Book Reviews

Reviews

SUBJECTS OF SLAVERY, AGENTS OF CHANGE: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790-1865. By Kari J. Winter. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1992.

Taking a clue from the rhetoric of eighteenth-century feminists who insisted that the condition of women in patriarchal societies paralleled that of slaves, Kari Winter uses insightful readings of selected gothic novels and slave narratives to explore the strategies women used to resist oppression under both systems and to carve out limited autonomy. Concentrating on the "ideology of male domination" (2) inherent in both slavery patriarchy, Winter traces the roots of each system in the "social ordering of power" (5). She isolates significant differences between gothic novels written by men and those written by women and uses the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the fiction of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison to explicate the difficulties of women encountered in affirming themselves, in asserting their worth and their right to speak. Despite the limitations of each genre, slave narratives and gothic novels allowed women that opportunity. Winter's conclusion, however, emphasizes just how limited that opportunity was.

Anyone who has noted parallels between the treatment of women under patriarchy and the treatment of slaves or who has questioned the validity of comparing the two will appreciate *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change.* Without equating the conditions of women and slaves, Witner has thoroughly explored the parallels but also the limits of the comparison in order to throw considerable light on both situations.

Edgewood College Winifred Morgan

CULTURE WARS: The Struggle to Define America. By James Davison Hunter. New York: Basic Books. 1991.

Hunter's excellent book sets the standard for balanced, thoughtful analysis of the seemingly incommensurable debates dominating recent American public discourse. Bringing to the task a strong background in the sociology of knowledge, especially the sociology of religion, Hunter maps the lines of cultural conflict, not conflicts along the old

lines of religion or race or gender or social class, but along the new lines of moral understanding and of moral authority. Hunter sees two "polarizing impulses" in American public culture. The impulse toward "orthodoxy" relies upon "an external definable, and transcendent authority," while the impulse toward "progressivism" tends "to resymbolize historical faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life" (pp. 44-45).

Like the authors of *Habits of the Heart* (1985), Hunter gives flesh to these impulses by quoting extensively from Americans from both sides of the culture conflicts over homosexual rights, abortion, and the content of public schooling. Hunter's book is accessible to the general reader, but he does not sacrifice theory, and along the way he introduces into his analysis discussions of the distinctions between private and public cultures, of the emergence of a new, professional middle class ("the knowledge class" or the "New Class"), of Antonio Gramsci's distinctions between traditional and organic intellectual elites, and more. Hunter is as good an historian as sociologist in recounting the roots of the culture wars, but he also proves himself a rhetorician in looking at the rhetorical strategies each side adopts in the discourse. Hunter concludes that the mass media polarize the debate, "eclipsing" the middle ground where most Americans actually stand when quizzed on one issue or another.

Hunter devotes separate chapters to the "fields of conflict" in the culture wars. The two sides struggle over the definition of "the family," for example. In the chapter on education, Hunter revisits skirmishes over textbooks, over "secular humanism" in the curriculum, over the issue of "choice" (i.e., vouchers and home schooling) in schooling, and over multicultural curricula in the university. The chapter on "Media and the Arts" recounts battles over television, over rock song and rap lyrics, and over National Endowment for the Arts programs. The chapter on "law takes an interesting look at the struggle over the rules and procedures for resolving public differences. Hunter's intelligent analysis of court cases concerning religion makes clear the warrant for each side's position. A chapter on "Electoral Politics" is brief and sketchy, not up to the quality of the other case studies, but Hunter makes clear how the media have effected electoral politics and, hence, the quality of political discourse.

In his final two chapters on "Moral Pluralism and the Democratic Ideal" and "Democratic Possibilities" Hunter steps outside his sociologist's role and recommends a solution to the destructive trajectory of the culture wars. Hunter believes that agreement around "a renewed public philosophy could establish a context of public discourse . . . to sustain a genuine and peaceable pluralism . . ." (p. 307). Building on the recent work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Bellah, Jeffrey Stout, and others, Hunter lays out his conditions for a "principled pluralism" in which the orthodox and progressives can engage in a conversation about a "common life." Although I would add Richard Rorty and Cornel West (and their neopragmatism) to Hunter's party forging a new public agreement, Hunter's book provides a superb map of the territory and of the questions.

University of California, Davis Jay Mechling

A NEW JEWRY? America Since the Second World War. By Peter Y. Medding. New York: Oxford University Press. 1992.

A New Jewry?, the eighth volume of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's series on modern Jewish history (specifically those essays subsumed under the heading, "Symposium"), poses an important question. It tries, although not consistently or evenly to explore the multiple ways in which post-World War

II culture shaped a new era in world and American Jewish history. Underlying the pieces here runs the notion that in earlier eras, extensive anti-semitism and the Jews' discomfort in their new American home shaped not only how they interacted with their hosts, but also how they expressed themselves as Jews, structured their communities, and manifested their Jewishness.

In the decades after World War II American Jews, by both design and default, increasingly stressed pluralism, freedom of choice, voluntary participation, and the right of individuals to shape their own options: in short, as both Jews and as Americans they emphasized that their own agency, rather than coercion from without, determined how and where they functioned. American Jewry took on the colors of the "golden age" of American liberalism, and in this epoch a new kind of Jewry came into being.

The essays in the symposium explore this newness and pluralism through the medium of diverse topics, which on the surface seem to be unrelated. A reader can discern, with some patience, a common thread binding together articles on literature and other cultural media produced for both in-group and out-group communities in Los Angeles, Miami and elsewhere in the Sunbelt, efforts at liturgical change and issuance of denominational statements of principle, levels of Jewish communal involvement, economic patterns which saw the near disappearance of Jewish marginality and the ways in which American Jews expressed their attachments to the Sate of Israel, whose creation played a key role in shaping this "new Jewry." In each case freedom of choice surfaces as the stated or implied paradigm for American Jewish life.

These pieces derive some unity in that they all assume that 1945 signalled the beginning of this new stage in the history of the Jewish people in America. Without explaining why (a serious shortcoming), the authors demonstrate how in the aftermath of the war American Jews gained an unprecedented degree of freedom from privation and from external pressure to choose where to live and how to affiliate, how to articulate their Jewishness and to manifest their Americanness.

Does this book fall under the rubric of Jewish history of contemporary Jewish studies? Not just a picky, academic question, this is an analytic problem which hovers over all of the essays here precisely because the authors fail to address it. The book editor, in a brief introduction, notes that in the 1980's Jewish acceptance into and comfort with America—particularly as measured by statistics of intermarriage—had reached such levels that Jews stood in danger of losing their distinctiveness and melding in to the general American population. As such, has the era of this "new Jewry" been replaced by something else, by a yet newer Jewry with its own paradigm?

A New Jewry? should have dealt with the question of timing. The essays should have picked out more clearly how the events of the post-World War II world and the nature of the larger culture assisted at the birth of a new Jewry. The authors should have pointed out more sharply the connections between Jewish cultural and social developments. Yet, with all these drawbacks, *A New Jewry* definitely makes a contribution to our understanding of an era which may indeed still be very much with us.

University of Maryland at College Park Hasia R. Diner

AND THE CROOKED PLACES MADE STRAIGHT: The Struggle for Social Change in the 1960s. By David Chalmers. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1991

SIGHTS ON THE SIXTIES. Edited by Barbara L. Tischler. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 1992.

Even leaving aside the implications of such cultural revivals as the unplugging of rock music and the new-hippy look in fashion, it would seem clear from the recent upsurge of publications on the New Left and the counterculture that after a decade of demonizing from both sides of the political fence, the sixties has begun to seem relevant again. The trend can only be viewed as a fortunate one. Neglected as much as misunderstood, this ostensibly "anomalous" period in the nation's history offers an exciting opportunity for both theorists and social historians. Neither of the present entries, unfortunately, goes far toward meeting that challenge.

David Chalmers' *And the Crooked Made Straight* on the surface offers an admirably balanced and comprehensive overview of the entire era. Ranging in its purview from the civil rights movement through student radicalism to the multiplex phenomenon of Vietnam, it sets itself both to document and to assess the groups and individuals which/who defined the decade-defining struggle for social change. On a purely factual level, Chalmers seems to have succeeded admirably in his chosen task. If only in terms of the volume and diversity of the data it manages to marshall, in fact, the book unquestionably makes a useful addition to the literature on the period. While flawed somewhat by a piecemeal, chronologically fractured narrative structure that obscures both the connections between the commonalities within the phenomena considered, as well as by Chalmers' decision to eliminate specific documentation in favour of a generalized "Bibliographical Essay," it nevertheless provides plenty of hard information about the events, actors, and ideologies that constituted sixties political culture. Once we move beyond facts to interpretation, on the other hand, the author falls decidedly short of what his title promises. Camouflaged by the cool, scholarly tone and carefully non-partisan coverage, the problem doesn't emerge until one is well into the text. Somewhere around chapter 5, however, it suddenly began to dawn on me why Chalmer's recapitulation seemed so curiously out of sync with my own memories of the sixties. Facts notwithstanding, it is clear from what he leaves out as much as from what he includes that the author doesn't really understand the mindset that made the period what it was. Particularly problematic is his narrow understanding of dissent. For Chalmers, it would seem, political activism has to be cast in the mold of traditional progressive or radical formations in order to be recognizable as such. In evaluating the effectiveness of sixties protest actions, consequently, he only gives credence to the earlier, more conventional interventions of pre-Black Power civil rights workers and pre-yippie student organizers. The generalized late decade deinstitutionalization—if not outright denial—of politics as increasingly large numbers of young people queried the rules of the game, far from escalating the rebellion, strikes him only as "exhaustion." The strategy of resisting by means of lifestyle, similarly, is totally foreign to his notion of what "revolutionary" activity comprises. That he devotes only twelve pages to the counterculture (which he writes off as escapist) is a telling indication of the preconceptions he brings to this project. Considering it was the tastes and values of these dropouts which had the greatest long-term effects on mainstream society, it is also a major detriment to his announced intention of elucidating the roots of change. The fact is, the most salient changes that came out of the sixties—changes that Chalmers

himself acknowledges in his concluding chapter on "continuities"—can be attributed to the very features and phenomena he devalues. Environmentalism, multiculturalism, and feminism, for instance—arguably three of the most important influences on the rewriting of the social agenda which took place during the eighties—were all formulated under the influence of deserter from or critics of the New Left mainstream; theorized by academics who emerged from that sympathetic but non-activist majority of students which Chalmers opposes to the "real" radicals; and finally normalized by a population which had bought into a modified version of hippie ideals. That more conventional political initiatives flared and declined before the decade was over, that solidarity dissipated into violence and buffoonery, should not, therefore, be taken to mean that their goals where abandoned; merely that the rebels came to understand that new ends required new means. *This* is what the decade was really "about."

Sights on the Sixties, a collection of interdisciplinary essays edited by Barbara Tischler, errs in exactly the opposite direction. Where Chalmer's history ignores too much of what is seminal, *Sights* includes far too much that is marginal. While one might in theory agree with Tischler's claim that, the macro trends of the period already being amply documented, "what is needed is an exploration of the meaning of local events, lesser-known movements, and historical actors who played smaller parts," the minor themes are only worth investigating if they are either intrinsically interesting or bring new insights to our understanding of the broader context. In the case of most of these papers, neither, unfortunately, is the case. The problem begins right from the choice of topics. Ranging from capsule histories of known campaigns ("Agent Orange on Campus"), cultural phenomena ("The Arts and the... Antiwar Movement," "Apocalyptic Imagery... in Films of the 1960s"), organizations ("Mothers Against the Draft for Vietnam"), and personalities (Abbie Hoffman, Lyndon Johnson), to studies of little known side issues like the role of women in the GI antiwar press and the influence of humanistic psychology on sixties thought, the topics are either so obvious as to have already entered into common understanding or so specialized as to be of small general interest. If the authors brought something new to their treatments of this material it would be different, but they don't. With the rare exception of Stephen Kent's analysis of "Youth Religious Conversion in the Early 1970s" (whose "academic" tone stands out like a sore thumb in this company) and Barbara Ehrenreich's thoughtful wrap-up on "Legacies," these essays are for the most part simply (and simplistically) recitations of fact. Insular, atheoretical, and methodologically naive, they don't even try to connect with, let alone cast new light on, the decade as a whole. Almost entirely absent, in fact, is the kind of revision or reinterpretation that one would expect from a collection billed as corrective. While mildly interesting to someone who hasn't read any of the more comprehensive histories or ethnographies of the sixties (here is where Chalmer's bibliographic essay could actually be useful), they are consequently unlikely to reward the attention of readers with any special interest in or knowledge of the period.

Rice University Gaile McGregor

CULTURAL EXCURSIONS: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America. By Neil Harris. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1990.

Readers in American Studies eagerly sign on to take a cultural excursion with Neil Harris, so interesting are the destinations of this interdisciplinary historian. The essays collected in this volume (all published within the past fifteen years) work from different

angles to converge upon common themes. The first set of essays look at American art museums and expositions as cultural institutions. The second set examines consumer culture, from utopian fiction and department stories to the collecting passion of J. Pierpont Morgan. And the third look at American art and architecture, but with an eye to revisiting the issues of consumer desire raised earlier in the volume. Thus, Harris's diverse essays all swirl around the same theme—namely, the relationships (I would say "intertextuality," though I think he would not) between museums, world's fairs, department stores, the iconography of advertising in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These are the great institutions that molded consumer desire in Americans, and Harris seeks to understand how these institutions accomplished that goal.

Harris's ideas remain fresh, often anticipating more recent scholarship. In a 1972 essay on the four stages of the cultural growth of the American city, Harris weaves together the stories of the growth of hotels, symphony orchestras, museums, and great expositions (1870s-1917). An essay on "Museums: The Hidden Agenda," offers an insightful analysis of the shifting social functions of museums. Another essay (written in 1975 but ever-more-timely in the 1990s) looks at the representation of Japan in American fairs (1876-1904), wherein Harris explores America's fascination with a culture working through the tensions arising between modernity and antiquity. Another essay directly addresses the similarities between museums, department stores, and world fairs as settings for objects in the late nineteenth century, when museums quite consciously "opted for a consumer orientation to justify their existence" (p. 58). On the pretext of discussing the history of libraries, Harris devotes a thoughtful essay to "Cultural Institutions and American Modernization." A close examination of Chicago's Columbian Exposition permits Harris to explain the evolution of fairs from consumer warehouses to "Heavenly Cities."

Harris connects utopian fiction with American anxieties about electricity and environmental risks. His essay on "The Drama of Consumer Desire" shows how verbal and iconographical narratives created rituals of consumption for Americans, and Harris finds a convincing way to make even John Philip Sousa complicit in the creation of consumer desire. In an excursion into "postindustrial folklore," Harris uses copyright disputes over popular culture figures (e.g., comic book characters) to meditate on cultural myths. The essays on shopping malls, especially the newly emerging phenomenon of the urban vertical mall, on hotel lobbies, and on the parking garage are first-rate. A triptych of essays on the interactions of color print photography, iconography, and cultural meanings takes seemingly trivial technological developments and shows their profound cultural impact. The volume closes with an excellent essay on art and the modern corporation.

The nature of this collection creates redundancy, but the repetition here is more like the elegant themes and variations of a Mozart symphony than like some books that have only a few real ideas and must say them over and over. Harris aims always at connecting seemingly unconnected phenomena. This rich book rewards the reader willing to take the excursion.

University of California, Davis Jay Mechling

THE CYNICAL SOCIETY: The Culture of Politics and the Politics of Culture in American Life. By Jeffrey C. Goldfarb. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Goldfarb's thoughtful book appears at an important moment in American history. The 1992 political campaign season addressed cynicism in its own way and a number of recent books have diagnosed the problem of America's "culture wars" between seemingly

incommensurable moral worldviews. Goldfarb usually writes on politics and society in the former Soviet bloc. The cynicism he sees rising in American public discourse looks uncomfortably like the cynicism at the core Soviet totalitarianism, and he wants to steer Americans in a different direction. His twin aims are "to demonstrate how the confusion of cynicism with political judgment and wisdom significantly enervates American political culture, and to highlight ways of thinking and acting which work against cynicism's confusions" (p. ix).

Cynicism, which Goldfarb defines simply as "a form of legitimation through disbelief" (p. 1), arises out of philosophical "relativism" and, to an extent, out of one late twentieth century understanding of cultural pluralism. Goldfarb focuses on the dialectical relationship between cynicism and mass society. The rise of mass society, its institutions (advertising, mass media, etc.), and the possibility of hegemony require American critics to be able to distinguish between "democratic practices" and "mass manipulation." Toward sorting out those differences, Goldfarb offers both an intellectual history of social science thinking about mass society and democracy and a history of earlier American thought (the debate over the Constitution, Tocqueville, etc.) about the tensions inherent in a pluralist democracy. Three chapters, in turn, look at public culture critics (Allan Bloom, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., and Russell Jacoby), at ideological criticism from the American left, and at ideological criticism from the American right. Goldfarb finds rampant cynicism in these critiques, agreeing with Jacoby's that there is a growing gulf of sensibility between the writings of "public intellectuals" and their audience.

Goldfarb arrives, finally, at the three chapters that argue his thesis. Ideological critique—that is, treating all ideas as merely ideological, as merely serving self-interest—is the "new treason of the intellectuals" because it offers cynicism rather than shared values as the "cultural glue" keeping together the democratic social order. Goldfarb recommends as an antidote to mass culture and its cynicism something he calls "autonomous culture," a public culture alive with the "living cultural traditions" of its various people. Goldfarb tries to show the distinction he has in mind by offering a chapter contrasting two cultural texts on the problem of American racism. One text, the film *Mississippi Burning*, evidences all the cynicism of mass cultural products, while the other, Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*, speaks for the autonomous culture Goldfarb prefers. Goldfarb concludes with an affirmation that by embracing autonomous culture Americans can steer safely between the shoals of cynicism on the one hand and fundamentalism on the other.

There is, of course, an old American tradition of steering this middle course, and one wishes Goldfarb tapped more into that tradition, especially the neo-pragmatism of people like Richard Rorty and Cornel West. Goldfarb writes of "irony," for example, without noting that Rorty has built a democratic "middle ground" from precisely that stance. Nor does Goldfarb show much nuance in his argument when it comes for gender, social class, and race, as does West. Nonetheless, Goldfarb usually has something interesting to say, and he has done us the best service by sharpening our understanding of the ways cynicism has become an American cultural form.

University of California, Davis Jay Mechling

CATHER STUDIES, Volume 2. Edited by Susan J. Rosowski. Lincoln: University Press. 1993.

Volume two of *Cather Studies* is a fine collection of articles covering a wide range of Willa Cather's works. Encompassing a variety of critical approaches, the volume contains articles which expand upon Cather scholarship in a fresh and thoughtful manner.

Especially refreshing is attention paid to works such as "The Garden Lodge" and *Lucy Gayheart* which have received proportionally less attention than Cather's most popular works.

Two articles ambitious in scope and depth respectively are Loretta Wasserman's "Cather's Semitism" and Anne Fisher-Wirth's "Out of the Mother: Loss in *My Antonia.*" Wasserman poses interesting questions in her treatment of Cather's portrayal of Jews, analyzing Cather's Semitism, or anti-Semitism, as it appears in her works. Though the essay raises important questions, one wishes for a deeper analysis. Fisher-Wirth, in contrast, probes deeply into the question of loss in *My Antonia* in a fully packed essay which is enlightening and complex in its analysis.

Of particular interest for their newer interpretations, John Flannigan and Linda Chown challenge more traditional views of Cather's works. Flannigan's "Issues of Gender and Lesbian Love: Goblins in 'The Garden Lodge'" exposes a duality of gender and transferral of gender presentation within the story. As Flannigan examines Cather's use of Wagner, he explores the issues of gender and sexuality that this use of Wagner reveal, issues always problematic in Cather's work. Chown's "'It Came Closer than That': Willa Cather's *Lucy Gayheart*" is particularly intriguing in its analysis of this novel through a close look at its aesthetics and through naming Harry Gordon as the novel's narrator. This view reshapes a reading of *Lucy Gayheart* and elevates the novel within Cather's canon.

Two articles on *The Professor's House* attempt to reshape readings of that novel. Matthias Schubnell discusses Spenglerian ideology as it shapes the novel in "The Decline of America: Willa Cather's Spenglerian Vision in *The Professor's House.*" Schubnell makes interesting connections between Spengler's ideas and Cather's work, though the connection between the two is speculative and does not rest on demonstrated knowledge that Cather read or read about Spengler's ideas. In her "This is a Frame-Up: Mother Eve in *The Professor's House,*" Jean Schwind exposes "conceptual frame-ups" within the novel and within reading the novel itself. This analysis is somewhat startling in its view of Tom Outland as a stereotyped hero more heroic in memory than in life and in its exposure of common errors of reading of the novel which create heroic actions from less than heroic individuals.

Merrill Maguire Skaggs and James Woodress each explore Cather's work from her use of her sources, Skaggs in "Cather's Use of Parkman's Histories in *Shadows on the Rock*" and Woodress in "Willa Cather and Alphonse Daudet." Skagg's article is more than source study, as she shows Cather's affinity for Parkman's histories as lying in her personal and spiritual needs as she wrote *Shadows on the Rock.* Woodress makes an interesting comparison of the lives and careers of Cather and Daudet, then moves to a view of the intellectual and personal influence Daudet may have had on Cather. Though he creates an interesting argument, his assumption that Cather's sexual orientation is questionable is troublesome. Also, Woodress' assertion that Cather's rejection of marriage as an option for female artists is derived in part from Daudet's work is problematic for those who see Cather as living in a relationship resembling marriage in most, if not all, ways.

The final article in the volume, labeled "Note," raises perhaps the most interesting issues in the volume. Robert K. Miller analyzes Myra Henshawe's Celtic heritage in "Strains of Blood: Myra Henshawe and the Romance of the Celts." As he looks at Cather's knowledge and understanding of Celtic character and her use of Myra's heritage to form Myra's character, Miller suggests interesting connections between Cather and the Celtic tradition and offers a strong reading of *My Mortal Enemy.*

This is an excellent collection of articles, approaching Cather from various stances and traditions. It raises important issues and offers interesting new readings of Cather's works.

University of Kansas M. J. McLendon

CHARLES S. PEIRCE: A Life. By Joseph Brent. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993.

Reading this illuminating biography of the great philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce reminded me of a peculiar faculty search I witnessed as a graduate student at Brown University. Because it was not a department, the Program in American Civilization sought to make joint appointments with related departments. One year the call went out for an assistant professorship in philosophy and American Studies. The only point of intersection the faculties could agree on was a series of candidates whose field was Charles Peirce. Unfortunately, however, no one in American Studies could understand the candidates' presentations on the intensely logical scientific philosopher. The frustrations were evident, but the wrangling went on out of view of graduate students. The upshot was that in 1980, when jobs were fiercely tight, this opening went vacant, while the Program in American Civilization waited until the next year to re-open the search with a more congenial department.

Brent's biography would have offered a bridge between the two camps. Both Peirce and this biography have a story worth telling: The scientific philosopher was a genius whose theories are fundamental to an interdisciplinary host of fields; a much shorter 1960 dissertation version of Brent's biography was suppressed from publication because the Harvard Philosophy Department wanted to prevent release of information about Peirce's idiosyncratic life. Brent left the field of Peirce studies and no other full-length biography was published. However, Peirce scholarship bloomed with ever more abundant theoretical inquiries, while biographical and cultural understandings remained almost completely barren, contributing to the analysis of Peirce in ever more abstract terms and to the implicitly ahistorical bias of philosophers that social realities have little bearing on theoretical creation. Brent's meticulously researched life of Peirce thoroughly grounds his thought in his life, although it has only minimal concern for Peirce's cultural context. Most impressively, Brent understands his philosophy well enough to show what motivated Peirce's thoughts and how an understanding of the life can illuminate themes in his philosophy.

Before Brent, questions of the relation of Peirce's biography to his philosophy were answered with simple surprise that someone so miserable, with "too little social talent" (p. 103) as the novelist Henry James described him, and so at odds with the social conventions of his time (he was haughty and insulting to his peers and he had a public affair, divorced his first wife, and married his mistress) could produce philosophy so elaborate, orderly, and insightful. Brent offers more sophisticated explanations. Usually without a steady job, Peirce could concentrate on his philosophy without distraction or any need to conform to others. Brent also shows that his philosophy was a therapeutic release from his misery. Brent also suggests that Peirce's interest in logic was a passion so strong as to be a religious fervor. Quoting Peirce, Brent describes the highly driven philosopher as the "wasp in the bottle," frantically analyzing the logic of this world to gain a glimpse of the reality within everyday facts. Brent's biography shows that underneath Peirce's influential logic of science and theory of signs is a religious quest for meaning. The metaphysical roots of his

logic also point back to his life's failures. Brent identifies his commitment to Swedenborgianism and its philosophy of evil as a necessary component in the progress of the good as a reason for Peirce's own moral failings. These biographical insights about the logical philosopher suggest dramatic new lines of inquiry into the religious roots of American pragmatism, semeiotics, and philosophy of science.

Students of American culture may see in Peirce another kind of W.A.S.P. (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant), far from the central concerns of recent American Studies scholarship on those marginalized by gender, race, and class. In these terms, Peirce offers more paradox than conventional power. He was born to a prominent New England family; he gradually dissipated his social power through his logical passion and personal infelicities; and tragically, only in death—to speak bluntly: without his abrasive presence--did his philosophy gain a hearing. Brent tells a remarkable story of the personal tragedy and philosophical questing behind Charles Peirce's prophetic and ground-breaking contributions to contemporary theory.

Stetson University Paul Jerome Croce

UNGODLY WOMEN: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism. By Betty A. DeBerg. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1990.

Given the role of religious discourse about gender within current cultural-political debates, this study is timely and important. Conventional explanations for the rise of Protestant fundamentalism in the early twentieth century stress sociological uneasiness with multi-ethnic industrial cities and theological controversies about the Bible and evolution. DeBerg argues that gender was an additional factor of at least as much importance. Fundamentalists presupposed middle-class Victorian gender roles. Their religious concerns represented, in large part, an attempt to maintain them unchanged into the 1920's, as middle-class male identities were challenged on various fronts: changing sexual mores, shifts from a small-scale producer to a large-scale consumer economy, and women's successes in entering "male" public spheres (e.g. suffrage, access to education and paid work, women's reform groups with public dimensions.) In the 1920's, when the first wave of fundamentalist mobilization peaked, these challenges were symbolically condensed in the image of the faithful Christian versus the ungodly flapper.

It makes no sense to promote any one factor as the sole explanation for fundamentalism, but DeBerg argues persuasively that fundamentalist discourse on gender was no mere afterthought or secondary implication of other beliefs. Through extensive quotations from fundamentalist periodicals she argues that concerns related to gender were deeply integrated into larger fundamentalist discourse, often to the point of shaping it. When premillenialists searched their Bibles and the wider culture for signs of the end-times, they often stressed the breakdown of the Victorian family. When they debated evolution, its implications for the breakdown of moral codes were a central concern. When they theorized about the central institutions of faith, they often ranked the "divinized home" as more important than the churches themselves. DeBerg suggests, without arguing in detail, that gender-based explanations may qualify common interpretations which draw sharp distinctions among fundamentalists, Catholics, and Social Gospel liberals. All three groups were male-dominated and may have responded in related ways to changes in the gender system. Despite intense general hostility to Catholics, fundamentalists spoke warmly about Catholic teachings on gender. And despite pitched battles between fundamentalist and modernist Protestants in various fields, key leaders on both sides promoted

a hyper-masculine "muscular Christianity" and argued that overly feminized churches should be "reclaimed for men."

It is important to stress one limitation of this text: it relies on popular prescriptive writing by male religious elites, and takes their writings as representative of the movement as a whole. The core structure of DeBerg's argument interprets fundamentalism as a male reaction to changes in the received gender system. However, she recognizes that a majority of fundamentalists were women. How did they perceive the issues she addresses? Did they simply accept the male version as hegemonic? If so, how and why? Did they accent different ideas or create counterinstitutions within the fundamentalist subculture? We need additional studies of these issues, working in the vein DeBerg has opened.

Along with its value for scholarship in cultural history, this is a fine book for undergraduate teaching. DeBerg's writing is vivid and accessible. And it is both fascinating and pedagogically useful to encounter arguments against contraceptives and women's entry into the universities that use virtually the same terms currendy used to condemn abortion rights or the civil rights of gays and lesbians.

University of Tennessee Mark D. Hulsether

V. F. CALVERTON: Radical in the American Grain. By Leonard Wilcox. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. 1993.

Leonard Wilcox has written an excellent study of V. F. Calverton, a long ignored figure in the history of American radicalism. Wilcox argues persuasively that Calverton and his Journal, T*he Modern Quarterly*, furnished a connecting link between the prewar Village left of Randolph Bourne, and the antiStalinist radicalism of the *Partisan Review* circle at the end of the 1930s. Calverton shared with the earlier left a kind of freewheeling radicalism that embraced culture and the "personal" as well as economics and politics. After attempting to work with the Communist Party in the mid-20s, Calverton developed a critique of Stalinism in the late 20s and early 30s. His critique alienated him from many of his friends, but it both helped develop a left critique of Stalinism which contributed to denying the Communist Party complete hegemony on the left during the early and mid-thirties and helped provide space for the emerging left critique of Stalinism in the late 30s.

Calverton was a man of many interests: Marxism, literary criticism, black culture, sexual psychology. He attempted to synthesize Freud and Marx in the 20s and later he attempted to combine a Marxian analysis with an American radical tradition. Wilcox recognizes that Calverton was never a systematic odisciplined enough thinker to fully develop any of his interests, but he rightfully gives him credit for his efforts to think creatively about Marxism, pragmatism, and the American tradition. It is as an editor of a radical journal and the catalyst for radical intellectual gatherings that Calverton had his greatest historic importance. Wilcox demonstrates the impressive array of radical thinkers (John Dewey, Sidney Hook, Max Eastman, Edmund Wilson, Lewis Corey) who had connections with the magazine. An advocate of open debate on the left--a position that precipitated his break with the Communist Party--Calverton opened his journal to radicals of all varieties.

Calverton, the public intellectual, comes off more admirably than Calverton the private person. Wilcox recognizes that some of Calverton's philosophizing about new sexual attitudes was a rationalization for his obsessive womanizing. His self-absorption and insecurities resulted in a doublestandard in sexual matters. His pervasive fear of death

led him to make emotional demands on the women in his life as if they had no independent lives of their own. The tormented and tragic last years in which drink, fear of death, worries about sexual inadequacy, and the bleak political situation created by fascism, Stalinism, and the threat of war caused Calverton to pursue a kind of self-destruction were terribly sad, but at the same time he was insensitive to those with whom his life was most deeply connected.

I have only two minor caveats about Wilcox's work. I think he slightly overestimates the divergence of Calverton and Lewis Corey from orthodox Marxist thinking in their treatment of the middle class. True, they believed that Marxists had too long ignored the importance of the middle class. But, as good Marxists, they were convinced that significant portions of the middle class were being proletarianized. It was Alfred Bingham, whom Wilcox links with Corey and Calverton, who really emphasized the importance of the middle class when he argued that the proletariat was growing smaller and was becoming bourgeoisified. Second, Wilcox pays a good deal of attention to Calverton's and others' efforts to synthesize Marxism with the American radical tradition. Tt is therefore surprising that he fails to discuss Leon Samson whose writings admittedly only appeared briefly in *The Modern Quarterly*, but whose book *The United Front* was positively reviewed in it by Hook. Samson's ideas on. Americanism as a form of "substitute socialism" were an essential part of the on-going exploration of radicalism and the American tradition.

But these are minor caveats. Overall, Wilcox has presented a moving story of an unusual, heroic, but terribly flawed, individual whose magazine kept alive the kind of independent radicalism and open exploration of ideas without which any left worth struggling for is unimaginable.

Queens College Frank A. Warren

JOHN DOS PASSOS' Correspondence with Arthur K. McComb or "Learn to sing the Carmagnole." Edited by Melvin Landsberg. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado. 1991.

John Dos Passos and Arthur McComb made an odd couple. While the protean Dos Passos wrote indefatigably, traveled to odd corners of the world, and involved himself with a multiplicity of causes, the crusty British-born McComb built a career as an historian of Italian Renaissance painting, centering his life on Boston when he was not seeking out the masterpieces of Italy and Spain. In a correspondence which flourished from 1916 to the early 1920's, these friends from the *Harvard Monthly* chatted about art and literature, read each other's manuscripts, and fenced over political ideas.

The two-way exchange printed in *Learn to sing the Carmagnole* has a claim for a place on the spacious Dos Passos shelf. It supplements the correspondence and diaries from which Townsend Ludington fashioned *The Fourteenth Chronicle* (1973). Dos Passos addressed McComb in a less intimate and more intellectual tone than he adopted toward his protege Rumsey Marvin or his lifelong friend Dudley Poore. Portions of the letters to McComb have already seen the light in Professor Landsberg's *Dos Passos' Path to U.S.A.*, and Dos Passos made extensive use of them in his memoir *The Best Times* (1966).

The major problems in *Learn to sing the Carmagnole* are the redundant background essays, the episodic form, and the excessive annotation. Most of the letters are divided into short sequences--of two years or less--introduced by narratives heavily laced with

information already available in the biographies by Ludington, Virginia Carr, and Landsberg himself. The overwhelming detail of the footnotes is frequently distracting. Dos Passos' friends are identified by full name at every opportunity, despite a list at the beginning of the book; every particle of foreign language is translated (*helas* is "Fr.'alas'"); every person and place, from FDR to the Bay of Pigs to the Brevoort Hotel, is explained.

Despite careful transcription of the text, handsome production, and excellent illustration, this conscientious edition falls short of what it might have accomplished. I wish that Professor Landsberg had given less attention, in his narrative and notes, to the accumulation of fact and more to the issues he raises in his Introduction: the intellectual and personal interchange between these two men. In this way he might have helped illuminate the elusive character of Dos Passos, the diffident iconoclast, the convivial loner. How seriously did Dos Passos take McComb's literary criticism and his discussions of Italian art? (In one case Dos Passos invented a "great neglected master" as a spoof.) Why did Dos Passos keep in touch with this snobbish eccentric over the years, although they seldom saw each other except for some months in Spain, in 1919-20? Why did he renew the correspondence in the 1950s and 1960s, after McComb had sold his earlier letters? In 1917, Dos Passos, as a new-minted radical, urged the street-song of the French Revolution upon McComb, who was to become an admirer of Mussolini. How did what Dos Passos called "a political argument" with a friend "which lasted a lifetime" explain his own political transformation into an icon of William F. Buckley, which has so irritated and perplexed his readers?

Colorado College Neale Reinitz

THE SCHOOLHOUSE DOOR: Segregation's Last Stand at the University of Alabama. By E.Culpepper Clark. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 1993.

The Schoolhouse Door is a compelling two act drama staged before a broadly painted backdrop. The closing act focuses upon George Wallace's famous "school house door" stand at the University of Alabama in which he challenged two entering black students and the representatives of the Justice Department who accompanied them. The first act deals with a similar but much less well-known situation back in 1956 when, under court pressure, the University of Alabama accepted a black student named Autherine Lucy. On the day that Lucy showed up for registration, an unanticipated riot erupted. Lucy subsequently decided to withdraw and the university quickly fashioned a blockade against the admission of blacks that held firm until the Wallace stand seven years later.

Clark, who is currently the Executive Assistant to the President of the University of Alabama, shapes his two acts as trying tests for two very different university administrations. The presidency of Oliver Carmichael is portrayed as an anguished failure for its poor handling of the Lucy admission. However, mindful of the valuable lesson in this painful episode, the later president Frank Rose moved aggressively so that Wallace's stand didn't bring added embarrassment to the university or stay its movement away from this past.

Clark effectively presents the Lucy registration as a Pearl Harbor for everyone involved. Neither Lucy nor her NAACP backers, which included Thurgood Marshall, anticipated very well the resistence and antagonism they were to provoke. However, Carmichael and the university trustees were even more overwhelmed. Despite impressive qualifications, Carmichael proved an inept leader. Clark's portrait of a suddenly awakened racism, especially that of the authoritarian trustees, is so vivid and so convincing one

cannot help wondering if *any* president could have handled this test very well.

Rose, on the other hand, is portrayed as man who came to his position with weak credentials but then demonstrated the wary, crafty leadership which the situation demanded. Under his presidency, the university ceased to be the sleepy, provincial institution which Carmichael headed. Cuing his efforts to the football team's national recognition, Rose moved aggressively to secure the federal funds unleashed by Sputnik and to strengthen the university's reputation for education. In the process he came to realize how much his efforts were hampered by the university's well honed system of excluding blacks. Thus he backed plans for the admission of blacks and then actively participated in a broad based, well-orchestrated scheme which effectively defanged the threat of Wallace's stand before it happened and distanced the university from his grandstanding display of reactionary belligerence.

Clark's detailed examination of these two events is accompanied by a quite different overview of the intervening seven years which is problematic, though not unsuccessful. He strives to show that the university did indeed change in spite of its unwavering position on blacks. Moreover he realizes that Rose wasn't the only one who was changing. The national economy, the political scene, university education, prevailing attitudes, even the make-up of the board of trustees were also changing. All of these opened possibilies and support for Rose which were not available to Carmichael. In other words, the times favored his course of action in a way that Clark is reluctant to admit and involved him in questionable practices at which he only hints. Still the biggest problem with this impressionistic bridge section is its departure from the detailed, sequential reconstruction of February, 1956 and June, 1963.

If Clark succeeds better with the two events that tested these two administrations than with this necessary background, he nonetheless offers a compelling case for this history's importance and does a masterful job of keeping the reader absorbed in his story.

University of Delaware Thomas Pauly

WHITE CAPTIVES: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier. By June Namias. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press. 1993.

So many works about "captivities" have appeared recently that in 1993 the *New York Times* book review section featured Annette Kolodny's front-page essayreview assessing the state of captivity scholarship--surely a signal that the topic has arrived. These narratives of (mostly white) people taken captive by (mostly) Native Americans during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries have long intrigued literary and cultural historians, but aside from a few anthologies the texts were hard to come by until *The Garland Library of Narratives of North American Indian Captivities* (1976-83) reprinted 311 of them (in 111 volumes) chosen from the Newberry Library collection. Alden Vaughan's extensive bibliography, *Narratives of North American Indian Captivity* (1983), was followed by several new anthologies containing the most gripping specimens. Mary Rowlandson joined Franklin and Edwards as *de rigueur* figures in classroom anthologies of American literature. Amy Shrager Lang's new edition of Rowlandson and Mitchell Breitwieser's book on her narrative, *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning*, were published in 1990, and a score of scholarly articles on captivity narratives appeared in academic and popular journals throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. *White Captives* and the new work by Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative. 1550-1900* (Twayne, 1993), mark the next phase: book-length interpretive studies of the narratives taken collectively as a literary "type" as

well as documentary sources for ethnohistory.

White Captives, an extended exercise in classification and division put to the service of current feminist and socio-historical categories, divides into what Namias calls the "macro" Part One, which considers the entire body of narratives written between 1607-1862, and the "micro" Part Two, which devotes three chapters to interpreting the narratives of Jane McCrea, Mary Jemison, and Sarah Wakefield. Namias places white women captives into three classes, roughly corresponding to historical periods: colonial *Survivors* (Mary Rowlandson as exemplar); Revolutionary and early national *Amazons* (Experience Bozarth); and *Fair Flowers* (Eliza Swan, Caroline Harris, Clarissa Plummer) from 1820-1879. The male taxonomy has only two categories, *Heroes* and *White Indians.* The Heroes further subdivide into "Heroes for God" (priests such as Jogues and Hennepin, ministers such as John Williams) and "Heroes of the Empire" (John Smith and Daniel Boone). Because, Namias claims, "the basic typology of Hero and White Indian is more persistent than changes over time" (p. 80), she does not link it to standard historical periodization as she does her typology of women.

Despite the catchy labels, reminiscent of Philip Rahv's famous division of American writers into Palefaces and Redskins, this paradigm proceeds from a familiar premise. Our culture has always understood captivity in moral terms: a testing of the captive's character. We love that gauntlet story. We admire the plucky, adaptable Survivor who makes the best of it; we respect the frontier Amazon defending her dwelling with an axe; we disdain the wimpy Frail Flower, utterly traumatized, who does not become well-adjusted and collapses into mental disarray. Namias revises the paradigm by displacing sympathy from the captives, where it has conventionally lain, to their Indian captors, whose actions she consistently renders as self-defense, but she also likes that gauntlet story. Though carefully replacing the stock caricature of the brutal savage with a decidedly nobler type, she does not challenge the paradigm's premise. Consequently, Part One's typologies place little emphasis upon the special psychological dynamic of captivity, one involving both the captive and captor, preferring instead to read the experience as differing only in degree from life's other stressful situations; as we require in those cases grace under pressure, so in this.

Yet captivity differs in kind. What distinguishes it--possibly the most terrifying human experience--is the unsought encounter with chaos: dislocation into a world lacking rule or apprehensible form. The captive, thrust without due process or cause into utter powerlessness, discovers all capacity for choice denied, a lifetime's construction of one's self crushed, and remedy removed from the captive's hands: intelligence, virtue, pluck, mental health, prowess avail not; and that realization is quite enough to drive anyone mad. But we cannot surrender that gauntlet story, and we borrow our critical categories from melodramatic fiction, so we continue to blame the victims, divide them into worthy and unworthy (the contemptuous "Frail Flowers"), and hint that the male "heroes" asked for it and had it coming because of their bad politics or bad company. Three hundred years later, we capture, discipline, and punish them once again.

When Namias gets down to cases in Part Two, however, the reductiveness of this typology immediately creates difficulties, which she acknowledges. Following Part One' s taxonomy of character types, we naturally expect the evidence: good examples of the types in action. But, Namias admits, her examples do not actually exemplify. "The cases chosen," she states, "do not represent unequivocally the prototypes laid out in Chapter I. Nor do they fit neatly into the three periods designated as helping to explain the transformations of the captivity story.... The categories of Survivors, Amazons, and Frail

Flowers, like any typology, have both explanatory power and limits. With greater depth and under closer scrutiny, categories often lose their simplicity--human life and the legends we create around them are more complex" (pp. 114-115). True enough. The second half of her book makes one increasingly aware of the limits of her categories and increasingly dubious of their explanatory power. Yet, Part Two is by far the more valuable and more interesting section of *White Captives*, perhaps because, as she observes, her cases in point defeat facile categorizations.

Instead she recovers the long reading and reception histories of two legendary captives, Jane McCrea and Mary Jemison, and the abbreviated reading history of one less-legendary woman, Sarah Wakefield, tracing the circumstances of their captures, the telling of their stories, and the subsequent, pervasive uses made of them in the creation or promulgation of some of the master myths of America, particularly as those myths illustrate the sad role of women in American culture. Properly, she ranges widely, culling materials from popular and art culture: good-old-fashioned-American-Studies research done with verve and skill. (The chapter on Wakefield, who has not become famous, is highly original, chiefly based on primary sources, and it should awaken interest in this neglected account from the 1862 Dakota War.) With some attention to reader-response and reception theory, but chiefly by applying categories drawn from feminist historians, she speculates that the "experience and recounting of captivity provided successive Euro-American audiences with stories of close encounters across cultural and gender lines. Along the moving frontier, captivity focused attention on the most vulnerable members of white society--its own women and children and those men who, at war or with their families, were on that edge of the culture when its future supremacy was in question" (pp. 272-273), a valuable insight well worth arriving at.

University of Minnesota Edward M. Griffin

THE (OTHER) AMERICAN TRADITIONS: Nineteenth-Century Women Writers. Editor Joyce W. Warren. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 1993.

The shape of nineteenth-century American literary history has been changing dramatically for nearly a decade. The reissuing of novels by women writers--both white and black--and the publication of anthologies of nineteenth-century women writers' work, such as Lucy Freibert and Barbara A. White's *Hidden Hands* and Judith Fetterley's *Provisions,* have led, first, to the increasing inclusion of such works in college curricula and, second, to revisions of literary history that attempt to restore balance to a tradition long skewed in favor of the individualistic male quest.

Joyce W. Warren's *The (Other) American Traditions* is a strong and multifaceted contribution to this recent critical enterprise. Its fifteen essays--most of them written by leading scholars of nineteenth-century women's literature--are grouped in two sections: the first includes essays on individual authors, and the second justifies the plural "traditions" of the title by addressing various strands and issues in women's literature of the period--e.g., African-American and Jewish women writers, the concepts of community and philanthropy, and "local-color" literature. The message of the whole is that we can no longer exclude or "tokenize" women's writing in any responsible accounting of nineteenth-century literary culture.

Or, as Warren puts it in her introductory essay, we should regard these women as important in their own right, and not just as "canon fodder." Warren's introduction does a fine job of locating the cultural and political reasons why nineteenth-century women's

fiction has been systematically ignored by twentieth century literary historians despite its enormous popularity and influence in its own time. Modernist assumptions about (and prejudices against) such concepts as sentimentality and domesticity tell part of the story, but Warren's more powerful claim is that many of the writers considered in this volume challenged cherished notions about class, race, individualism, and woman's "proper place."

Warren is less successful in justifying the word "(other)" in her title. Although she notes that the term "other" describes accurately the subordinate status that traditional literary histories have accorded nineteenth-century women and their writing, the parentheses within which she encloses the word (itself a scholarly cliché by now) do not, as she hopes, remove the stigma of "otherness," but in fact call attention to it. A minor quibble, perhaps, but scholars intent on removing barriers to our full appreciation of a body of literature must take care not to erect, unwittingly, those same barriers.

The essays in this collection, however, admirably perform the task of setting the record straight, beginning with Jane Tompkins' lively account of why Susanna Rowson should be considered the "father" of the American novel instead of Charles Brockden Brown. Indeed, the seven essays in the first half of this volume will be of enormous assistance to those planning to teach the works of Rowson, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Lydia Sigourney, Fanny Fern, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Wilson, and Frances E. W. Harper. Each essay locates its author(s) in an hisqorical and literary context that informs theme, style, and genre. Each is clearly written and soundly researched, drawing on the work of other scholars in order to present a cogent analysis of one or more of the works that have been making their way into anthologies, courses, doctoral dissertations, and critical studies.

The second half of this volume might well have been the first. In particular, Susan K. Harris' provocative essay "'But is it any good?': Evaluating Nineteenth-Century American Women's Fiction" raises the issues of judgment and canonicity that lie behind most of the other essays; and the "mini-traditions" identified by Sandra A. Zagarell, Carla L. Peterson, Josephine Donovan, and others in this second section establish the sense of multiplicity that is necessary to break out of the monolithic patterns of earlier literary history. Paul Lauter's "Teaching Nineteenth-Century Women Writers" (from his 1991 *Canons and Contexts*), however, is appropriately the final essay, for as the information and analyses to this point have provided one kind of empowerment for new ways of teaching nineteenth-century literature and ulture, Lauder more directly addresses pedagogy.

Although each essay has endnotes, the reader would have been better served if the editor had also provided a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the volume to bring these references together in a single list. The range of authors and works with which this collection deals suggests that such a bibliography would have been in itself a valuable contribution to the study of this emerging body of literature.

Vanderbilt University Nancy A. Walker

THE IMAGINARY PURITAN: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life. By Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press. 1992.

Beautifully written but maddeningly elusive, *The Imaginary Puritan* is a tough book to describe let alone to review. Its complex prose requires frequent pauses and rereading; its province ranges from the Elizabethan era to the present, from John Milton to Karl Marx,

from old to New England; and its theoretical gymnastics wrap the entire performance with twists of light that illuminate or obscure depending on which way they turn--or are perceived to turn. This will be a book which will have as many meanings as it has readers.

The malleability of *The Imaginary Puritan* is fitting: it underscores the authors' basic belief that language creates reality rather than the converse. Traditional scholars, Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue, believe that historians select language that best describes manifest historical events. Literary scholars in the poststructural tradition, on the other hand, believe that language is so freighted with assumptions, values, and changing meanings that the choice of words shows more about an author's mind than about the historical event he or she writes. Add to this, the reader's ability to rearrange meanings through individual interpretations of the written message, and one has a world of imagined reality where words give history its only meaning.

Within this theoretical framework, Armstrong and Tennenhouse pose a question as provocative and important as it is incapable of being defined: when did the modern mind emerge and what makes it different from the pre-modern one? The change in mentalite, they believe, began during the English Revolution when vernacular writing first appeared frequently in print. Prior to the middle of the seventeenth century, few people could read, few publications were available, and printed material used esoteric language. Knowledge of government, politics, society, and current events was limited to personal witnesses who passed their versions on through oral accounts. The nobility, gentry, and other members of the elite controlled the flow of information. But, during and after the English Revolution, the printed word metamorphosed into the "plain style" that became widely accessible to the upper half of society. The bourgeousie, according to Armstrong and Tennenhouse, derived its power much more from the control of "print capital" (pg. 20) than from its control of labor. The middle class became much less a group of merchants and owners of money and much more the owners of words and information that allowed them to define reality according to their own standards and interests.

John Milton's writing, particularly *Paradise Lost*, the last great epic in the English language, is identified by Armstrong and Tennenhouse as the bridge between the pre-modern and modern worlds. The "author of authors" they call Milton: he connected Renaissance humanism with the Enlightenment and Romanticism, and served as an inspiration to writers as different as William Blake and Wallace Stevens. Milton's ability to appeal to various strata of society in prose and poetry that could be adapted to a multitude of beliefs, interests, and eras, testifies to language's new power to define the world. This power emerged fullblown with the development in the early eighteenth century of the genre of the novel which completed the process of "the empowering of words" (pg. 146).

The broad outline of the foregoing argument, of course, as Armstrong and Tennenhouse freely acknowledge, is not revolutionary. Yet, their analysis of the particulars is original, fascinating, and at times bedeviling. Their evidence is extremely subjective; but inasmuch as they are conducting a battle against what they believe to be a misplaced certitude bred by empiricism, why should their own reliance on nuance and the personal meaning of text bother them? Several of the secondary conclusions of *The Imaginary Puritan* are provocative and turn customary thought on its head. For example, it argues that Puritan New England, with its emphasis on the written word and literacy, led the revolt against the premodern mind. The captivity tales of English women taken prisoner during New World wars with natives were the seedbed for English novels. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), often regarded as the first English novel, contains the same plot and moral structure as Mary Rowlandson's captivity tale published in Boston in 1680. Hence, Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue, English literature derived as much from the American experience as

American literature did from its English background.

In sum, *The Imaginary Puritan* will challenge anyone who has the inclination to read it. Historians will probably remain suspicious of many of its conclusions but they, too, have been pursuing the same subject--the history of the printed word and of literacy. Their journey, however, has followed a more easily read map. One thinks immediately of Richard D. Brown's recent study of communications in early New England, *Knowledge is Power* (1989) whose title suggests that historical empiricists and poststructural theorists may take different routes and yet arrive at the same intellectual destination.

University of Winnipeg Bruce C. Daniels

OTHER DESTINIES: Understanding the American Indian Novel. By Louis Owens. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press. 1992.

"How to translate from one man's life to another's--that is difficult," Louis Owens quotes D'Arcy McNickle. "It is more difficult that translating a man's name into another man's language." Any work on American Indian fiction must deal with the clash of cultures inherent in a serious study of the subject, and Mr. Owens, a novelist and scholar himself, takes on the task with relish and sagacity. Early on, he takes up the difficult question of how and by whom "American Indian" is defined, pointing out that in much of the world's consciousness today, the term is a product of literature, history, and art which unfortunately bears little resemblance to Native Americans living today. He points out that American Indian novelists often must deal with this "disjuncture between myth and reality."

The loss of cultural identity is felt by many American Indians today and in the recent past and so becomes an important and rich field for fictional accounts of Indian life. Characters find themselves involved in recovering or rediscovering their identities, many times through the process of developing a sense of place and of community. But finding one's identity becomes extremely difficult after centuries of displacement, of relegation to the edges of the dominant society, and of cultural denigration. Language plays an important part in these historical processes, especially when English replaces or dominates Indian languages.

Ownes rightly recognizes that lanugage is critical in helping individuals to see themselves or to recognize how they are seen by others, and thus becomes valuable in the various searches for self depicted in American Indian fiction. Any examination of the role of language in the search process is complicated because of the tensions that exist in Indian societies between their own languages and the often more "privileged" English that Native Americans are taught or forced to learn.

In his examination of how Indian novelists depict the process of establishing identity, Owens often applies the ideas of Russian critic Michail Bakhtin, whom he identifies as "ubiquitously useful," and especially his dialogic process. He turns to other scholars as well to help make his points, some who do not hold Bakhtin's credentials. But most of the ideas presented here are Owens' and they are presented well. His arguments are tightly woven, his assertions backed up with copious references to the works themselves.

The range of this work is impressive. After an absorbing theoretical introduction, he begins with the nineteenth century Cherokee poet and novelist John Rollin Ridge, and while perhaps overemphasizing Ridge's personal "psychodrama," does a good job of analyzing the first novel written by an American Indian. He then examines the work of Mourning Dove, John Joseph Mathews, and D'Arcy McNickle before moving on to

contemporary novelists N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Silko, Louis Erdrich, and Gerals Vizenor. His discussion of the works of these important Native American writers is an important contribution to the field, one that will be useful to students, teachers, and scholars alike.

University of Arkansas, Little Rock James W. Parins

THE OFFICE OF THE SCARLET LETTER. By Sacvan Bercovich. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1991.

Coming to terms with Hester Prynne has occupied readers and scholars for generations. Put more precisely: coming to terms with Hawthorne's apparently ambiguous attitude toward her. "The scarlet letter had not done its office," Hawthorne writes in what has beoome the inescapably classic novel of the nineteenth century, and yet the once-defiant Hester returns at the end of the novel to settle quietly in the Puritan community whose leaders had marked her for adultery. It is this paradox that Bercovich addresses in *The Office of the Scarlet Letter,* examining the relationship between the novel's historical context and its aesthetic dimensions in order to show the necessity of Hester's return in both cultural and novelistic terms.

For a relatively brief book (175 pages including notes and index) this is richly detailed and theoretically sophisticated, which is at once its blessing and its curse. This is the very book one would like to give to undergraduates to help them understand *The Scarlet Letter*'s cultural origins and Hawthcrne's artistry, but most of them would have difficulty following Bercovich's text, which is densely written and whose very argument demands that Bercovich continually double back on himself to set one perception against another. The method is no doubt necessary, for Bercovich sets out to make text and context speak to each other in order finally to collapse the boundary between aesthetics and ideology, showing them to be mutually interdependent.

The "scarlet letter" of Bercovich's title refers both to the "A" that Hester wears, discards, and ultimately resumes, and to the novel itself. Each has an "office," or function--the first to chasten Hester and warn her neighbors about the gravity of breaking God's law; the second to represent the process by which America symbolically assumed the attributes of a liberal ideology: individualism, personal rights, free enterprise, progress, pluralism. Hester's return from Old World to New World embodies the way in which dissent is part of the process of concensus, "a stranger who rejoins the community by compromising for principle." If the "office" of the scarlet letter has been to instruct Hester in her proper relation to her Puritan oommunity, then it has necessarily failed, because only Hester herself can do this—viewed, at least, in the context of nineteenth-century beliefs about individual agency.

Hawthorne's style and narrative design, Bercovich argues have prepared the reader all along for Hester's return. Her very radicalism is couched in terms that make it seem dangerous rather than liberating, and Hawthorne makes it clear that if she loses her "womanly" essence, she loses her essence altogether. The stylistic control that he maintains over his central character both mimics and satirizes the Puritan desire for control over the lives of community members and reveals Hawthorne's anxiety about the social disruptions of the mid-nineteenth century: the approach of civil war and the increasing agitation for women's rights. It is in Bercovich's analysis of the nineteenth-century lens through which Hawthorne saw the seventeenth century that *The Office of the Scarlet Letter* is most persuasive.

As innovative methodologically as Bercovich's study is, he nonetheless reveals a

deeply concervative view of literary history. Hawthorne's classic tale *is* classic, he argues, not least because it participates in the public, political debate about self and society--a debate to which only white males were invited. He thus perpetuates the notion that privileges the literature of the privileged, and by emphasizing the extent to which, for Hawthorne, Hester Prynne was more symbol than person, he underscores one of the central shortcomings of the literature of the "American Renaissance."

Vanderbilt University Nancy A. Walker

THE CULTURE OF LOVE: Victorians to Moderns. By Stephen Kern. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

According to the enlightenment narrative of historian Stephen Kern's *The Culture of Love: Victorians to Moderns,* the "inauthentic" love of the Victorians became "authentic" with the Moderns. Drawing loosely upon Heidegger, Kern argues that, as the discourse and conventions of love became more open and forthright, lovers were more inclined to reflect on the meaning of being in love. As a consequence of their heightened awareness and more forthright expression of themselves as human beings in love, modern lovers made love itself more authentic.

Kern's wish to historicize love is refreshing, and his demonstration of the changing social and discursive conventions of love as they appear in late-19th- and early-20th-century European and American novels and paintings is persuasive. Based on an impressive sampling of these elite cultural texts, Kern offers an extended series of contrasting analyses, organized around different aspects, moments, or motifs of love (e.g., meeting, sexuality, gender, proposals) but fundamentally designed to demonstrate Kern's thesis that modern love is more forthright and self-aware than victorian love was.

Kern's study ultimately reveals more about bourgeois aesthetic ideology than about the social and historical worlds from which the texts he examines emerged. As Kern points out in his introduction, the "word `culture' in [his title does not refer to an aspect of experience but to [his] sources: philosophy, literature, and art" (2). In addition to the fact that Kern limits his analysis of the culture of love to *elite* culture, his examination of British, French, German, Russian, and American novels and paintings as products of the same social and discursive conventions fails to account for these texts in their historical specificity. Thus, even if we grant Kern's assumption that his sources simply "render the social world and historical context of the relationships that sustain their plots," we should still note that the world and context they render is exclusively middle-class, Anglo-Saxon, and heterosexual (2).

Although restrictive along these lines, Kern's study is attentive to changes brought about in the culture of love by the "gender depolarization" that accelerated during World War I. Still, the perspective of the study is relentlessly masculinist, for example, when Kern writes that "Isabel Archer, for all her American pluck, brought her husband a sexual blank page" or when he describes the woman in Frank Dicksee's 1885 painting *Chivalry* as a "tethered maiden [whose] passive sexual allurement [is] tantalizingly revealed by her exquisite profile and bare shoulder" (144, 228). These betrayals of Kern's position as a male subject need not be seen as signs of any intentional bias but rather point to inadvertent or even ironic identifications with the masculinist perspectives Kern is often describing. Such unreflected identification is symptomatic, I think, of Kern's broader assumptions about history, discourse, and understanding.

To prove that the culture of love is historical rather than universal, Kern demonstrates that it underwent change in the discursive and aesthetic realms of philosophy, literature,

and art. Yet Kern also wishes to argue that this change was for the better, that the moderns came to understand and even experience love better and more fully than the victorians did. The assumption that history is a teleological progression toward enlightenment and emancipation, however, has been much contested in the 20th-century. Blithely dismissing Foucault's critique of "the repressive hypothesis," Kern bases his entire argument on the tired assumptions of enlightenment thinking. In other words, his historical analysis is structured by the same bourgeois aesthetic ideology that underpins his sources.

Kern assumes that discourse offers a more or less direct view of experience. Because the discourse of sexuality was more forthright in the modern period, Kern concludes that the moderns knew, practiced, and enjoyed more about love. For having argued to the contrary in *The Bourgeois Experience,* Kern charges Peter Gay with having misunderstood psychoanalysis (424-25, n13). It is Kern, however, who misunderstands the psychoanalytic account of the interplay of repression, expression, and awareness. By embracing the modern culture of love as emancipatory and enlightened, Kern relinquishes the critical distance crucial to understanding and conceals the value of the bourgeois culture of love to a political order that subordinates human sociality to individual gain.

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OPERA IN AMERICA. By John Dizikes. New Haven, CN, and London: Yale University Press. 1993.

John Dizikes's book is one that opera enthusiasts both in the United States and abroad have been eagerly awaiting for many years. We have had such histories of opera as Donald Grout's famous work or Brockway and Weinstock's popular T*he Opera;* we have also had many books about singers, managers, conductors, and stage directors and about the Metropolitan Opera of New York, the Chicago Opera, the Manhattan and Boston operas, and the San Francisco Opera. Books about regional opera in America have come closest to Dizikes's rather monumental survey, such as Julian Mates's *The American Musical Stage before 1800*, Henry A Kmen's *Music in New Orleans,* and Ronald L. Davis's *A History of Opera in the American West.* The great service Dizikes has done is to gather together all these and a vast number of other sources to produce the first comprehensive survey of the production of opera in America, by which he means the area of the contiguous of forty-eight states.

One can imagine a multi-volume treatise on opera in America, with separate volumes allotted to various areas or even states, but Dizikes has accomplished much in this groundbreaking original work. It is well documented by end notes, but one weakness is the absence of a bibliography. One may hope that a bibliography will be provided in later editions of this study.

Dizikes writes in clear and understandable English, and his enthusiasm for opera is evident on every page. The book should popularize opera for a wide audience of readers who will find it not only informative but entertaining as well. There is nothing stuffy or pendantic about the work, because it focuses on personalities as much as on performance data. It is written in nontechnical terms for general readers, especially for those who are interested in music and opera, not just for scholars and musicologists. Sometimes the author does not write in complete sentences, but when he does this, it is usually to achieve some special effect. His style always makes his ideas and intent clear.

The book deals with opera and opera singers in the contiguous United States from the earliest ballad operas heard in this area in 1735 in Charleston, South Carolina, to about

1990. The first part—called Act I—is entitled "Origins, 1735-1836." The author describes this period in an interesting fashion, starting with a chapter about the Garcias, who brought Italian opera to New York in 1825. He concludes what he calls Act I by returning to the visit of the Garcias and Italian opera to New York and the part that Lorenzo da Ponte played in this, plus a résumé of da Ponte's life. At the conclusion of this section there is a kind of appendix, which Dizikes calls a coda, a life of Maria Malibran.

Act II of the book, entitled "Expansion, 1836-1863," describes the growth in popularity of all kinds of opera in the United States during the years leading up to the Civil War. This section is concluded by a biography of the famous soprano Adelina Patti and a coda on Walt Whitman and the influence that opera had on his poetry. The other two-thirds of the book go on to describe opera at the Metropolitan, Manhattan, Chicago, San Francisco, and other opera houses in the United States, bringing the story, with occasional biographies (Caruso, Callas, etc.), almost up to 1990.

This is a delightfully written introduction to the very large topic described as OPERA IN AMERICA. It can be recommended to anyone interested in opera or music, but it is not a flawless book. The title itself is somewhat misleading: it is not a study of opera in America, because it never even mentions opera in Mexico, Canada, Central America, or South America, all of which have rich operatic traditions. This is a pioneer study of opera in the contiguous United States.

Because the subject covered is so large, the book tends to be quite superficial in certain areas, notably in passing over in part of one sentence the remarkable achievement of Fortune Gallo's traveling San Carlo Opera Company of America, which brought opera to all corners of the United States during the period 1920-55. Cardell Bishop's fascinating 250-page book THE SAN CARLO COMPANY OF AMERICA, 1913-1955 relates the history of this company in great detail, and it could make up another whole chapter of Kizikes's book in a subsequent edition. Another chapter could be drawn from the colorful and often strange operatic experiences of Kansans, described by Harlan Jennings, Jr., in his long and well illustrated article in KANSAS HISTORY, vol. 3, no. 2 (Summer 1980), pp. 66-98. These are only two examples of operatic lore available for an ever-growing book or series of volumes. Thus one may hope that Dizikes's excellent work will encourage authors interested in opera to delve into the state and regional archives to produce local operatic histories that can then be converted into even more comprehensive works about opera in America than this impressive and successful pioneer effort.

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