysis of the novel on the level of theory and by keeping it on the margin of classroom discussion.

University of Northern Iowa

Theodore R. Hovet

MESSAGE, MESSENGER, AND RESPONSE: Puritan Forms and Cultural Reformation in Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." By Gladys Sherman Lewis. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. 1994.

It is no surprise to students of American literature that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is framed by a Christian view of human existence. Many, however, would be surprised by the richness of the theological, rhetorical and narrative traditions which Stowe adapted from this view. Gladys Sherman Lewis has given an excellent account of the way these traditions shaped one of the major events in American literary history. More specifically, Lewis explains how the nation's violation of Christian values motivated the author (the "message"), (the "messenger"), and the manner in which her audience reacted to the work (the "response").

Of particular interest is Lewis's analysis of how narrative forms drawn from popular culture—the captivity, confession, and conversion narratives—enrich the "master narrative" which governs the novel. Also significant is her description of Stowe's use of "two voices," the Puritan preacher and the storyteller, to give authority and drama to her depiction of American slavery. Finally, she provides an interesting interpretation of how three "reading communities" in existence at the time—"the religious, the sentimental, and the sociopolitical"—came together as a mass audience to make the novel a national event.

The study is perhaps too long and often loses sight of its efforts to illuminate the sources of the power of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, mainly because of a kind of compulsion to support even minor assertions about the novel with lengthy detours into American history

accompanied by a convoy of historians and literary critics. For example, in a section on “the religious community of interpretation” (230-52), Lewis attempts to define Stowe’s religious audience by entering into considerations of the history of revivalism and millennialism, supported by at least 30 brief summaries of other scholarly interpretations of these movements. In contrast, the section contains only two short quotations from the novel and virtually no careful analysis of its structure or any of its scenes, some of which contain explicit references to both movements. Most scholars of the work would like a closer reading of the text, particularly an examination of how the novel reflects revivalist and millennial rhetoric and images or how it might suggest Stowe’s awareness of her religious reading community.

In short, Lewis has completed an informative study for those readers primarily concerned with gaining insight into the religious traditions which influenced the author and the power these traditions retained in American culture at mid-century. For those readers wanting greater insight into the artistry of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* or into its symbolic and imagistic complexity, the study will be less satisfactory.

University of Northern Iowa

Theodore R. Hovet

FROM SKISPORT TO SKIING: One Hundred Years of an American Sport, 1840-1940.  
By E. John B. Allen. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press. 1993.

E. John B. Allen’s *From Skisport to Skiing* casts much light on the development of modern skiing, both competitive and non-competitive recreation, from a variety of cultural sources and from a range of Winter sporting activities. Covering the century before World War II, Allen concentrates on such themes as the efforts and eventual failure of exemplars of the Norse *Idraet* tradition of disciplined manliness to restrain more exuberant, more dynamic, and more overtly pleasure-oriented forms of skiing advanced by British exponents of skiing such as Sir Arnold Lunn. The *Idraet* tradition significantly impacted on America, and the Norwegian influence predominated in the early promotion of cross country skiing and ski jumping. Allen treats the subsequent emergence of collegiate and club-based skiing in New England effectively, observing in it qualities consistent with a developing culture of consumption and leisure, such as the role of speed, good looks, and style, that anticipated modern skiing but ran afoul of the *Idraet* tradition. The title of this book itself accurately implies that substantive differences as to what “skiing” ought to be lay beneath different terminological conventions.

Expected names appear, such as the Nordic-oriented National Ski Association of America, the U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association and collegiate ventures such as the Dartmouth Outing Club, companies such as Northland, instructors such as Hannes Schneider, elitist promoters such as Averell Harriman, and the Civilian Conservation Corps, which cut trails in the northeast and otherwise affected Winter sport. Yet among the greatest strengths of Allen’s argument is that he does not try to put all the periods and places in which skiing enjoyed localized popularity into a continuous linear development. Indeed, he firmly asserts, for example, that ski sport in the mountain mining communities of Colorado and California were essentially isolated phenomena, drawing little on either European or Eastern traditions—the latter of which, in any case, the mining communities predated. Although promoters of skiing after 1945 sometimes called attention to nineteenth century ski competitions and recreational outings, as well as to delivery of mail and medicine in the snow season, lines of continuous development of ski sport were few, and nearly none of them date back to the nineteenth century.



Two theoretical frameworks are crucial to Allen's assessment of the development of skiing. Using Allen Guttmann's mode of modernity in sport—consisting of secularism, equality, bureaucratization, specialization, rationalization, quantification, and an obsession with records—Allen concludes that skiing prior to World War II was not really a modern sport. On the other hand, applying Walt Rostow's idea of economic "take off" to sport culture, Allen observes that the preconditions for skiing's "take off" to modernity were largely in place around the time of World War II.

This informative, well balanced book fills a big gap in the history of American sport. It also speaks usefully to the complex ways in which cultural phenomena emerge.  
Kansas State University Donald J. Mrozek

STEINWAY AND SONS. By Richard K. Lieberman. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1995.

It would be easy to criticize *Steinway and Sons*. The book makes no argument, uncritically accepts well-worn historical paradigms, and is cluttered with detail. In fact, one could say that *Steinway and Sons* has little to recommend other than a straight forward narrative of a family-owned business that dominated American piano manufacture between 1853 and 1972. But what a story that is.

Shortly before the American Civil War when the first Steinway (then Steinweg) left Germany for the U.S. to 1972 when the last Steinway to head the company signed a sales agreement with CBS, Steinway and Sons (the "Sons" is not an honorific—Steinway daughters were prohibited from any formal role in company management) is a tale of ambitious men, errant women and an organization determined to maintain family control of a business at any cost. Founded in the fertile seed bed of the unregulated business climate of the mid-nineteenth century, the firm quickly outdistanced competitors to become the leading producer of quality pianos in the world. With a commitment to craftsmanship and developing technology and a keen understanding of the market, Steinway made the "Steinway sound" an auditory standard. Through advertising campaigns and the endorsement of noted pianists, Steinway promised consumers "The Instrument of the Immortals," guaranteeing culture for an entire family. The firm thus established the piano as a critical domestic accoutrement to middle-class status in America.

In fact, Lieberman makes the point that Steinway, through its sponsorship of national tours by such artists as Paderewski and Rachmaninoff transformed musical taste in America. "William Steinway did for classical piano music what P. T. Barnum did for the circus. He put it within the reach of most Americans."

An important motif of Steinway and Sons is control—not only of the market but of family and workers. Ultimately the inflexibility of Steinway management resulted in its downfall. In one of the most interesting aspects of the Steinway story, Lieberman depicts the mighty Steinway toppled by Yamaha, today the most widely purchased piano in the United States. Declining profits forced the sale of Steinway to CBS in 1972. Under subsequent owners, the Steinway piano continues to be manufactured and marketed as a quality instrument found in distinguished concert halls.

University of Kansas

Ann Schofield

THE FILMS OF D. W. GRIFFITH. By Scott Simmon. New York. 1996.

There is a fine literature on D. W. Griffith that begins with Iris Barry's *D. W. Griffith American Film Master* (1940); Russell Merritt's fugitive Harvard dissertation of a generation ago; and Sergei Eisenstein's famous "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today" (in English in his *Film Form* [1949], edited by Jay Leyda), and continues apace more recently in Tom Gunning's *D. W. Griffith and the Origins of the Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph* (1991) and Richard Schickel's hefty tradebook, *D. W. Griffith: An American Life* (1984).

Scott Simmon, the author of this intentionally slim critical biography of Griffith, knows these intellectual forebears and uses them well in his placing of Griffith's art in American popular culture and social history. An added pleasure in reading this balanced sketch of the historical Griffith is to be found not only in his rereading the literature but also in his rereading of the films themselves with an eye informed by some of the current literature of cultural criticism. Moreover, he accomplishes his task with uncommonly jargon-free clarity.

Every student of Griffith knows that his life paralleled the rise of smokestack industry and of the urban proletariat that served it. The resulting "shame of the cities" at the turn of the last century seemed to trap workers between two shimmering visions—a pre-urban Eden and a new workers' paradise to come in the "city beautiful" movement. Living at this "crisis point," as Simmon calls it, Griffith formulated a selfcontradictory ideological stew composed of Victorian sentimentality and an urban Progressivism. This mix of nostalgia and social gospel resulted in a sort of reformism driven by the heart rather than by nose, bureaucratic social workers. It was as though Griffith and Harold Gray's comicstrip *Little Orphan Annie* shared a common empathy for the downtrodden and a common antipathy for bluenoses.

Simmon, by setting Griffith in his times, discounts the familiar debate over whether Griffith was either a "film-form master or retrograde thinker"—artist of the cinema or racist ideologue. Instead, he proposes a "search" for the art to be "recovered from D. W. Griffith's work to admire and treasure," while at the same time admitting the risk of muddling the balance between "formal integrity" and "moral consequences." In staking out this precarious terrain between art and politics, Simmon writes that "the successful artists is one who distills a culture's images and fables, locating, dramatizing, and preserving for us its crisis points."

Thus Simmon's Griffith is a more complex figure than we often find in the literature. Far from the Manichean sentimentalist-cum-racist of many critics, Griffith seems more in tension with his selves. He is indeed the sentimentalist in his bucolic successes: *A Romance of Happy Valley*, *True Heart Susie*, and *Way Down East*. But when he portrays sweet life despoiled by modernism, he seeks the fault in brutes and rapists as in *Hearts of the World* and *The Birth of a Nation*. Thus the latter film seems not so much the racist tract intended by its original author, Thomas Dixon, as it was Griffith's prism through which to view his old South that could never rise again. Indeed, we might infer from the context offered by Simmon that *The Birth of a Nation*, far from being Griffith's masterwork, in fact masked the true vitality that he had given the silent film in his earlier, smaller, less extravagantly sentimentalized works.

In any case, Simmon's argument seems clear in offering Griffith as a man of his time. His view of blacks was surely not a Southern white conceit as much as it was an image shared by Yankees. His empathy with the plight of the urban poor might extend to reading John Spargo's *The Cry of the Children* (1906), but as Simmon points out, his will to social

change allowed an end to oppression of the poor, but only “if they are oppressing themselves” as by drinking or sloth. Such limits on reform were not Griffith’s alone, but also America’s.

Baltimore, Maryland

Thomas Cripps

**SANDOW THE MAGNIFICENT: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding.**  
By David L. Chapman. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1994.

Americans are inundated with visions of the erotic, muscular, strenuous life in ways that Theodore Roosevelt could never have envisioned earlier this century. The chiseled “hard bodies” of Fabio, Rachel McLish and others featured in advertisements, infomercials, and specialty fitness magazines saturate the highly-commercialized, cultural landscape. But well before the likes of Charles Atlas, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and countless other muscular icons, there was Eugen Sandow. David Chapman has redeemed Sandow from historical anonymity; the resulting biography documents his significance to our understanding of body culture both past and present.

Born in 1867 in Germany, Sandow, came to bodybuilding at an early age and developed astonishing musculature which attracted prominent artists. He commenced what would become a life-long career as a touring performer at a time when bodybuilding was dominated by bull-necked, shaven-head vaudevillians with curled mustaches. Early exhibitions consisted of a series of muscle flexing, weightlifting, iron pipe bending, and chain breaking exercises. Sandow performed all such event with unprecedented skill to packed houses throughout England, Scotland and Ireland. In 1893, the 26-year-old modern-day Adonis visited the United States and stunned Americans with his magnificent physique. The media pronounced him a model of the “ideal man.” An emerging impresario named Florenz Ziegfeld, shrewdly promoted his new client with lurid posters, newspaper advertisements and handbills. Chapman’s rendering of Sandow’s early life is the book’s strongest component. Although skimpy on the protagonist’s private life, Chapman interrogates the primary sources (especially Sandow’s autobiographical accounts) with critical vigor.

The public’s response to Sandow reflected a growing interest in health and physical fitness that permeated late nineteenth-century American culture. A mid-nineteenth-century Protestant avant-garde made its peace with sport and physical activity by pointing to the ways in which athleticism could be used as a moral force (and social technology) to affirm the middle-class values of discipline, order, self-reliance, human perfectibility, and productivity. During the late nineteenth century, numerous commentators maintained that the future of the nation (and the “Anglo-Saxon race”) rested in the hands and loins of virile men. Sandow’s participation in the 1893 Columbian Exposition bolstered this emergent ethos, and he became a muscular icon in American folklore and popular culture. Like Frank Merriwell, Sandow was a model for romantic dime novels and boyhood magazines, whose persona promoted the muscular Christian virtues of manliness, purity, athletic participation, and material success.

Cognizant of his physical capital, Sandow remained a tireless performer and opportunistic entrepreneur until his death in 1925. His message and muscular exhibitions consciously sidestepped national, class and gender boundaries. He devised exercises, correspondence courses, luxurious Institutes of Physical Culture, and equipment for an athletically diverse public on both sides of the Atlantic. Unlike most of the realm of athleticism that appealed to and resided exclusively within the male domain, Sandow’s

extraordinary popularity derived significantly from the warm reception given him by women. Matinee girls and society women alike sent him flowers and other tokens of affection; both carried and displayed his soft-core porn, theatrical photographs. When women went backstage for private viewings and fondlings, they were, Chapman speculates, “satisfying feelings other than mere curiosity” (75). He battled the “villainous corset” and the vexing fears of female athleticism that preoccupied mainstream America. His efforts diverted attention away from the freakish “staged” performances of “muscle molls” toward a more receptive understanding of how robust good health and physical happiness were birthrights for men and women alike. In all and perhaps unwittingly, Sandow became a bona fide “progressive” social reformer who proselytized (and profited from) the vision of a healthy, happy, disease-free world that could be created through the cultivation of enlightened physical culture.

Scholars have only recently begun to uncover the taboo associations between sport, muscularity, and spectatorial eroticism. Chapman’s biography of Sandow is an important contribution to the growing literature on body culture that challenges scholars to understand how bodily practices are forms of cultural capital and collective memory. Although much of this story takes place across the Atlantic, there is much for American Studies scholars. Sandow’s career intersects with the history of vaudeville, photography, early film, self-help manuals, dime novels, and America’s growing obsession with physical culture. As such, this biography challenges American Studies scholars to “get right” with both the importance of physical culture and the history of sport.

Portland, Maine

S. W. Pope

KENYON COX, 1856-1919: A Life in American Art. By H. Wayne Morgan. Kent: Kent State University Press. 1994.

The artist Kenyon Cox was an idealist, a classicist and a traditionalist who profited from American culture’s late nineteenth-century flirtation with those principles, but who lived to see them vociferously attacked and sarcastically derided. In *Kenyon Cox, 1856-1919: A Life in American Art*, the historian H. Wayne Morgan continues his exploration of turn-of-the century culture, and the role of Cox, one of its leading practitioners. Morgan’s *New Muses: Art and American Culture 1865-1920* (1976) pioneered a re-evaluation of the so-called American Renaissance at the turn of the century, which had, since the advent of modernism, been considered the nadir of American culture. Morgan, the George Lynn Cross Research Professor at the University of Oklahoma, has also published a study of Cox in the company of two other traditionalists, Royal Cortissoz, and Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., and previously edited a volume of Cox’s student letters from Paris (a second volume *An Artist of the American Renaissance: The Letters of Kenyon Cox, 1883-1919* has just been published).

Cox was from the midwest (his father was a governor and congressman from Ohio and eventually president of the University of Cincinnati) but he chafed under its provincial yoke and consciously set out to be cosmopolite, studying in Paris, traveling to Italy, and living in New York. An artist, teacher, illustrator, lecturer, and important critic, he lived his art passionately and with utmost seriousness. He felt his role as a muralist in some of the civic wonders of the American Renaissance—James Lord’s Appellate courthouse in New York, Cass Gilbert’s Minnesota statehouse in St. Paul and Essex County courthouse in Newark, and George Post’s Wisconsin state capitol—was a service to a higher ideal, bringing beauty into the public sphere. Unfortunately, often the content of his murals was

so dogmatic as to be preachy and his style so classic as to be static. This made him a potential scapegoat of the modernists, and he took the bait, publishing a highly polemical review of the infamous Armory show of 1913 in *Harpers Weekly*. It seemed that in revenge modernist critics thereupon took particular glee in denigrating his work. His last important easel painting, *Tradition* (1916) was a defense of what he had spent his entire life upholding.

Although Morgan insists that his work is a biography and not art criticism, he often describes the paintings at length, especially Cox's iconographically complex murals. The chapters seem to lead up to the one on mural paintings, which is the most complete published documentation of Cox's career as a decorative painter to date, and then follows the rest of his career in less detail. It is an appropriate emphasis because it mirrors the trajectory of Cox (and other muralists' careers). Inspired by the opportunity to paint murals at the world's Colombian Exposition in 1893 they began their new careers with great enthusiasm and consistently received commissions until 1914, when the war disguised that their brand of classicism and tradition was going out of fashion with architects. Despite such success, Cox and many others seemed constantly to be lacking money. They may have seem well-compensated (for example, \$8000 in 1905 dollars for 8 lunettes at Iowa statehouse), but there were studios to be rented, assistants to be hired, materials to be bought, and shipping to be paid. Morgan's biography is ultimately a sad tale, since it details the life of an artist devoted to his craft and his principles, suffering from money worries much of his professional life and in the end ridiculed for those principles he suffered to uphold. But Morgan's work on Cox are important steps in documenting the anti-modernist impulse in American cultural history, with its emphasis on beauty, refinement, tradition, and classical ideals on guard against the perceived threats of realism, materialism, and progress in American society. Since so little of the basic archival research on this period has been done, this biography and its companion works are a very important foundation.

Virginia Tech  
Bailey Van Hook

AMERICAN LITERARY NATURALISM AND ITS TWENTIETH-CENTURY TRANSFORMATIONS: Frank Norris, Ernest Hemingway, Don DeLillo. By Paul Civello. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 1994.

I have all kinds of reservations about Paul Civello's book. His main thesis is that naturalism emerges as a result of "post-Darwinian crisis" and "depicts the rift that opens as a result between the self and the material world—now perceived as one of meaningless, indifferent force—and points toward a resolution of it! He uses this as a base from which to argue a reconceptualisation of American literature in terms of the move from a "modern" naturalism to a "postmodern" naturalism. This literary shift occurs as a response to a change in "scientific paradigms" as a belief in "linear causality" (a cause-and-effect world) is replaced by a view of the physical universe as "an all-encompassing field," an interconnecting system where subject cannot be separated off from object and where "indeterminacy and uncertainty" predominate. Civello then charts this change in paradigm by selecting two novels from the work of three authors (Norris, Hemingway, DeLillo) to argue finally that it is DeLillo who "undoes the reality on which literary naturalism was based, and therefore . . . undoes the naturalistic novel itself" (that this exact sentence is used more than once in the text suggests the tendency toward repetition throughout).

Civello gives interesting enough readings of the novels on which he focuses but there are holes in his argument and problems with his thesis throughout. Though he claims to be viewing naturalism as a mode “closely aligned with narrative processes, one that is developed and transformed as it moves through time,” there is little sense of history in his book. The quick dismissal of June Howard’s reading of naturalism as “heavily Marxist” does less than justice to her careful positioning of the genre in terms of the “concrete historical circumstances” of late nineteenth-century American culture, while his own comparative authorial approach tends almost completely to marginalise any detailed consideration of social and economic change. That Civello distinguishes Jack London from both Norris and Dreiser on the basis that the former depicts “humanity’s . . . battles with the forces of nature” rather than with “capitalist economic forces” suggests, moreover, that he has not kept up with the London criticism appearing over the last few years which focuses precisely on this latter subject.

In arguing as he does, Civello flattens out the complexities of American literary culture and, at times, flattens out too the intricacies of the authors he considers. To say that, with the work of DeLillo, “an author can no longer presume to stand apart from his created universe as a classic scientist from his experiment” is to ignore that Henry Adams had said much the same thing half a century earlier. While to claim that Hemingway’s fictional protagonists “stand in conscious opposition to the natural world . . . and create [their] own order which imbues the world with meaning” is to misread the ironic structures of Hemingway’s fiction and the double-logic they imply: that any such ordering only operates in very limited spheres and in the knowledge that historical force act directly to contradict them. Most importantly, though, Civello’s re-categorization of modernist and postmodernist as adjectives describing different kinds of naturalism takes away, to my mind, the very usefulness and specificity of the latter term. Without anything to be measured against, or opposed to, “naturalism” ends up pretty much emptied out of meaning here.

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**LAURA INGALLS WILDER’S LITTLE TOWN: Where History and Literature Meet.**  
By John E. Miller. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 1994.

John E. Miller provides avid readers and the growing number of scholars interested in the stories and biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder with this study of the town most closely associated with the peripatetic Ingalls family, De Smet, South Dakota. Miller’s discussion of De Smet in the early years, when Laura Ingalls and Almanzo Wilder were maturing, courting and struggling to start a life together, provides valuable background on the prairie town that has come to embody the frontier settlement for generations of Wilder’s readers.

Wilder’s works are widely acknowledged to be fictionalized autobiography; that is, Wilder and her daughter Rose Wilder Lane arranged and edited her memories of events for her intended audience: juvenile readers. The extensive Wilder-Lane correspondence, and the extant drafts of the novels’ manuscripts reveal that Wilder and Lane were acutely aware that if the historical data was not accurate, the series’ value would be negated for many readers, especially among De Smet residents. The effect of this careful crafting, most Wilder scholars agree, is that Wilder’s books convey “more than a simple history of the frontier, but also [embody] timeless truths,” as Miller says (6).

Miller’s accounts of De Smet in the 1880s contains a wealth of information that corroborates Wilder’s portrait of the community. Chapter two is a thorough description

of the physical arrangement of the town, with useful historical illustrations, and an excellent summary of the town's social and cultural activities in the 1880s. In chapter seven Miller analyzes the educational training Wilder would have received in a prairie school, and its influence, evident in her remarkable memory. Miller surveys the origins of the settlers who first populated De Smet in chapter eight, and chapter nine focuses on the opera house as the catalyst for building a sense of community in the maturing town. These chapters complement the factual information that was so important to Wilder and Lane, but few of Miller's other chapters fulfill the promise of the introduction, to analyze the history in light of the literature and the literature in light of the town's history. In three chapters, Miller focuses on Wilder as a writer with few direct references to De Smet or the works' historical contexts.

Despite this, *Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little Town* offers readers of both the history and literature of the prairie frontier helpful information about the town and about Wilder's use of the town's factual history in her fictionalized renditions of her own life on the prairie.  
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CONTAINMENT CULTURE: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age. By Alan Nadel. Durham: Duke University Press. 1995.

How narratives that Americans re-tell in order to make sense of their lives become both naturalized and historicized is the grand theme of Alan Nadel's study of particular texts of the post-World War II epoch. Once upon that time, a syndrome of beliefs and assumptions was so coherent and so credible that it served to unify a disparate populace. Then in the 1960s the inherent contradictions encoded in those myths could no longer be saved from exposure, thanks to disruptions in Mississippi, at Berkeley and in Indochina. The keyword is therefore "containment"—not only the doctrine that animated American policies toward the Soviet Union and its allies, but also the domestic imperative to intimidate political dissent and to keep the Other secure and invisible within the Same. *Containment Culture* subjects a dozen fictional, cinematic, journalistic and other artifacts to close readings that trace the codification and the fragmentation of the Cold War ideology. The method that the author deploys is literary, a daringly high-speed maneuver around the linguistic turn. The site of his analysis, however, is past politics, though historians who restrain their enthusiasm for postmodernism may be vexed by the capriciousness of Nadel's topics.

To be sure, many of his choices are justified: from John Hersey's innovative effort to record the birth of atomic age in *Hiroshima* (1946), to "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (1947), where Mr. X marked the spot where geopolitical conflict was joined; from the enormous popularity of the James Bond films starring Sean Connery, to Joseph Heller's revisionist satire of "the good war" and the authoritarian institution that conducted it in *Catch-22* (1961). Nadel cannily recounts how Cecil B. DeMille clumsily enlisted in the fight against monolithic tyranny in *The Ten Commandments* (1956), and how John Ford subtly reconsidered how the West was won in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962). But to explore other works which lack any intention or impact besides entertainment seems misplaced; the attention Nadel lavishes on the cartoon, *The Lady and the Tramp* (1955), and on the Doris Day-Rock Hudson romantic comedy, *Pillow Talk* (1959), comes to mind as failed efforts to show that bedfellows make strange politics. Nor does the inclusion of the influential and admired *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) bear any relation to the Cold War, other than chronological coincidence. The fourth section makes little sense because the

texts of black writers John A. Williams and Alice Walker are not placed in context; while Nadel's coda, a critique of Joan Didion's new-journalism novel, *Democracy* (1984), sums up the case for the impossibility of Cold War narratives from too oblique an angle. As a book of essays, *Containment Culture* merits praise for the acuity of its local perceptions and for the assurance with which Nadel negotiates his way through the treacherous terrain of contemporary theory, invariably inflected in French.

But that critical indebtedness is also troublesome; rather than situate the art and politics of the post-war era in their distinctive historical setting, Nadel wants the texts primarily to validate the recent musing of the most chic English departments and of programs in cultural studies. *Containment Culture* cites bell hooks but not Sidney Hook, and does not bother to list "Communism" (or Stalin or Khrushchev) in the index. Though Nadel discusses *Macbeth*, the real problem is *Hamlet* without the Prince. For the challenge that the Soviet Union and its American sympathizers presented is trivialized when an unprecedented crisis-haunted by the Bomb—becomes a playground of narratology adjoining a house of games. Something serious is lost when the Cold War ceases to be considered as the record of how relatively free societies confront the threat of totalitarianism, and instead is treated as a gloss on rhetorical strategies, as though the significance of such a conflict is that it was the prelude to postmodernism.

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DANCING WITH THE DEVIL: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas. By Jose E. Limon. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1994.

This book is a fascinating account of Mexican-American urban culture in South Texas written by a native South Texan. Professor Limon draws upon anthropology, literary criticism, political economy and his own life history as methodological foundations for his narrative. The work is divided into three parts. In Part I Professor Limon deconstructs previous ethnographic writings on the folk culture of South Texas. He examines the works of John Gregory Bourke, J. Frank Dobie, Jovita Gonzalez and Americo Paredes. Simultaneously he reconstructs the ideological ambivalences and contradictions—the 'bedevilment'—these authors inscribed in their writing as they theorized, among other things, about the devil motif in this region's folklore.

In Part II we are introduced to a politico-economic analysis of the impact of contemporary capitalism upon South Texas. This section defines what Eric Wolf might call the "field of force" of the dominant mode of production in the area. Finally in Part II, Limon offers his own "poetics" of local dances, jokes, and devil sightings in the area. His focus is on the figure of the devil and the practice of social dancing among South Texas Mexican-American women in the mid- and late 1970s.

In an elegant style Limon argues that the increased frequency of devilish visits in this period of time by a Lucifer with happy feet represents a significant change in this otherwise abundant image in the region's culture. The more recent dancing devil represents—for Limon—a kind of "spirit of resistance" as well as a new adaptation to the more recent forms of monopoly capitalist exploitation in the region. Limon's volume constitutes a thoughtful addition to the growing literature on Chicano cultural studies.

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THE BELL CURVE. By Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray. New York: Free Press. 1994.

As any good behavioral scientist knows, the tails of the bell curve never touch the baseline.<sup>1</sup> That's because, as unlikely as the most extreme outcome might be, there's always the smallest chance that such an outcome will occur. This asymptotic nature of the bell curve typifies the recent, controversial book, *The Bell Curve*, since their major thesis, that the IQ differences between Blacks and whites is mainly genetic, is based on opinion rather than on solid facts. But what the authors do write well is to lay the issue of a widening gap between the rich and poor, and the consequences of such a gap, on every American's kitchen table where it cannot be ignored.

In 845 pages Herrnstein and Murray present data and opinions on what they allege is the division of American society into two groups. One group they call the "cognitive elite"—those with access to the tools and information needed to advance socially as well as economically. The other group—which interestingly goes unnamed—are those who will never acquire the tools or skills necessary to compete and to succeed and are instead, doomed to a life of lowly labor, "If they find work at all." While few would argue that our society contains haves and have nots, the controversy surrounding Herrnstein and Murray's conclusion is that these differences are closely related to a quality we call, for the sake of convenience, intelligence. Thus, the 15 point difference between the IQ distributions for Blacks and whites becomes crucially important: Herrnstein and Murray would have us believe that black people are at a disadvantage in our society not because of the color of their skin, but because of the distribution of their IQ scores.

*The Bell Curve* presents an overwhelming amount of data that are accessible on three different levels. At the most simple level, each chapter begins with a concise summary of the chapter's conclusions. Next, the main text contains detailed discussion of each chapter topic, including technical data. While the writing is not as accessible as the authors claim, it is understandable to anyone motivated to plow through so many pages and to many technically difficult discussions. Finally, for those who have an insatiable lust for statistics, the appendices contain almost 300 more pages of technical material, including charts and tables—all used to illustrate the arguments presented throughout the book.

The well-documented finding that whites perform about one standard deviation higher than blacks on IQ tests, and that within the "white" population, specific ethnic groups outperform others by a sizable margin, is really only the tip of the iceberg. Herrnstein and Murray go far beyond a simple description of the nature of the relationships between race, ethnicity, and IQ—a topic that has too long been of unproductive and divisive discussions. Their arguments hinge on what psychologists have traditionally referred to as the nature-nurture debate: are differences among people due primarily to nature (meaning biological factors such as genes and the quality of prenatal nutrition) or to nurture (environmental factors such as family configuration, quality of education, and peer influences)?

This wide-ranging and often acrimonious debate has produced many different models, such as the one presented by Sandra Scarr ("Developmental Theories for the 1990s: Development and Individual Differences," *Child Development* 63 [1992], 1-19) who contends that *children create their own environment*. That is, given particular predispositions at birth (temperament, innate talents, etc.) we actively seek out those environmental contexts where these predispositions have the most room to grow. In the case of the young child who is provided with the basics and the opportunities to grow both

physically and intellectually, the world is a challenging place where natural curiosity can take hold. For the child who is abused, uncared for and unprotected—and there are far too many such children—future outcomes and potential are constrained by the narrow paths open to them. No matter how much they seek it, the environment that permits them to develop to their full potential might be beyond their reach.

After decades of discussion, most developmental psychologists agree with Donald Hebb (*Organization of Behavior* New York, 1949), who recognized almost 50 years ago, that both heredity and environment operate 100 percent of the time and that the influence of one is impossible to understand without considering the influence of the other.

While Herrnstein and Murray provide an invaluable service in bringing the questions of class, intelligence, and race to the table, they fail to adequately address certain key points. First, intelligence test scores are only a reflection of one's *realized* level of intelligence. In other words, intelligence quotients as test scores may or may not be accurate indicators of potential intelligence.

In addition, the assumption that there is a single general intelligence factor (called *g*), rather than the multiple intelligences proposed by psychologists such as Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg, puts a limit on the ways that people can differ from one another and on the kinds of opportunities that may permit them to grow and prosper.

Second, although the linking of intelligence with genetic differences does not imply that intelligence is immutable, Herrnstein and Murray clearly think that, for all practical purposes, it is immutable. However, there is a plethora of evidence that particularly stimulating and well-structured early experiences can have a profound effect, increasing school readiness and success in school. The more intensive the intervention, the greater the benefits realized. Perhaps the most important point, is that these benefits last beyond early childhood into early adolescence (C. Ramey and S. Landesman-Raney. "At risk does not mean doomed," *National Health/Educational Consortium*, Occasional Paper #4, 1992). Furthermore, recent evidence (R. Dvorsky, S. Bradley-Johnson, and C. M. Johnson, "The effect of token reinforcement on WISC-R performance for fifth- through ninth grade American-Indians," *The Psychological Record*, 44, [1994] 441-449) demonstrates that performance on IQ tests is highly sensitive to environmental manipulations. The simple procedure of reinforcing performance with tokens can increase scores by as much as 12 points on the WISC-R, a standard IQ test.

Finally, if the observed differences in cognitive abilities (a.k.a. intelligence) are innate, one would be hard pressed to come up with any explanation for differential evolutionary pressures for blacks and whites that created such disparity. The biggest weakness of the book is that Herrnstein and Murray can give no explanation for why such differences might exist, since surely intelligence is a useful attribute—one that increases the chances of survival—in any environment. Why would evolution select for intelligence on one continent and not on another?

The important message of this book is misguided, rather than hateful. Is there an "inequality of endowments" of an intellectual nature, as the authors claim in their last chapter? Using the simple notion of difference in performance on IQ tests won't give us the answer. And if that is the answer we seek, then, tragically, the wrong question is being asked.

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