

## Book Reviews

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## Reviews

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN FOLK ART. Edited by Gerard C. Wertkin. New York: Routledge. 2004.

As the title suggests, this is a reference book—a big fat collection of essays on the artists, movements, institutions, collectors, dealers, and types of objects that have been crammed, however uncomfortably, into the category of “folk art.” Some would not dignify bunnies made out of discarded bottlecaps or the Reverend Howard Finster’s plywood Elvis effigies with the term “art.” Others have argued that there are no “folk” left in our melting pot of look-alike malls and multiplexes. That folk art, if it exists at all, is a synonym for crudely drawn colonial portraits, rusty weathervanes, and cement-over-chicken-wire pseudo-theme parks built by the profoundly disturbed. For the most part, the *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art* steers clear of judgmental and semantic catfights. After all, everybody knows what American folk art looks like, whether it is deemed good or awful, and Mr. Wertkin’s authors—experts in their own contentious field—simply state what they know in plain language, bolstered by excellent bibliographic data for each entry.

Of particular interest for those concerned with the “art” component of folk art are the entries on Hamilton Easter Field and Holger Cahill. Field, who was a vocal proponent of modern art early in the 20th century, when the modern movement was widely scorned both here and abroad, founded a summer school at Ogunquit, Maine, in 1911, to promulgate his beliefs. The students stayed in seaside shacks decorated with hooked rugs, duck decoys, and other items available cheaply in the area. Field’s pupils, in turn, used these objects as subjects in their own work and discovered affinities between the spare lines and simple shapes of Americana and the tenets of modernism. So grandma’s rugs literally paved the way for American cubism and all that followed.

Cahill, the curator and critic who became director of the art programs of Franklin Roosevelt’s famous WPA during the 1930s, had earlier exhibited and discussed folk art—especially painting—as the art of the common man. While he, like Field, found similarities between folk and modern forms of expression, his essays were noteworthy

for insisting that the “folk” could be found almost anywhere, at any time—that folk art was a grassroots, contemporary phenomenon, to be found in both the city and the countryside.

The attention focused on the universality of folk art and its formal kinship with advanced modernism had several important consequences. One was the creation of major collections of folk art. Another was the “discovery,” beginning at the end of the Depression, of a new crop of folk talents, including the celebrated Grandma Moses. In the postwar era, Grandma’s cheerful scenes of yesterdays in rural upstate New York came to define the American utopia: peaceful, communal, simple, and serene—or everything that the average Levittown was not (but aspired to be). And the essay on Anna Robertson Moses refers the reader back to the context in which her work was lauded and forward to a broader consideration of the aesthetic and anthropological issues raised by her popularity.

The reader is best advised not to look up a topic and leave it at that. This is a book well worth curling up with in a sunny corner, to follow the trails of “see alsos” on a fascinating and illuminating journey through a multitude of issues and artifacts that ought to be of interest to any interdisciplinary scholar of American life.

University of Minnesota

Karal Ann Marling

AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES. Edited by Catherine A. Warren and Mary Douglas Vavrus. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2002.

This collection, appearing eight years after its conference, promises to illuminate two themes: 1) what cultural studies is and should be in the United States, and 2) U.S. exceptionalism.

Not all the essays succeed in their task. Some contributions (such as Robert McChesney’s) are written in a more confessional style than are other contributions, and mostly theorize about academic CS’ relationship to radical political practice, while alleging, somewhat ironically, the poor quality of much scholarship identified as CS. Others employ more scholarly means, usually moving through literature reviews to argue a particular point about the scholarship/politics nexus. For example, Lana Rakov argues that ACS has inadequately theorized, studied and practiced community, ultimately urging CS scholars to return to their geographical communities of origin as advocates and teachers. Similarly, two scholars (Joli Jensen and Rick Tilman) argue that ACS has overlooked its important genealogical resources in the American pragmatists, particularly John Dewey.

While almost all of the contributions touch upon or are wholly driven by the issue of ACS’ relationship to political practice, many focus on its relation to more institutionalized fields. Dan Czitrom looks at ACS’ relation to American history to argue that ACS needs to be more historical, though he notes important ways CS approaches have enriched American historical study. Similarly, Andrea Press and Linda Blum provide an autobiographical discussion of ACS’ fraught relationship with sociology, which drove them into less positivist-influenced disciplines of communication studies and women’s studies. The discussion is educational for understanding the institutional boundaries that help constitute actually existing ACS scholarship. Linda Steiner discusses ACS’ lack of attention to its human objects and suggests it should attend to voice in autobiography, while Norman Denzin reviews ACS’ turn to narrative studies in the 1980s and -90s, demonstrating the rich overlaps between new journalism, fiction, and ethnography practices.

James Carey's epilogue is a typical tour de force, further establishing his presence as an American intellect who arguably embodies the best of ACS' living tradition (and who deserves to be better read by American studies). Carey's contribution masterfully synthesizes scholarship about national identity, culture, technology, globalization, communication studies, and American history into his own piercing historical observations and cultural criticism, which scholars of several departmental identities will find educational and inspiring.

At times, contributors seem to use the collection as an excuse for a particular scholarly pursuit without carefully documenting how that pursuit relates to the topic of ACS, a problem that the book's bold and ambitious title can hardly avoid. Contributions by Tilman, Marvin, and Christians, though intellectually stimulating, are guilty of unconvincing (or absent) object legitimation. More generally, this collection demonstrates a variety of assumptions about ACS' identity, and some readers will want to id. this CS creature that is relentlessly summoned as either a straw figure or a vague symbol. Finally, the collection lacks an engagement with the defining moment of the current conjuncture: 9/11 and the war on terrorism.

These points aside, the book is unquestionably an artifact that helps us understand the debates, institutional pressures, and historical conjuncture that inevitably influenced current scholarly situations.

American University of Paris (France)

Jayson Harsin

AMERICAN CHILDHOODS. By Joseph E. Illick. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2002.

Still in its infancy, the history of American childhood is a field marked by deep disagreements over method, subject matter, and modes of interpretation. Should it be a history of children, emphasizing young peoples' perspectives and cultures and their experience of growing up? Or should it focus instead on parenting practices, representations, commercialization, law and public policy, and institutions of socialization, such as schools? Should it dwell on those younger than puberty, or include adolescents as well? The most intense debates, however, involve psychohistory. Heavily influenced by Erik Erikson and anthropology's culture and personality school, many of the field's founders, such as John Demos, Philip J. Greven, Jr., Joseph E. Illick, and Michael Zuckerman, were much more willing than younger scholars to speculate about the impact of childhood experience upon adult behavior and historical events.

In this pioneering synthesis, Illick reasserts psychology's importance to an understanding of childhood's history. In fewer than 170 pages of text, he offers a succinct overview of the history of American childhood, encompassing such topics as the shifting nature of childbirth, nursing and weaning, childrearing, mortality and health, play and toys, and punishment. Embedded in his narrative are three overarching themes: the connection between childhood socialization and the adult personalities that subcultures have sought to nurture; the significance of ethnicity, gender, religion, and social class in fostering distinct personality types; and the contrasting degree to which various social groups have encouraged autonomy, initiative, independence, self-reliance, and resourcefulness among children.

Illick divides his narrative into three chronological periods, and in each era, concentrates on specific social groups. His section on early America contrasts childhood among Native Americans, which he characterizes in terms of freedom, indulgence, and clearly defined puberty rituals, with the enforced restraints imposed upon most colonial

English and enslaved children. He seeks to show how different subcultures prepared children for different forms of adulthood, whether they sought to create stoic hunter-warriors, wilderness-savvy planter-gatherers, Godly deferential evangelicals, and genteel slaveholders.

His second section, on industrializing America, contrasts childhood among the emergent nineteenth-century urban middle-class, with its emphasis on maternal nurture, internalized self-restraints, and gender difference, and the urban working class, with its stress on children's duty to subordinate personal self-fulfillment to the family's well-being. In his discussion of the urban middle class, he is especially interested in the conflict between a stress on individual initiative and a heightened emphasis on emotional regulation, control, and guilt. In the chapter on the working class, he stresses the unhappiness that many children felt about work and the sacrifices they were expected to make for their family.

The third section, on modern America, contrasts suburban childhood, with its emphasis on fostering other-directedness, with its urban and rural counterparts. One of the book's most original discussions is about the way suburban parents sought to nurture other-directedness by adopting permissive childrearing techniques, linking emotions and consumer objects, and stressing play as a way to develop interpersonal skills.

The book's brevity is both a strength and a weakness. One wishes for more vignettes, like those that begin each chapter and provide vivid descriptions of real children's lives, including those of Chuka, a Hopi Indian, Cotton Mather, and Frederick Douglass. One also wishes that the author had spelled out his argument in greater detail in the introduction and epilogue. The book's conciseness, while making the volume more accessible to undergraduates, results in certain arguments, such as that involving "satellization" (the process of developing a sense of self-worth) among enslaved children, which are too compressed.

More than a concise synthesis, Illick's book is also a moral critique of a society which professes to love children yet allows a sixth to grow up in poverty and which claims to value childhood freedom, but which has repeatedly undermined children's autonomy through the imposition of rigorous religious strictures, adult-directed forms of play, and commercial interests that seek to colonize children's cultures.

University of Houston

Steven Mintz

REINVENTING EDEN: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture. By Carolyn Merchant. New York: Routledge. 2004.

In *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*, Carolyn Merchant uses the distant and near past to explore the changing conception of nature in Western society's future. Her account is at times vague and sweeping but with a depth of personal commitment and fervor that—particularly when the product of such an accomplished and respected scholar—makes *Reinventing Eden* a must read for students of nature in American culture.

Merchant is interested in the way that society passes on story and myth and she organizes the book around her assumption that the declensionist model of human interaction with nature has become the pervasive one for most scholars. Merchant argues that this is oversimplification. "My own view," she writes,

is that both progressive and declensionist stories reflect real world history, but from different perspectives. Both open windows onto

the past, but they are only partial windows depending on the characters included and omitted. The linearity of the upward and downward plots also masks contingencies, meanderings, crises, and punctuations. . . .

I present a new perspective on the history of humanity's relationship to nature. I draw on the framework of progressive and declensionist plots, on the roles of men and women in transforming and appreciating the environment, on ideas of contingency and complexity in history, of nature as an actor, and of humanity as capable of achieving a new ethic of partnership with the nonhuman world. (6)

Merchant's account is too brief (246 pages) to exhaustively pursue this broad agenda. But, using scientific writing and literature from pre-1900s, Merchant traces the effort to understand the natural world. Merchant explores a remarkable number of these exceptional representations, including literature, art, built and planned landscapes, and policy. Merchant's goal of covering such a great span of human life can frustrate the reader. For instance, it is troubling to see *Chapter 7: Colonizing Eden* leap from the early 1800s to the mid-1900s in a mere twenty pages that then leads directly to *Chapter 8: Eden Commodified*, which begins with shopping malls at the start of the 21st century. The necessity of such leaps makes *Reinventing Eden* most useful for each of its separate parts than for its overall chronological coverage.

In the final section, "New Stories," Merchant uses theory and science to demonstrate the great intellectual recovery that has taken place in humans' contemporary relationship with nature. This section places ideas such as Gaia, deep ecology, and complexity theory within a pattern of thought organized around humans' place in the world. Emphasizing ecology's role in this cultural shift, Merchant writes:

Unlike the closed systems of classical mechanics, ecology deals with open systems that incorporate the flow of matter, energy, and information across boundaries. In ecological systems, nature's movements are not as readily controllable as classical mechanics assumes. . . . [N]onhuman nature can become a partner with humanity by listening to the voice of nature and interacting with it through new forms of design and planning. (228)

Similar to Michael Pollan in *The Idea of a Garden* and others, Merchant constructs a partnership ethic that gives humans an integral role in the natural environment's future. Although abstract at times, *Reinventing Eden* becomes an ethical mission to its illustrious author. Merchant, who has written widely in environmental history and the history of science, has been the field's foremost theoretician, particularly regarding the role of gender and science in humans use and management of nature. *Reinventing Eden* does not necessarily blaze a new path in this department. However, each of the chapters offers a very specific example of attitudes toward nature at moments in the past. The volume does not link these essays together as well as it might, but Merchant's account is personal and impassioned. *Reinventing Eden* will provide nuggets of knowledge to students of the conception of nature in human history and a wonderful explication of a cooperative approach to environmental ethics.

Penn State Altoona

Brian Black

NATIONAL IMAGINARIES, AMERICAN IDENTITIES: The Cultural Work of American Iconography. Edited by Larry J. Reynolds and Gordon Hutner. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2000.

In thinking about photography and a world endlessly mediated by visual constructs, theorist Walter Benjamin struggled to articulate a critical theory that would somehow disrupt the seemingly cohesive narratives woven through images. Benjamin argued that the central problem for modernity would be the lack of visual literacy alongside the illusory naturalness of the image. It is a similar urgency for a critical language or set of interpretive tools that drives this important collection of essays shaping the relatively new, highly interdisciplinary field of American cultural iconography (broadly defined to include photography, film, material culture, physical landscapes, artistic representations, and narrative structures that contemplate the optical).

In a nuanced preface, Reynolds attempts to formalize the critique that Benjamin imagined—the practice of “reading” iconography through complex historical, cultural, national, and post-national vertices. While Reynolds acknowledges that this type of academic inquiry has been underway in recent years and through various disciplines, he contends that this scholarship has been relatively ad-hoc, lacking the explication of a coherent methodological framework. This assemblage of essays, then, offers shape and depth to multiple, intersecting sets of cultural studies practices that largely trouble the humanistic faith in the visible through a range of theoretical perspectives including: semiotics and close reading of narrative structures, Marxist theories of ideology and repression, Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts of racialized and gendered subjectivity, and Foucauldian analyses of discourse, power, and surveillance.

The book is divided into two sections, Part I “Between Image and Narrative: Figuring American Collectivity,” and Part II “Representational Frameworks and Their Others: The Politics of Racialized Gender and Sexuality.” The contributors to this first section, including Alan Trachtenberg and Bryan C. Taylor, largely utilize the conventions of literary theory and culture studies to explore the ways in which iconography operates at the level of storytelling in the struggle to visualize a collective national identity. From a compelling exploration of the tension between the daguerreotype as science or romantic incarnation in the work of Hawthorne to a reading of the subversive narratives that lay at the margins of nuclear imagery, these essayists understand the image as a site of continual contestation as their scholarship looks for moments of slippage, rupture, and negotiation in the stories they tell. The second section, featuring notable essays by Eric Lott and Maurice Wallace, draws heavily upon the postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories of ambivalence, mimicry, and the returned gaze in order to reinvest “oppressed racial Others” with modes of resistance to hegemonic visual constructs (17). From exposing the sublimated racial motifs in film noir to reading opposition into visual and material representations of African American freemasonry, these essayists argue that whenever national boundaries are enunciated through image making, a never wholly silenced “Other” is always present—destabilizing the imperialist desire for a cohesive, racial, and gendered national body.

Although the scope of cultural iconography has greatly expanded in the last several years, *National Imaginaries, American Identities* is not a dated work. It remains a very useful introduction to this interdisciplinary, critical practice that encourages visual literacy.

Saint Louis University

Angela Dietz



FREEDOM IS AN ENDLESS MEETING: Democracy in American Social Movements.  
By Francesca Polletta. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2002

Sociological texts from David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* to Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* form a venerable canon within American Studies, but contemporary Americanists look more frequently towards cultural studies than they do towards sociology. Francesca Polletta's study of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and a range of women's groups and more contemporary anti-globalization groups is a wonderful reminder of sociology's value for our multi-disciplinary fields. This is an important, though densely written work, worthy of the broadest possible audience.

Polletta rejects the conventional dismissal of participatory democracy as a utopian exercise prone to self-indulgent chatter. Far from being impractical, participatory democracy boosted group solidarity and commitment in difficult and dangerous circumstances, and it had significant developmental benefits. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the classic protest groups of the 1960s are celebrated equally for the nobility of the causes they espoused and for the dissension into which they descended. Polletta looks closely at these clashes over modes of decision-making and finds 'less a conflict between principle and pragmatism' than a growing 'inability to resolve interpersonal conflict' (14). Accordingly, modes of interpersonal relationship are central to her analysis. Three types—religious fellowship, tutelage, and friendship—predominated in the movements studied, and each one had a distinctive decision-making ethos, key benefits in terms of solidarity and development, and particular vulnerabilities.

Religious fellowship was most evident in the pacifist organizations that seeded 1960s anti-racist and anti-war dissent. Drawing heavily on the educational philosophy of the Highlander Folk School, tutelage was central to SNCC's fieldwork and informed community organizing in the New Left's Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP). However, it was not a top-down relationship in which the organizer instructed, but one of mutual learning and respect. Friendship was the most pervasive relational mode, and taking account of feminist critiques of family metaphors, Polletta re-appraises its significance as a reciprocal model that embodies the ethic of care without the inequality of the parent-child relationship. She notes James Miller's contention that the New Left confronted 'a fundamental tension between a civic republican ideal of democracy, 'a face-to-face community of friends sharing interests in common,' and an existential vision 'of an experimental collective embarked on a high-risk effort to test the limits of democracy in modern life'?' (162). But judging by the experience of women's group members, she concludes that friendship potentially dissolves this tension. At the same time, she acknowledges that 'along with caring, cooperation, and a complex equality that made for mutual learning' came 'norms that undermined democratic projects: variously, exclusivity, deference, conflict avoidance, and an antipathy to the rules that might have made for more accountability' (222). Activists, she warns, need rules and rituals to guard against the problems that come with friendship, religious fellowship, and tutelage, even while they strive for the benefits that such relationships provide.

Nottingham University (United Kingdom)

Peter J. Ling

BECOMING OLD STOCK: The Paradox of German-American Identity. By Russell A. Kazal. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2004

Kazal's *Becoming Old Stock* is valuable on a number of grounds. Most obviously as he correctly states, any study of German Americans and especially their assimilation process is a considerable challenge to researchers. Not only was it the largest incoming contingent in our history, but also German Philadelphia is a difficult challenge to researchers. It was the group's first major settlement so its story is quite long, living there for over a long period, over three and a half centuries. More daunting is the extensive fragmentation of Germans and German Americans. Germans were particularly heterogeneous, divided by the long period time of their coming, as well as by religion, geographical and political affiliation, social philosophy, and perhaps most importantly by class. It is no wonder that tracing the course of social change among these Central Europeans has produced few scholarly studies.

Kazal's exhaustive research is impressive; as his the employment of various methodologies and the manner in which he employed them. He has combined both traditional approaches using many group documents and evidence along with sound statistical skills. Attractive, too, was supported his use of personal testimonies to support his generalizations, all of which suggests his close acquaintance with local affairs, particularly in two group neighborhoods, Germantown and along Girard Avenue. Another achievement was largely overcoming the distinctive disadvantage of this urban *Deutschtum* compared to that in other American cities. His German Americans throughout were dispersed, not concentrated and therefore much difficult to cover than the group's Midwest centers, "Over the Rhine" in Cincinnati, in Milwaukee and elsewhere.

Several important although not surprising findings are noteworthy in his investigation. One was the particularly active role of women in the last century who retarded and slowed the assimilation process. Another more intriguing was his discussion of the implications of a "subdued ethnicity," again a condition familiar to immigration specialists but not with the close attention to its effect that the author gave it. Further, Kazal's concentration on the transformation in the twentieth century of a purely German Catholic parish into a mixed ethnic, Euro-American one. Finally of value was his drawing from April Schultz' work on Norwegian Americans, the class differential in the Americanization process. The elite glorified and promoted their American identity based on their "old stock" colonial ancestors.

Kazal's major point and final discussion is about how most working class German Americans acquired what other historians have referred to as a whiteness consciousness that affected all Euro-Americans including East Europeans after 1920 in response to the Black's Great Migration (247ff). While the urban influx did result in racial segregation between Germans and Blacks, he admits the degree of a conscious "white identity" among the former "is unclear." (251). In that rise of the racial divide, one wonders about the role of the Catholic hierarchy.

In addition one can question Kazal's observation that the Philadelphia German experience was representative of the group in a national context. In reviewing the German working class statistically in his subject city and elsewhere, Kazal frequently used surnames to determine ethnicity, a procedure that could distort his findings as Jews and Slavs often had German names. Finally the author's use of Schultz's stress on the Americanizing character of Norwegian ethnic celebration in the 20s reinforced down to the 60s by Novak's "Nordic Jungle" and Jacobson's "monolithic whiteness," requires further scrutiny. Scholars still need an explanation in that period for the promotion and

pride of Midwest cities demonstrating their cosmopolitanism by a *consistent* display of a public ethnic pluralism in their folk festivals.

Nevertheless these reservations about the work are really minor flaws; they show that the study offers a stimulating probe into the complexity of group assimilation. While I personally still withhold judgment on the widespread whiteness consciousness of immigrants, Kazal has shown one important yet neglected social change among an ethnic group in one of our major cities. Hence his “Becoming Old Stock” is essential reading for Americanists.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Victor Greene

APPALACHIA: A History. By John Alexander Williams. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2002.

With three decades of work by talented scholars to draw on, Appalachia has needed a synthesis history and now John Alexander Williams provides such a volume in his simply titled, *Appalachia: A History*. Williams’ study roughly follows the official boundaries the federal government has set for Appalachia that stretch from New York to Mississippi, but he stresses that the region is much more amorphous. He has combed a range of primary sources, including travel narratives, personal letters, oral history interviews, and state and federal records. He supplements these sources with personal anecdotes that reveal a keen first-hand knowledge of the challenges facing Appalachia and a deep concern for its future.

Williams covers the subjects one would expect a survey history of Appalachia to address such as moonshine, Bluegrass music, and hillbilly stereotypes, but rather than touching on these topics in an encyclopedic fashion he weaves them into a complex portrait as any successful synthesis should. In the case of Williams’ book, the product is greater than the sum of its parts. He offers a fresh perspective on how a region so richly endowed with resources came to be impoverished and how the area assumed the place it holds in the American imagination. He offers a cogent Marxist critique of the region’s conflict-laden past, noting that Appalachia’s story has application for America’s future, providing lessons about “crisis and renewal” (18).

Williams begins his study by describing the earliest interactions of white Europeans and Native Americans and the eventual “repopulation” of Appalachia (30). He shows that the mountains, from the start, have attracted outsiders eager to enjoy their bounties. Until 1850, Appalachia kept pace economically with surrounding areas by developing a farm and forest economy, but in a story that has been well-chronicled, industrial development left the mountains impoverished and stereotyped as backward. Williams notes that absentee speculation began early and sharply defined the region’s future. While he emphasizes the exploitative nature of the coal industry, he also gives due time to the role textiles and timber played in shaping the region’s colonial economy. The twentieth century brought an influx of federal funds into some mountain communities through the Tennessee Valley Authority and projects sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission, but Williams laments that the government did not direct more of its largess, especially in the form of defense spending, to the region. Defense contracts, he notes, could have provided a more respectable form of “reparations” than the transfer payments that came to dominate the mountain economy after World War II and could have stemmed out-migration (381). Tourism has and will continue to change the essential flavor of mountain communities. Highlighting attractions such as Dollywood and

Harrah's Casino, Williams provides little hope that Appalachia will escape its colonial past anytime soon.

Those who are familiar with the outline of Appalachian history will be delighted with the unexpected juicy tidbits that appear in this book and will find enough fresh analysis to leave satisfied. Non-specialists will find Williams' narrative engaging, though they may become frustrated with the high level of detail he provides and his tendency to wander from the main point. At least for now though, this book will serve as the seminal history of Appalachia.

University of Kentucky

Melanie Beals Goan

SHOOTING KENNEDY: JFK and the Culture of Images. By David M. Lubin. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2003.

MEMORY AND THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN PUBLIC SPACE. Edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer. Durham: Duke University Press. 2004.

These two important books exemplify innovative approaches to the study of visual, material, and civic culture. In Lubin's project, he contextualizes the assassination of John F. Kennedy by connecting photographic images of that event, viewed in full biographical perspective, to comparable images drawn from the history of painting and sculpture, reaching as far back as antiquity. As he declares near the end, "images beget images, gestures, gestures, and symbols, symbols—that political, historical, and commercial mythologies reverberate off one another and draw sustenance from the same deep wellsprings of culture" (p. 284). A compelling rationale for this provocative methodology is provided by an observation drawn from Oscar Wilde: "Things are [as they are] because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it depends on the Arts that have influenced us" (p. 250).

Lubin's wide-ranging erudition as a historian of art, both American and European, enables him to juxtapose precursors and precedents with familiar images from the Kennedy era (largely 1955-63). Thus the famous photo of Jackie Kennedy leaving St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington with her children hand-in-hand on November 25, 1963, is aligned with Benjamin West's notable painting of *Agrippina Landing at Brindisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (1768). Occasionally the allusions seem forced, as when the photo of Lyndon Johnson taking the oath of office on Air Force One is compared with *The Consecration of Napoleon* by Jacques-Louis David (1805), or when the famous photo of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald at close range is analogized with the *Laocoon* group (1st century A.D.) in which a father and two sons are entwined in mortal combat with serpents (pp. 239-50).

On the other hand, the photo that Oswald asked his wife to take of him early in 1963 holding vertically what became the murder weapon is brilliantly juxtaposed with Daniel Chester French's famous statue of the *Minute Man* located at the "rude bridge" in Concord, Mass. The murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday and David's influential painting of *The Death of Marat* (1793) is astutely compared with the tragedy in Dallas in 1963, and followed by a discussion of Peter Weiss's avant-garde theater piece called *Marat/Sade*, first performed in Berlin in 1964 and then in New York the following year. Lubin's exhaustive analysis of the famous Zapruder video and his comparison of it to various contemporary films is richly informative, as is his treatment of Andy Warhol's sixteen images of Jackie Kennedy happy and sad in *Jackie (The Week That Was)* from

1963. Because so much has been made of the way that Nancy Reagan choreographed every phase of her husband's funeral in 2004, it is poignantly instructive to be reminded that the same was true of Jackie's concerted orchestration with Robert Kennedy in 1963 (pp. 277-80).

Since Lubin uses rarely seen photographs of the Kennedys as well as familiar ones, and because his command of popular culture is as sure as his grasp of Western high art since ancient times, his comparisons and contrasts could not be more illuminating, engaging, and informative. He provides a fresh methodology for the contextualization of American historical events—and our perception of them—that is likely to be pursued for years to come. His title refers to more than just the lethal long-range bullet because Lubin really begins his analysis with *Life* magazine's obsessive coverage of the Kennedy couple's courtship in 1955. "Shooting" alludes to camera work as much as it does to the actual assassination, and we learn all sorts of juicy details about the Kennedys, including the bizarre and manipulative behavior of the two fathers, Joe Kennedy and "Black Jack" Bouvier. There is titillating material here, but it is rarely extraneous to Lubin's objective. As he puts it: "the point of this book is to argue that participants and onlookers alike always understand historical events, tragic or otherwise, through culture, high, low, and in-between" (p. 10).

The book may very well be over-argued and overextended in spots. We really did not need, for example, a discussion of the Beverly Hillbillies sit-com (and a comparison of them riding in their open jalopy with the Kennedys riding in their luxurious, topless Lincoln Continental) just because both families happen to have been nouveau riche and father Joe lived for a while in southern California (pp. 154-59). But Lubin's research is so meticulous and thorough in so many directions that it is difficult to be annoyed when he seems to throw in every possible analogy along with a few that seem implausible. There is a sense in which this book is all about our "cultural unconscious," the ways in which events we read about and visualize connect with others familiar to some but perhaps unfamiliar to many. The scope of the book is awesome and it never fails to grip our attention.

Lubin is not engaged by the issue of "American exceptionalism" because he transcends it with his wide-ranging contextualization. *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* begins with the on-going issue of how best to memorialize the catastrophe at the World Trade Center on 9/11, but makes that event and problem an "absent presence" by deliberately de-centering it. Following a smart and fresh introduction concerning issues of historical memory, the book contains 13 case studies of problematic sites *outside* the U.S.: monuments and memorials, museums, cityscapes, places where disasters and tragedies unfolded, and what the editors call "performative commemorations" (in Nicaragua and post-apartheid South Africa). Most of the essays first appeared in the *Radical History Review*, but all are well-done, informative, and remain fresh. Some involved memorials so controversial that they were never built, but the politics responsible for those failures and the diversity of venues in these essays (from Harbin, China, to Chile, and from Scotland to Sri Lanka) make this volume a *vade mecum* for those engaged by public memory who could use a cosmopolitan perspective to compensate for the occasional provincialism of American studies. These two outstanding books, as different as they can be in texture, converge in that respect and handsomely complement each other.

Cornell University

Michael Kammen

SEEMS LIKE MURDER HERE: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition. By Adam Gussow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2002.

If you are serious about the blues as a black cultural institution—not just a bin in a music store or an NPR “Best of . . .” sampler—you must read Adam Gussow’s *Seems Like Murder Here*. Nearly a century and a quarter after its beginnings, the blues seems like a classic “American success story.” The popularity of the blues has spread nationally and internationally, but Gussow, a blues performer as well as scholar, points out a lingering “black uneasiness” (267) about “whites ‘stealing’ the blues from black people [and] profiting from an appropriated cultural legacy” (276). In “Don’t Forget the Blues” (1997), the poet Roland L. Freeman echoes Langston Hughes’ 1940 complaint, “You’ve taken my blues and gone.” Freeman warns, “I know they’ve been doing anything they choose, I just want ‘em to keep their darn hands off’ a my blues” (276). Modern blues scholars are often “dismissed . . . for engaging in romantic primitivism” and, according to Jon Michael Spencer, “do not fully understand the blues . . . because they do not understand the threat and experience of getting their heads beaten” (277). What has been lost, stolen, forgotten, erased, and romanticized is “the ‘real’ blues—the origin-myth underlying the tradition” (279), and that is violence. “You don’t understand how it was back then” says a character in Walter Mosely’s *RLs Dream*. The reason Gussow wants us to understand the “pervasive violence” (274), the deep cultural trauma, or the “weight of those days” (280) back then, is because that is where and when blues as culture began. Blues music developed in the “[w]orking-class black life in the Jim Crow South [which] was a deadly affair, hemmed in by white law and lynch law, white racial and sexual hysteria, white-managed economics of expropriated black labor, white folkways that demanded silence and submission. Blues was a resistance, a way of bearing coded and overt witness to terror, easing troubled minds, making a living outside the sharecropper’s exploited condition, clearing a space for pleasure, fantasizing revenge—a way of bringing oneself and one’s community back to life by getting loud, fierce, and *down*” (15-16). To lose sight and memory of the trauma of Southern Jim Crow horrors is to lose sight of the blues and the unsanitized jook as a cultural institution, practice, and place.

When Charlie Patton, the gravelly-voiced early bluesman, sang “Every day seems like murder here,” he referred to the culture of southern violence. Gussow explains, “the predicament of blues culture was to be situated in that violence, with no place to hide. The blues textual tradition confronts such violence forthrightly, unsentimentally, often searingly, without ever abandoning hope” (16). It is black folks “participation in a blues culture that, although marked by these violences, offered blues subjects a badly needed expressive outlet, a way of conjuring with and redressing the spiritual wounds that such violence had engendered in them” (6). The blues paradox is that playing the blues is the “antidote” (16) of having the blues. “[B]lack southerners evolved blues song as a way of speaking back to, and maintaining psychic health in the face of an ongoing threat of lynching” (xii).

Gussow deals with a wide spectrum of violence. “Disciplinary violence” is brutality of whites against blacks; in “retributive violence,” blacks strike back; “intimate violence” speaks of the violence amongst black folks.

In Chapter One, Gussow restores the “lynching blues.” He establishes “the primal lynching scene” and “lynching as spectacle” (12) as a “collective nightmare,” (26) a cultural climate of terror. Gussow’s reading of copious blues lyrics and the orature of

black bluesmen is astoundingly convincing, and is a challenge to the trivialized and romanticized blues “stories.”

Chapter Two not only deals with W.C. Handy’s popularization and commodification of the blues, but also Handy’s near lynching experience and the dialectic of blues as both feeling and catharsis.

Chapter Three expands to the blues literary tradition in blues novels and poems by Arthur Flowers, Clarence Major, Sterling Plumpp, Alice Walker, Bebe Moore Campbell, Walter Mosley, August Wilson, Chester Himes, and others. Gussow uses the theories of Roberta Rubenstein (“cultural mourning”), Cathy Caruth, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, and Saidya Hartman “who provide working definitions of trauma, abjection, and redress” as ways to transform the trauma of spectacle lynching.

Chapter Four focuses on the “cop killing” in Mamie Smith’s “insurrectionary text” (161) “Crazy Blues,” which sold 75,000 copies in one month. Gussow explicates the “gun-borne reprisal against white power” of the badman and badwoman figures whose violent rejection of white terror produces—fantastic or real—“heroes” and not “victims” and extends to the gangsta rap of the 1980s.

The last two chapters break with violence between white and black. Chapter Five investigates the “blues weapons” (14) of the black bluesmen and women as “instruments of self-making rather than random mayhem” (14). Chapter Six deals with “intimate violence” (15)—violence inside the black community—in the “deadly shadow” of the jook in new creative readings of Z. N. Hurston’s *Mules and Men* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Oddly enough for a musician, Gussow, in his effort to restore the trauma and terror of the blues origins, overemphasizes them at the expense of playing the blues as healing and antidote. Gussow also treats blues lyrics apart from their musical performance. He ignores the sounds, the tempo, the mood, tone, or styles of playing and thus misses the cues for irony and even humor. He crucially misses Albert Murray’s warning in *Stomping the Blues* that blues music “which regardless of lyrics almost always induces dance movement that is the direct opposite of resignation, retreat, or defeat” (45).

Gussow admits to not dealing with clear “African” connections to blues culture, yet some discussion of the near Pan-Sub-Saharan cults of affliction, drums of affliction, or “doing ngoma” would strengthen the discussion. Likewise, some discussion of pure pre-moral, “dark, power” and violence and those specialists who are qualified to handle it—especially the power of “words”—in many African cultures, would be pertinent.

What is outstanding about *Seems Like Murder Here* is its scope and creative use of inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches that the blues as a dialectical and complex culture deserves. Gussow’s treatment of the blues reminds us of Ralph Ellison, in “Blues People,” speaking of the blueswoman, Bessie Smith, who “in the . . . Negro community where the blues were part of a total way of life, and a major expression of an attitude toward life, she was a priestess, a celebrant who affirmed the values of the group and man’s ability to deal with chaos” (*Shadow and Act*, 257).

University of Colorado at Boulder

Stewart Lawler

CUBA AND ITS MUSIC: From the First Drums to the Mambo. By Ned Sublette. Chicago: Chicago Review Press. 2004.

Early on in Ned Sublette’s voluminous and powerful history of Cuban music, the reader is introduced to the legendary Baghdad-born poet and singer Ziryab, the “Black

Songbird” who arrived in Cordoba, Spain, in 822, and proceeded to transform the musical, literary, and sartorial culture of that most eminent of cities. Sublette calls Ziryab “a distant prototype of the fashionable guitar hero,” (16) and it is the author’s dramatic and rich prose that enables us to see, essentially, the first Elvis to grace the stage and leave the building, leaving a thousand imitators and innovators to follow behind. Hefting this sizeable book—it spans from the 12th century, B.C., to 1952 in its nearly seven hundred pages—is the first indication one gets that Sublette has produced something grander than most academic historians, their sights fixed on a more modest span of years and a more manageable chunk of terrain, would have the audacity to attempt. Though in many ways a sweeping narrative history along the lines of a Spengler or the Durants, Sublette’s study of Cuban music and its influence offers a number of fresh and salutary perspectives for those scholars thinking about borderlands, hybridity, and the historical constant of multiculturalism. Sublette’s argument will likely provoke reflection among scholars of American popular music, who, Sublette argues, have largely ignored the presence and influence of Cuba as a site of amalgamation, innovation, and transmission of the music we call “popular.” For that matter, Sublette argues, even the music we call “classical” reveals the imprint of Cuba. His tracing of the zarabanda, a musical genre characterized by its rhythmic eroticism—Sublette calls it “the rock and roll of Spain in the late sixteenth century” (80)—from its African origins (its name derives from a Bantu phrase meaning roughly “let the spirit rip”) to the New World and back again, until its once-outrageous signatures can be seen in the pious *sarabandes* of J.S. Bach, is a nice iteration of Sublette’s central points. These points he makes often, anecdotally, and forcefully: first, that musical texts are always already miscegenated along with their human carriers; second, that Cuba, a port nation at the forefront of the transatlantic and colonial trade in African slaves, sugar, rum, tobacco, and sin, has always specialized in miscegenation—or, if you prefer, cross-pollination. Asserting the Cuban musical system, which is based on rhythmic *claves*, or keys, melismatic singing of Muslim origin, and Western harmonic and melodic protocols, as “the Other Great Tradition,” Sublette challenges the reader to move beyond incomplete, and historically recent, characterizations of American popular music as simply “African-American”—it’s not so much that that designation is inaccurate, it’s just that understanding Cuban history and culture enables a historical link between America and Africa that scholars of popular music have generally neglected to make. And there’s more at stake there than simply knowing that, as Sublette relates, the riff on the quintessential garage-rock classic “Louie, Louie,” rips off “El loco cha cha” by the 1940s musician and author Rosendo Ruiz. What Sublette is after here is a mapping of *how* sounds arrived at different destinations in the Atlantic world, and what happened to them in the possession of new ears and players. Sublette’s epic style is not without its shortcomings. Especially in the early chapters, much of the narrative is synthesized from more exhaustive secondary sources; occasionally, Sublette slips into mythography or sands-of-time mysticism. But the writing also crackles with energy and humor, as when Sublette describes Ziryab, or the untimely death of 1940s conga innovator Chano Pozo, or the nineteenth-century *negro curros*, “the badasses of Havana” who invented a new lexicon of urban style. The book will reward readers who are willing to enter into Sublette’s narrative and by charmed, challenged, shocked and edified by it. For those put off by its grand Plato-to-NATO sweep, it might at least serve to build the biceps.

Dickinson College

Cotten Seiler



LIBERTY ON THE WATERFRONT: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution. By Paul A. Gilje. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2003.

In his new book, Paul A. Gilje reappraises the role played by America's maritime communities in achieving national and individual liberty. He also explores the multiple meanings of liberty within the waterfront world of the Revolutionary War and Early Republic. Gilje's work, which builds on nearly four decades of social, cultural, and literary scholarship on seafaring, is ambitious in scope. At times it achieves great clarity and insight, particularly in its examination of the relationship between 'Jack Tar' and the politics and patriotism of the revolutionary era. However, much of the book falls short of fully realizing its objectives.

In the first part of the book, Gilje describes the maritime world of seafaring sailors and their waterfront communities ashore, which included their wives and girlfriends, boardinghouse landlords, crediting agencies, and local organizations. In this summary section, Gilje argues that the sailor occupied an ambiguous position within his own world and the larger society. Aboard ship, seamen's entire lives were circumscribed by rigid hierarchies of rules, responsibilities, and rank, and always subject to the captain's "dictatorship of the quarterdeck" (94). Yet when they came ashore these same sailors comprised an anti-authoritarian, egalitarian counterculture (13), reflected by the image of the swaggering, free-spending Jack Tar on a spree. For these seafarers the word "liberty" might refer to individual freedoms attained by the sailor ashore on liberty from his vessel or denied them by heavy-handed officers.

In early America liberty was also a political concept, and the relationship between maritime culture and the nation's birth is explored in Part Two, "Revolution." In this section, the most fully explicated and synthetic part of the book, Gilje asserts that "the American Revolution began on the waterfront" (99). The crucial importance of maritime trade and shipping in America made the waterfront a flashpoint for the tensions that led up to revolution, and many of the resultant mob actions involved members of maritime communities. Sailors participated not only in the pre-war riots and eventual combat that ensued, but also in the post-revolutionary formation of a new republican consciousness. As the nation faced growing international instability in the decades at the close of the eighteenth century, the figure of Jack Tar took on even greater symbolism in the face of growing threats of piracy and naval impressment on the seas. Throughout the War of 1812, the figure of the brave American sailor entombed aboard a British prison hulk served as a powerful patriotic icon representing the triumph of his nation's indomitable spirit and democratic values. The book concludes by examining the aftermath of the war, when the cultural importance of the sailor diminished as America focused inwards on domestic production and expansionism. No longer an avatar of national manhood and liberty, by the mid-nineteenth century sailors were pitiable targets for middle-class reformers offering moral salvation, or at least an end to the corporal punishment system of flogging at sea.

*Liberty on the Waterfront* breaks new ground in its powerful portrayal of American sailors during the Revolutionary War and Early National period, basing its conclusions on newspaper articles, correspondence, popular culture, and personal diaries. In a series of chapters on American mariners of this era, Gilje explores the multifaceted definitions of liberty that arose from the unique maritime environments that nurtured these men. He carefully demonstrates the complexities of these seafarers' experiences, delineating their personal experiences of liberty on shipboard and ashore, their identification with various political constructions of liberty during the Revolutionary period and War of

1812, and the conflicting motivations and loyalties that prompted seamen to serve in both the American and British navies, sometimes simultaneously. In a perceptive coda to this section, Gilje concludes by tracing the changes in the culture of the waterfront and its diminished importance to the national identity by the midpoint of the nineteenth century.

But the impact of the book is undermined in a number of important ways. In a key statement in his introduction, Gilje asserts that “American maritime culture . . . remained largely the same from 1750 to 1850.” His aim, he states, is to portray “the larger unified American maritime culture” with minimal attention to “the fine distinctions . . . between decades, between regions and ports, between types of shipboard labor, between experiences of fishermen, whalemens, merchantmen, and men-of-war” (xii). By choosing to gloss over a century of massive social and historical change as well as some key factors that differentiated maritime lives, the author weakens his case. The thriving maritime trades of colonial America bred a waterfront community very different from that of the declining era of mid-nineteenth century seafaring; local fishermen were as different from deep-sea whalemens as sea-cooks were perceived to be from able-seamen; and it would be a serious stretch to conflate the experiences of Mississippi rivermen or workers on the Great Lakes with those of Yankee New Englanders aboard three-year whaling voyages. These not-so-fine distinctions raise serious questions about the existence and dimensions of a purported “larger unified American maritime culture,” especially since nearly all of Gilje’s evidence originates among merchant and naval sailors sailing out of Northeastern ports such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

Gilje also fails to situate America’s maritime culture within larger national and historical contexts. He points out, quite correctly, that “the boundaries between work ashore and work afloat remained fluid” (28). Yet only rarely does the author link his shore-born maritime laborers to other contemporary American groups or movements. Sailors are not seen against a backdrop of other labor or working-class activists, nor are their conceptualizations of liberty and freedom examined with regard to other markedly similar shorebound versions. As Gilje himself states, for most young American sailors seafaring was but one part of a long working life, the majority of which would be spent ashore. By titling his work *Liberty on the Waterfront* rather than *Liberty at Sea* the author further places maritime America within the environs of the landed nation. But those connections are not made explicit enough to provide complete context.

*Liberty on the Waterfront* makes a valuable contribution to the growing field of American maritime studies, but does not fully achieve a broader synthesis.

Kingsborough Community College/CUNY, Brooklyn, NY

Michael Sokolow

EMERSON. By Lawrence Buell. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2003.

Lawrence Buell remarks at the beginning of *Emerson* that his book “reflects an adult lifetime of meditation and teaching” and that he “finished the first crude version when [he] was twenty-six” (6). This seems an insignificant comment, and yet it tells us something about a theme that wends its way through this richly textured and illuminating tribute: What leads Buell to his subject is the portability of Emerson’s thought and writing. That Emerson “still retains the power to startle and excite” (5) over a span of forty years is the starting point of Buell’s inquiry. How is it that Emerson manages to compel readers who belong to contexts so vastly different from each other and from his own?

Buell answers these questions, in part, by focusing on Emerson's openness to global intellectual influences and his desire to communicate ideas across time and space. The claim here is that we miss something crucial about Emerson when we read him parochially, as an icon of American individualism. In chapters that deal respectively with biography, the theory of Self-Reliance, aesthetics, religious thought, philosophy, social reform, and mentoring, Buell continuously positions his subject as a transnational figure, who draws from a variety of intellectual traditions and who crafts a body of work that lends itself to wide appropriation. Thus, we learn about Emerson's reading of Persian poetry and Indic scripture and his impact on Mill, Nietzsche, and Hindu and Buddhist religious thinkers. Emerson becomes a case study in what is gained when a writer, who is usually positioned at the origin of American literature, gets new treatment as a participant in transnational intellectual traditions.

Yet Buell's emphasis on the portability of Emerson's thought also places this book in tension with the mainstream of American Studies, a movement that emphasizes contextual placement of literature. For his point is not only to challenge the national borders of American literature, but to resist readings of Emerson that might situate him remotely in a distant historical context. Emerson "doesn't want to be 'historicized,'" Buell tells us. "He wants to be sifted by readers on their own terms for whatever may be of lasting value" (332). To be an Emersonian, in other words, is to allow for the fresh and newly relevant insights that a powerful body of work can inspire—not simply to treat that work as evidence of a prior context, now deceased.

*Emerson* is full of attentive readings that illuminate the small, revealing turns of essays like "Experience," "Intellect," and "Napoleon." Part of what makes the book so worthwhile is that Buell doesn't hammer home his points, doesn't lean too heavily on his own big claims. If this is partly because hammering home a point would detract attention from the careful study of Emerson's thoughts, it is also because Emerson would have cringed at any complacent adherence to a thesis. In this sense, the book is not simply a study of Emerson; it is Emersonian itself. Buell demonstrates that Emerson has prepared his work for travel, for readers who find in it the meanings and applications that continuously revitalize it.

University of Colorado, Denver

Philip Joseph

WHITEWASHING AMERICA: Material Culture and Race in the Antebellum Imagination. By Bridget T. Heneghan. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 2003.

In a *Journal of American History* piece (March 2004) about recent plagiarism exposés in the historical profession, Richard Wrightman Fox hypothesizes that the problem partly derives from authors being afraid to trumpet their sources, lest someone question their own originality. The remedy, Fox argues, is for scholars unabashedly to sprinkle the names of their intellectual fountainheads within their texts.

Heneghan's fascinating *Whitewashing America* could be a model for what Fox has in mind. While bridging the disciplines of material culture, literature, archaeology, and history in an effort to describe and comprehend a whitening trend in middle- and upper-class antebellum U.S. culture, her narrative insistently references how the publications of Richard L. Bushman, James Deetz, Henry Glassie, Karen Halttunen and others shaped her argument.

Addressing whitening trends in dining ware and etiquette, gravestones, house paint and interior design, female dress, skin and tooth care, portraiture and photography, and additional cultural expressions, Heneghan argues not only, as one might anticipate, that

they held profound meanings for race relations, but also that they reflected and informed gender and class relations. For instance, only upper- and middle-class white women could claim femininity, which had much to do with material culture: feminine women were supposed to have consumer products but lack desire for them. It is no accident that the figure of Columbia wore a "simple white dress" (p. 103). Meanwhile popular culture, while allowing factory workers to differentiate themselves from black slaves by their theoretical right to accumulate material goods, nonetheless denied whiteness to laborers who failed to internalize time-driven discipline in the workplace. The office worker Turkey who works effectively for only half the day in Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," tellingly has a reddish countenance.

To construct her highly-nuanced argument, Heneghan draws especially on archeological discoveries, historical documents such as Frederick Douglass's autobiographies and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (which show that some African Americans rejected and signified against the rituals and objects of whitening), and most especially literary texts, including not only canonical works but also domestic fiction such as Susan Warner's popular *The Wide, Wide World* (1850). There is little evidence, however, that Heneghan consulted manuscript sources. The latter might have allowed her to better elaborate just how the constructs floated in print culture infiltrated everyday life, and whether they affected Americans at conscious level or only subconsciously.

Heneghan informs research on far more issues than can be covered here, cleverly navigates twentieth-century fiction (Maya Angelou, William Faulkner, Margaret Mitchell, and Toni Morrison) to clarify her arguments about the nineteenth century, and brings her study to an effective closure by visiting the White City of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Sometimes her argument seems elusive or dubious, as when she suggests that nonwhite gravestones undercut white marble's hold on Southerners after the Civil War because emancipation had "liberated" "official anxieties" (p.28) about racial control. This runs counter to evidence that Southern white racial fears if anything worsened after Appomattox. But this provocative work validates Heneghan's premise that material culture has much of substance to tell us, and is revelatory about the interstices between race, gender and class in antebellum America.

Purdue University, West Lafayette

Robert E. May

LIGHTNING MAN: The Accursed Life of Samuel F. B. Morse. By Kenneth Silverman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2003.

In *Lightning Man*, Kenneth Silverman characterizes Samuel Finley Breese Morse's accomplishments in terms of what to Morse, were resulting defeats and disappointments. More interestingly, Morse's personal struggles appear to coincide with major conflicts in American history.

In a time when Calvinism was playing a large role in the forming of American national idealism, Morse's conservative parents were imposing their puritan beliefs on young Samuel Finley.

During the War of 1812, Finley, as Morse is referred to by Silverman, studies art abroad and begins to worry that America's republican ideals are under attack. At the same time, he "Wished to see himself on the 'higher branches of poetical and historical painting'" (59) and even feels responsible for fostering a respected American style.

Later, instead of broadening his view while Journeying to Europe and examining works for his art school, the National Academy of Design, the experience leaves him

“concerned to warn about the spreading influence of Catholicism” and foreign immigrants (133). On his return the same sentiment led him into American party politics where he promoted slavery and his anti-immigration sentiment.

It was in this post-Napoleonic age of enlightenment and new environment of politics that Morse began working quietly in his office for five years on the mechanism for the telegraph. Like sparks signaling the advent of the industrial age, another electro-magnetic invention was also being developed in France, along with an early photo format, the daguerrotype, providing competition for American edifice.

In Morse’s later years, amidst disputes of ownership and profits from his most noteworthy invention, the Civil War erupted and he again was trying to escape the defeat of his republican rectitude. “Since the war of 1812, he had often spoken out passionately against the wishful view abroad that the United States, like all other republics, was likely to break apart. ‘We are now’, Morse lamented, ‘the scorn of the world’ (391).

Morse’s struggles to define himself and his country’s integrity are especially interesting in light of current efforts to define nationality and responsibility in the face of global economic interdependence and world communication; all eventual results of a wave of electric invention started in Morse’s time and undeniably by Morse himself.

How does this master biographer balance the interpretation of character and psychology with the chronological objectivity of the documents and letters that his exhaustive research has uncovered? It can be disconcerting when after so much rich storytelling the reader is yanked back out of the head of a character and brought to the brink of a hole left gaping by missing letters. Nevertheless, in Silverman’s style, the gaps of personality left behind by written records and correspondence are not filled with conjecture, but with sympathy.

In this way the reader is pulled into the mind of a man who alternated between perceptions of piety, emotional devastation and austerity. As he did with Cotton Mather, Houdini, and Edgar Allen Poe, Kenneth Silverman again successfully connects historical analysis with the psychology of a single man.

Rampo College of New Jersey

Ann LePore

JOHN BROWN: The Legend Revisited. By Merrill D. Peterson. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. 2002.

Merrill Peterson’s *John Brown: The Legend Revisited* provides a useful and interesting overview of the legacy of John Brown in American history and culture from his death in 1859 to 2000. Peterson introduces the reader to Brown in chapter one with a concise history of the old man’s life and the events that made him, but the book really begins where Brown departs. The remaining five chapters examine considerations of Brown in historiography, art, literature, commemoration, and film, beginning with tributes to his martyrdom immediately after his death. From there, Peterson explains how information released after the Civil War on Brown’s Kansas exploits negatively affected popular perceptions of him. After examining treatment of Brown in turn-of-the-century historiography (placing particular emphasis on Oswald Garrison Villard’s biography), Peterson examines the decline of Brown’s reputation in the interwar years and its rehabilitation at the onset of the civil rights era.

The book is well researched and written, informative, and enjoyable. Its particular contribution is its focus on Brown’s legacy as expressed in culture and historiography

rather than concentrating on his life or his meaning for American history, as most other works on Brown do.

I have two criticisms of the book. First, Peterson documents the rise and fall of Brown's legacy in the American imagination but doesn't tie these fluctuations to changes in historical-structural conditions. He points out, for example, how Brown's legend was tarnished in the late 1870s by new information regarding the brutality of his raids against the proslavery "Border Ruffians" in Kansas, but he doesn't connect this fall in stature to the end of Reconstruction, rapprochement between North and South, and the renewed subordination of African Americans. Without exploring possible connections between Brown's reputation and historical context, Peterson provides us with a good sense of how malleable Brown's legend has been but no explanation for why.

Second, the book lacks significant discussion of the meaning of Brown to African Americans. This is particularly important given Brown's close identification with Black folk during his life. Peterson notes that Brown was a "perennial inspiration to African Americans" (144) and provides a brief overview on how 1960s and '70s Black radicals embraced him (152-55). He also notes that "John Brown was the blackest white man anyone had ever known," a compliment that surely would have made Brown proud (152). Yet even all this underestimates the significance of Brown for the Black community historically, and thus for the nation at large. By underplaying the relationship between African Americans and the legend of John Brown, Peterson misses one of the most important aspects of Brown's legacy. For by making him one of their own, Black people who honored John Brown demonstrated the socially constructed nature of race and illuminated the wisdom of Brown's determination to become Black (or at least to unbecome white) in the struggle to abolish white supremacy. As W.E.B. Du Bois writes in his own masterful work on Old Osawatamie (which unfortunately receives just two pages of attention in Peterson's book), "Today at last we know: John Brown was right." Department of Political Science, Northern Arizona University Joel Olson

A YEAR IN THE SOUTH: Four Lives in 1865. By Stephen V. Ash. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2002.

In *A Year in the South*, historian Stephen Ash weaves historical research into a page-turning narrative that takes readers back to the twilight of the Confederacy and the beginning of Reconstruction. Through the lives of four southerners, Ash explores the impact of Confederate defeat on southern society in all its diversity. Louis Hughes is a mulatto slave who has lived and labored in Virginia, Mississippi, and Tennessee. When 1865 begins, he and his wife are leased to the state of Alabama and working at the saltworks. Cornelia McDonald, the mother of seven children, owned six slaves when the war broke out. By 1865, she has lost her husband, much of her property, and is an impoverished refugee in Lexington, Virginia. Eighteen year-old John Robertson, a former member of the home guard in Greene County, Tennessee and Confederate soldier, lives on his family's small farm. He has taken the Oath of Allegiance to the Union, but it does not protect him when east Tennessee Unionists seek revenge against guardsmen for wartime depredations. Samuel Agnew is a Reformed Presbyterian minister, married, and resides in his father's household in Tippah County, Mississippi. Exempt from military service, he observes the war and its conclusion from the family's plantation. Through these individuals, we observe the varied ways that emancipation, military defeat, the Confederacy's political and economic collapse, and Union military power shaped people's lives.

Professor Ash's work succeeds on a number of fronts. While he does not claim his subjects are typical, and indeed emphasizes that their experiences were intensely personal, he raises significant historical issues through their accounts. For example, the often uneven and halting process of emancipation is illustrated in Hughes's summer escape from a Mississippi plantation to a Union army garrison and the evolution from slave to free labor on the Agnew plantation. McDonald and Robertson's wars illustrate the diversity of economies and politics in urban and rural areas of the South. Agnew and Robertson both view the war and its aftermath through a prism of religious commitment and different levels of seeking. Hughes and Robertson venture beyond the South to highlight issues of race and reunion in the North. All four lives reveal the deep psychological scars left by the uncertainties of war.

The author succeeds in linking the four lives across the actual and metaphorical seasons of 1865 because the last person profiled in a season begins the subsequent section of his work. This gives the book momentum, building suspense and making the book difficult to put down. For some readers, the very seamless nature of Ash's writing will beget questions about his sources. Hughes and McDonald compiled and published their memoirs long after the war. Robertson began his unpublished memoir in 1867. Ash supplements and supports these sources with ample and varied evidence documented in the endnotes. In addition, the use of these memoirs would promote useful classroom discussions about the role of historical memory as well as a broader dialogue about historical methodology. Indeed, it is a tribute to the author's skill as a historian and a writer that makes *A Year in the South* a compelling and memorable work of scholarship.

Carlisle, Massachusetts  
Christine Dee

MANHOOD LOST: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States. By Elaine Frantz Parsons. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2003.

Elaine Frantz Parsons's *Manhood Lost* "is about the power of a story" (3). Parsons traces the typical narrative of the drunkard's decline across a variety of genres to further contextualize our understanding of the social and cultural history of alcohol use and temperance in the nineteenth-century U. S. According to Parsons, the figure of the drunkard as presented in the drunkard's narrative destabilized cultural references with regards to both individual volition and gender roles, contributing to a weakened faith in personal willpower and to a further movement of women into public life. Parsons draws from such sources as trial testimonies, memoirs, scientific treatises, reformers' narrative accounts, periodical essays, and a variety of literary genres to explore and situate the significance of this repetitious narrative. Parsons's analysis of arguments surrounding the temperance debate supports her contention that the same arguments were readily used to support claims of both opponents and proponents, demonstrating the pervasive acceptance of premises supporting the narrative. She relates drunkard narratives and their underlying premises to other important movements, most significantly that for woman's rights, arguing that the gender politics of the temperance movement were ambiguous because reformers focused primarily on the dangers and difficulties arising from the drunkard's abdication of traditional patriarchal roles—that "reformers were largely motivated by the specter of families in which men became dependants and women were forced to take on traditionally male roles" (9). Her vast array of sources and close analysis make *Manhood Lost* a valuable contribution to the wealth of existing material on this movement in U.S. history.

The first chapter on volition prepares the reader for subsequent chapters, as Parsons lays out the slippage in notions surrounding individual willpower and discusses how the temperance debate was fed by and contributed to concerns surrounding individual volition. Subsequent chapters, entitled Manhood, Contentment, Seduction, Invasion, and Resolution, provide an interesting discussion of key nineteenth-century terms and metaphors. In these chapters, Parsons examines a variety of challenges to traditional cultural expectations and demonstrates how anxiety surfacing around social and cultural change played out in the debates over temperance and gender. Through these discussions, Parsons shows that shifts in the drunkard's narrative over time supported changes for women. For example, early temperance stories dwelt on alcohol's seductive powers. Such a narrative fit within and morphed existing literary conventions of the seduction novel, both early novels of women's seduction and anti-Catholic novels of seduction by priests. However, the narrative gradually became one emphasizing the invasive nature of alcohol. The invasion metaphor—invasion of body, nation, etc., but also women's invasion of saloons—permitted a change in cultural notions about gender and power. According to Parsons, with the change in narrative “more and more reformers, inspired by invasion language, called for women to leave the home, invade the male domain, and reclaim drunkards by force” (152).

Parsons does not address the possibility that, rather than creating change, the drunkard's narrative was simply symptomatic of transitions already taking place in U.S. culture, but *Manhood Lost* is worthwhile reading. Franz's careful and contextualized exploration of diverse discursive sources both confirms and complicates previous notions about the temperance movement, contributing to a further understanding of the stakes for which proponents and opponents of temperance vied.

University of Louisville

Carol Mattingly

VICTORIA WOODHULL'S SEXUAL REVOLUTION: Political Theater and the Popular Press in Nineteenth-Century America. By Amanda Frisken. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2004.

*Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution* by Amanda Frisken is a cogently argued and well-researched book about one of the most notorious women of the late nineteenth century, best-known for being the first woman to run for president (in 1872) and for precipitating the Beecher-Tilton scandal. Frisken's key insight is that Woodhull was adroit at manipulating her own celebrity to advance her various ends. Since she came from a somewhat disreputable background, she had no reputation to lose and could be particularly outrageous in her lectures, in her career as a stock broker in New York in concert with her sister, the equally notorious Tennessee Claflin, and in the newspaper the sisters published.

An issue of *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* in November 1872 broke the story of the alleged affair of Henry Ward Beecher—arguably the most famous clergyman in the United States at the time—with one of his parishioners, Elizabeth Tilton. In a brief review it is impossible to go into any detail on the ensuing scandal itself. Suffice it say, that Frisken's parsing of Woodhull's role is both judicious and persuasive.

One of the chief strengths of the book is the fact that Frisken gathered a plethora of telling illustrations. She is then able to analyze, for example, the depictions of Woodhull in the “sporting” press to great effect to advance her argument that Woodhull shrewdly calculated the impact of her own flamboyance. Moreover, as a side benefit, the vivid illustrations will also make the book especially appealing to students.



Another strength lies in the author's sensitivity to issues of class. She is able, very convincingly, to correlate Woodhull's radicalness—and its decline over time—with fluctuations in her class position.

There are two principal criticisms to be made of this otherwise fine work. In the first place, Woodhull, in addition to her wilder claims to fame, also became a spokeswoman for the New Departure strategy for suffrage after the Civil War, even testifying about it to a Congressional committee in 1871. Because people will come to the book without necessarily having a grounding in the schism within the suffrage movement during Reconstruction, a fuller discussion of the issues that led to the New Departure strategy would have been helpful.

Secondly, the author establishes that her subject cleverly deployed her image to advance her own ends. But in so doing, Woodhull behaved in an extraordinarily self-centered way. She had sought allies among various communities of reformers and/or revolutionaries—the international socialist movement and the suffrage movement, to name two—but seems to have felt no compunction about ignoring the impact her decisions might have had on those allies. She left a trail of destruction in her wake, in fact, and it seems to this reviewer that Frisken does not pay adequate attention to this pattern. Put bluntly, Woodhull could be a radioactive ally, as the twentieth century would learn to say, and it would seem that a biographer should grapple with this phenomenon.

Institute of Urban and Regional Development, Berkeley

Glenna Matthews

MONTANA JUSTICE: Power, Punishment, and the Penitentiary. By Keith Edgerton. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 2004.

This book began as a 1994 Washington State dissertation on the Montana penitentiary between 1871 and 1921. The author has fleshed it out at the beginning and the end. The first two chapters comprise rambling, unfocused attempts at theorizing the subject. The final chapter breathlessly surveys the penitentiary's institutional history since 1921 in fifteen pages. In between are two solid chapters, the first on penitentiary development during Montana's territorial years (1871-1889) and the second on the fiefdom that was established, expanded to massive proportions, and ruthlessly plundered by warden Frank Conley for thirty-five years (1886-1921).

The author's effort to situate Montana's prison history in a larger context of cultural theory only serves to reinforce the unrepresentative nature of the Montana experience, if not also the marginal worth of those theories themselves. One can glean from the book's early chapters, for example, such insights as the fact that penitentiaries are a good place to "study power" (13), that prisons establish social boundaries, that the federal government promoted capitalism in the West, that Hollywood and television contribute to popular misperceptions about Western justice, and many other tautological or trivial observations. The painful tug between Edgerton's empirical findings and the requirements of current academic parlance is evident in a hesitant, repetitious prose style clotted with pointless or equivocating adverbs. It shows, too, in his obligatory reference to Michel Foucault. "In many ways the institution's haphazard history has both supported and defied the rigid and rational theories" of Foucault, he boldly states (xv).

It is therefore with relief that the reader turns to the third chapter and sees Edgerton put his extensive research in the primary sources to productive use. Even his prose begins to breathe free as he starts to present his empirical findings. In Montana, the demand for penitentiary construction developed less out of the fear of crime than from

the barbaric social response to it, namely vigilantism. Vigilante justice was both a symbol of the community's backwardness and a threat to further political and social development. Without a functioning, stable judicial system, leaders feared, Montana would be subjected to continuing underdevelopment. Congress provided for prison construction with the Territorial Penitentiaries Act in 1867, but the Interior Department handed prison administration off to the new Justice Department in 1871. Justice transferred authority to the territory in 1873, but the governor said "I . . . shall avoid it as long as possible" (35). Conley's depredations were therefore the direct consequence of a continual shirking of responsibility for the penitentiary's construction, management, and oversight.

Edgerton effectively presents aggregate data about prison populations, derived from the annual prison reports. He describes the incestuous relation between Conley and the Anaconda Copper Mines, largest in the world in the early twentieth century. And he shows how decades of incompetence and political patronage led directly to the terrible prison riot of 1959. Current Montana policies have devolved from the irrational to the insane. Montana ranks forty-seventh among the states in per capita income, but its per-inmate expenditure is three percent above the national average. While higher education spending declined ten percent between 1980 and 2000, prison outlays doubled—with no change in the crime rate. In light of such information Edgerton's expressed hope that historical scholarship might have a beneficial effect on policy formation seems to lack the very historical perspective he seeks to provide.

Saint Louis University

Matthew Mancini

ROUGH JUSTICE: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947. By Michael J. Pfeifer. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2004.

In this thought-provoking, impressively researched, sweeping study of rough justice in the United States, Pfeifer expands the history of lynching and its transmutation from popular, ritualized collective violence to state-sanctioned, sanitized execution, that is, legal lynching. He utilizes maps, data bases, newspapers, court records, government correspondence, and public archives to document lynching patterns against the uneven pace of change wrought by industrialization in the East, Midwest, West, and South during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He focuses on the shifting socio-economic contexts and their influence on the cultural war between rough justice and due-process advocates, who agreed on the need to exterminate racial and ethnic criminals, real and alleged, yet differed on how to preserve white supremacy in the process. That difference, Pfeifer contends, depended on how quickly each region evolved from its traditional, rural-frontier background into a modern, urban-industrial society, wherein capitalistic needs and middle-class legalities developed the technology of death capable of assuring white prosperity and dominance. New York led the way, and Louisiana converted last, with Iowa and Wisconsin, Wyoming, Washington, and California changing-over between the 1890s and the early twentieth century.

Pfeifer thus signifies the central role of white supremacy as the interactive constant between the kind of justice and the pace of change within each region. Detailing this racial tug-of-war between culture toughness and culture change, he reveals myths of lynching. For example, he dispels the popular beliefs that early lynching in northwest territories emanated from "an absence or distance of law enforcement" (30) and that blacks were the lone victims of lynching nationwide. In fact, frontier justice turned on community instability, property disputes, and social order concepts and, along with

African Americans who dominated lynching statistics, American Indians, Chinese, Mexicans, and Sicilians faced rope and gallows.

Perhaps most impacting is the continuation of racial and ethnic animus inherent in both lynching and legal lynching. In New York, where lynching nearly ceased in the nineteenth century, the state executed 357 persons between 1891 and 1933. Of these Italian born males and African American males, respectively, represented twenty and seventeen percent of the total. These disproportionate statistics, Pfeifer contends, indicate that “generalized fear of black violence” and “Italian crime” (125) carried into mid-twentieth century legal lynching. Thus he concludes with a penetrating epilogue that supports abolishing today’s death penalty because of its ever present racism and connection to “the profound legacy of lynching” (153),

On occasion Pfeifer simplifies. Beyond reference to “legal anthropologists” (8), he rarely specifies socio-psychological theories of inter-group conflict and white racism that partly explain rough justice and state execution. And, while police-community strain precipitated most race riots in the 1960s, more than “the new legal order” (150) caused African Americans to rebel. That contention better fits racial upheaval in the 1990s.

These comments aside, *Rough Justice* superbly reinforces and extends the modern path-breaking work of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall (1979, 1983), James R. Mc Govern (1982), W. Fitzhugh Brundage (1993), Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck (1995). It is first-rate.  
Southwest Missouri State University Dominic J. Capeci, Jr.

POLICING CINEMA: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America. By Lee Grieveson. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2004.

In the past decade or so a large number of scholarly books have been written detailing the history of film censorship in the United States. Those studies have, for the most part, concentrated on the sound era and the impact of the Production Code Administration and the Catholic Legion of Decency on Hollywood. A welcome addition to the literature on film censorship is Lee Grieveson’s well-written and superbly researched study of the early years of the film industry. It was during the period from 1907 to 1915 that the debates over the role of cinema in society raged throughout America in the federal and state courts, churches and civic organizations. Was film, as industry supporters argued, a new art form that deserved protection under the First Amendment or, as censorship advocates maintained, was it simply a crude and dangerous form of popular entertainment that could be legally regulated by the state?

For Grieveson the interaction between the forces of regulation and the developing film industry in the early twentieth-century had a profound impact on the development of the American film industry. Chicago passed a film censorship law in 1907 and several states quickly followed their lead. The film industry tried a variety of methods to counter government censorship. Reformers like Jane Addams and others lobbied for educational and informational films—uplifting films that would benefit society. The problem was that audiences preferred exciting crime dramas to travelogues. The industry created its own censorship board and argued in state and federal courts that film was just another form of communication and should be protected free speech. But the industry lost every case based on free speech arguments

Grieveson’s analysis of the Jack Johnson fight films illustrates the problems the film industry faced when it attempted to make realistic films based on contemporary

events. Newspapers gave full and detailed coverage of boxing and were not accused of corrupting American youth. But when Jack Johnson, an African-American, pummeled the white fighter, James Jeffries, in front of movie cameras in 1910 to win the heavyweight championship of the world, a howl of protest erupted over the corrupting value of the movies. Not only did states and cities across America ban the exhibition of the film, Congress leaped into action with the Sims Act which banned the transportation of fight films across state lines.

The Sims Act, notes Griesevson, should not be seen as an isolated act of Congress. It set a clear precedent for the 1915 Supreme Court decision that upheld the legality of prior restraint censorship. Films were, the Court ruled, were first commerce with a capacity for evil.

The lesson the film industry learned from the censorship battles was that the closer films stayed to reality, whether it be fight films, films based on contemporary sex scandals or white slavery films the more stringent the regulators became. The end result, Griesevson writes, was that the industry gradually, over a decade or more, shifted away from controversial topics based on real-life and moved toward fiction films. Harmless entertainment became the mantra of the industry.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Gregory D. Black

FREEDOM FROM WANT: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer. By Kathleen G. Donohue. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2003.

Kathleen Donohue's *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* is an important contribution to the history of American liberalism. Starting with the assertion that of Franklin Roosevelt's four freedoms only freedom from want was not a principle of classical liberalism, Donohue traces how consumers and consumption, rather than producers and production, became central to modern liberalism. Through close readings of the works of Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Simon Patten, and Thorsten Veblen in the late nineteenth century, Donohue analyzes the shifting emphases on production and consumption in each. She demonstrates how the role of the consumer entered into their thought even as they were unable to depart from their producer-oriented conceptual framework. She continues her close readings of individual liberal thinkers of the twentieth century to illustrate the eventual triumph of a consumerist framework. Her work is intellectual history at its best—sophisticated, aware of connections, alert to nuances and ironies. Certainly those historians like myself who have sought to understand the development of modern liberalism, especially left liberalism, did not give enough attention to the role of consumption-oriented and consumer-oriented ideas (a distinction Donohue perceptively analyzes) in liberal thought. Donohue's work makes a compelling case for their centrality.

Even a compelling case is not without questions. Some of her generalizations could have benefited from a broader context. Her intense focus on George, Bellamy, Patten, and Veblen in the late nineteenth-century raises the question of how far beyond her four key thinkers the tension between emerging consumerist ideas and traditional producerist values extended in intellectual thought. Her briefer discussions of the continuous strength of producerist concepts in the ideas of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Richard Ely, and later Florence Kelley suggest they didn't extend very far. Only the marginalist economists appear to have been ready to move firmly in a consumerist direction, but without a broader consideration of other late nineteenth-century reformers one is unable to firmly judge if the inroads into producerist thinking were as small as she argues.

In the Progressive period, I would have liked the context to include the national political administrations (later she does this for the New Deal). As Charles Forcey wrote many years ago, *The New Republic* intellectuals whom she focuses on fluttered around Theodore Roosevelt and later Woodrow Wilson like “moths around a flame.” Surely they saw something in Teddy Roosevelt’s definition of the public interest or some actions of his administration that corresponded with their consumerist analyses.

Stuart Chase and George Soule were very important liberals of the 1930s, but how representative were they? Very, I believe. But it would have strengthened Donohue’s case to see if their ideas were illustrated in the national planning thinkers around *Plan Age*, or those liberals writing for *The Nation*, or non-Marxist left-liberals like Alfred Bingham. Donohue has a fascinating discussion of how the Agricultural Adjustment Agency that was focused on the farmers as producers contributed to consumerism, but one wonders why there is no discussion of the consumer motives behind the labor-oriented Wagner Act, a point argued persuasively by Stephen Fraser in his biography of Sidney Hillman. Finally, there appears to be a tacit acceptance that the New Deal brand of consumption liberalism as defining the good society ended the liberal debate over structural reform of capitalism. Certainly the New Deal brand of liberalism permeated liberal thought, but the liberal debate over the way toward an abundant and just society during the World War II years contained those who thought that structural change—not consumerism alone—was necessary.

The issues I have raised, however, should in no way detract from the importance of Donohue’s work. This is a major work that offers a new and persuasive perspective on the history of modern American liberal thought.

Queens College, City University of New York

Frank A. Warren

THE ROMANCE OF SMALL-TOWN CHAUTAUQUAS. By James R. Schultz.  
Columbia: University of Missouri Press. 2002.

Chautauqua, a uniquely American phenomenon, provided opportunities for education, culture, recreation and social contacts for millions from 1874 until the early 1930s. Originating in western New York State, “Mother Chautauqua” gave birth to a successful reading program and numerous independent chautauqua assemblies. Beginning in the early 1900s, these assemblies were gradually replaced by circuit or tent chautauquas, which recorded annual ticket sales exceeding 30 million during their peak in the 1920s. Despite the importance of this movement, American historians have given it little notice in the typical history textbook. This book represents another attempt to correct that problem.

Mr. Schultz generally succeeds in achieving his goal to provide “a personal perspective focusing on the human interest side of the tent chautauqua story” (Prologue, p. x) by including many anecdotes from spectators and participants as well as photographs. Also helpful is his appealing writing style and his chronological and organizational model. The first and last chapters trace the appearance of the tent chautauquas in 1904 and their final programs in 1933. Between these bookends, the author carefully describes circuit management and logistics and provides numerous examples of speakers, performers and entertainers collectively known as “the talent.” During the 1920s, this talent pool was being asked to provide more entertainment and increasingly less education and inspiration, a change that became one of the basic reasons for the declining financial support in many chautauqua communities. Other commendable features include the description of the Junior Chautauqua, a program for children which

was adopted by most of the circuit bureaus, and a survey of present-day tent and independent chautauquas.

While there is much to recommend this fascinating narrative, a number of significant problems must be addressed. One is the excessively large number of references to talent and programs in chapters other than those designated for these topics. Another is the space allotted for pictures and narrative about the author's father and uncle. However, the most conspicuous space problem derives from the selection and usage of the photo collection, which comprises more than half of the text. It is indeed unfortunate that a large number are not relevant or do not contribute significantly to the narrative. One example is the collection of two dozen tent pictures, of which only seven are sufficiently different to merit inclusion. Questions of relevancy are also appropriate concerning the number of photographs of individuals who are mentioned only incidentally in the text.

In addition to relevancy, a number of specific topics deserve further explanation or development. One involves the impact of the earlier chautauqua organizations on the origins and growth of the tent chautauquas as well as reasons for the transition from one to the other. Except for an occasional hint, the author virtually ignores the extremely crucial evaluation of chautauqua's achievements and its contributions to the American way of life. These indeed are serious omissions in a book that otherwise offers us an interesting and well-written history about this uniquely American phenomenon!

Concordia University

Roland M. Mueller

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHILDREN: A History of the Boys and Girls' Republic. By Gay Pitman Zieger. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 2003.

This narrative history of the Boys and Girls Republic traces the Michigan residential treatment center from its Progressive-era origins to the near present. Rather than putting forward an explicit argument, though, an underlying assumption about the benevolence of administrators frames the book. Chapter titles take their name from superintendents and the dates of their tenure. Only incidentally does this work consider shifting notions of a kids' "republic."

The first administrator was a progressive who believed in the environmental causes of crime and that self-government would help "ragamuffins." Leaving his post in disrepute and the place decrepit, he turned out to be something of a bad boy himself (62). Next, three superintendents influenced by the professionalization of mental health and social welfare upgraded the facilities but divested "troubled youths" of their right to self govern (66). During the Depression and the war, "gang" members and others were superintended by a man who believed in the importance of individual initiative and the *discipline* of self-government. Several superintendents ran the Republic during the postwar years when "delinquent" boys were pathologized and disenfranchised of their rights to self govern. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the Republic provided a "total milieu" for "disturbed," "disadvantaged," and druggie boys (161). Since the 1980s, the Republic has been run by a handful of professionals profiled in thumbnail sketches in the final chapter.

Despite the opportunity to historicize the current discourse on "bad boys" by illuminating institutional attempts at shaping boyhood, this court history is a gender-absent, race-blind, top-down, hagiography of uncomplicated white men who are celebrated, not interrogated. Zieger, a "professional writer" (of film, drama, and literary history) was hired to spread "awareness" of the institution's historical legacy by one of

Republic's former directors.) The many problems from which this work suffers consequentially, could have been remedied by a handful of historiographic essays that highlighted the major developments that have transformed the field of history over the last 40 years. Instead, such basic analytic tools as class, race, gender, and age are nowhere in this uncritical and uncontextualized work that begs for their use and the application of theory.

Despite expectations to the contrary, *For the Good of the Children* sheds little light on the subjectivities of youth. The premise that progress is only generated by those in recognized positions of power precludes the influence of boys who, at different times and in different ways, helped run the institution as "citizens" (91). Despite prior emphasis on self-government, bad boys' acculturation, containment, and contestation are seen as nothing more than quaint and cute. And, despite the book's subtitle, girls are entirely absent except for the farewell mention that: "No longer strictly for boys, it changed its treatment policy as well as its name, becoming the Boys and Girls' Republic in 1994" (229). Though Zieger traces the challenges that shifting populations of boys posed to the institution's self-government principle, there is no similar discussion in regard to girls. Still, had the author paid greater attention to the role that youth culture (among other social forces) played in shaping adolescence as well as adults' perceptions and definitions of youth, she might have seen how changing delineations of delinquency were not necessarily accurate descriptions but instead, discursive constructions.

University of Missouri, Kansas City

Miriam Forman-Brunell

THE INVENTION OF THE WESTERN FILM: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century. By Scott Simmon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003.

Scott Simmon opens his impressive, important, and valuable new study of the Western film with a dangerous concession, especially for someone doing such important work in the field. He writes, "If the West essentially preceded Westerns, it now looks as if the West has also outlived the Western. The many premature obituaries for the Western film—the first few published in 1911—might warn us off such a pronouncement, but the genre is beginning to feel clinically dead, especially if a living genre requires a critical mass of productions" (xv). As proof, he reports that "no westerns were released theatrically in 2002" (xv). A more sanguine view of the Western's future might emphasize that the recent release and distribution of a magnificent new cut of Sergio Leone's epic *Once Upon in the West* (1968) dramatizes the continuing interest in Westerns for academic and popular audiences. Ironically, *The Invention of the Western Film* in its own way will help foster such interest. The book becomes the latest in this rich field of publication to be a necessary read for scholars and general readers.

The special contribution of Simmon's book concerns its emphasis upon the early years of the film genre. His focus upon the situation and condition of the Indian in these early films represents an original and provocative insight and approach to the genre. Similarly, he demonstrates acute critical sensitivity to the nuances of the genre in his development of the structural and narratological connections between relatively neglected B-Westerns and widely-discussed A and classic films. His analysis of connections between film noir and Westerns intelligently and creatively advances the considerable work that previously has been with this aspect of the genre.

Simmon wisely proffers a method and critical approach to the Western that emphasize the historical and cultural significance of the Western rather than its absolute

historical accuracy. He argues “all of that cultural baggage carried by Western films should allow them to be unpacked through a cultural history, by which I mean examining film aesthetics within a wide context of literature and visual arts, of social histories of the eras depicted and of the years when the films were produced, and of the ideologies propounded by the films” (xiv). The statement soundly echoes the founding ambitions of American Studies to synthesize coherent aesthetic analysis with solid historical and cultural research.

*The Invention of the Western Film* would be even stronger with a better use of this scholarly and critical history of the genre to create a tighter integration of the book’s various thematic threads. Thus, greater recognition of John Cawelti’s seminal work on the Western and Robert Warshaw’s enormous contribution in what Simmon calls “the single most influential essay about the Western film” (127) could help the elements cohere. Similarly, Simmon correctly expatiates upon the Puritan origins of the Western hero and character but neglects how John Wayne and John Wayne heightened and intensified this theme to a new degree of critical and cultural consciousness in *The Searchers* (1956).

Vanderbilt University

Sam B. Girgus

THE PUSSYCAT OF PRIZEFIGHTING: Tiger Flowers and the Politics of Black Celebrity. By Andrew M. Kaye. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 2004.

*The Pussycat of Prizefighting* is a potentially exciting book which unfortunately does not devote enough time to its title character, Tiger Flowers, boxing’s middleweight titleholder during 1926. Flowers, the first black world champion since the controversial Jack Johnson lost the heavyweight crown in 1915, has not been the subject of any book-length scholarly treatment, and Kaye’s work could have filled an important gap in our understanding of the relationships between race and sport. However, only about one-fourth of the piece is devoted to Flowers, and the resulting analyses are inconclusive and murky. In fact, the title of the book is misleading since the author spends more time talking about other fighters. Nevertheless, there are a number of contributions that come as a result of the author’s concentration on Atlanta, and how that city’s racial politics influenced residents’ reception of Flowers and other boxers.

Some of the best work is about Jack Johnson. For example, Kaye comes to the unique and plausible conclusion that among some whites, the real dread that stemmed from Johnson’s title reign was economic rather than social. Although many authors have described how Johnson’s affairs with white women stirred the nation’s passions and sparked a backlash against him, Kaye counters that the real problem for Atlanta’s commercial elite was not Johnson’s behavior, but that the racial violence which resulted from it was bad for business. Atlanta’s reputation as a place in which one could invest had been damaged by a 1906 race riot, and the city’s leaders feared that another uprising could destroy their plans of making it into a national economic hub.

Because so little of the study is devoted to Flowers, the author has difficulty coming to significant conclusions about the meaning of his life. When probing the potential symbolic impact of the fighter’s mansion, he is reduced to asking the rhetorical question, “How could Atlantans, for example, ignore the splendor of Tiger’s Villa?” (p. 138) One of the functions of this book should be to answer such queries, but Kaye fails to do so, partly because he has not unearthed any significant sources which might shed new light on the fighter’s life and times. Perhaps the most telling examples of this come in the



book's epilogue, where the author essentially admits to the readers that he was unable to figure out what Tiger Flowers meant to American society. When discussing the possibility that Flowers entered an arrangement to throw a championship fight with Mickey Walker, Kaye concludes that "we cannot ascertain whether Tiger Flowers was naïve, incompetent, deceived, or none of the above." (p. 151) A few pages later, he tells readers, "Tiger Flowers's true character remains an enigma." (p. 154) While it is certainly acceptable for an author to acknowledge the unknown rather than invent conclusions, Kaye's failure to even attempt an analysis of Flowers' essence renders the book somewhat impotent.

Sonoma State University

Michael Ezra

**BLUE-COLLAR HOLLYWOOD: Liberalism, Democracy, and Working People in American Film.** By John Bodnar. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2003.

John Bodnar's *Blue-Collar Hollywood* is a history of the filmic counterpart to the American working class. To complicate his readings of six decades' worth of working-class characters, plots and settings culled from American popular films, Bodnar uses published reviews and private exchanges between studio heads, directors, writers, and the Production Code Administration (Hollywood's film censorship office), crafting an extra-cinematic discussion centering on the struggles that went on behind, and about, the depictions of the on-screen American working class.

Unlike traditional film historians, Bodnar eschews the constraints of genre, studio, director, or decade. Instead, he uses the working class as his analytic lens, moving through popular film history from the inception of sound through to the 1990s. This allows Bodnar to generate a sufficiently complicated, character-centered history of the working class in film, shaped from a collection of 1930s gangsters, fallen women and boxers, 1940s war heroes and their wives, 1950s dysfunctional families, 1960s African Americans (from *Shaft* to *A Raisin in the Sun*), 1970s reactionary white men and pro-union women, and ending with a brief look into the working class of 1980s as seen in films such as *Jungle Fever* and *All the Right Moves*.

In spite of the number of films Bodnar covers (more than 230), his analysis works best at the micro-level. The readings of films like *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977) raise useful questions about how to bring a 1970s film concerning a woman's (tragic) search for sexual and social liberation into a history of the working class in popular cinema. Likewise, Bodnar is at his most compelling in arguing how many of these narratives are meditations on the need to regulate and police gender roles, and how this implicit necessity structures otherwise formulaic stories of the upward mobility (or immobility) of the working class.

However, at times the working class (and its history) that Bodnar fashions from this body of film loses definition, and this is reflected in his shifting terminology, which moves through "proletarian," "working class," "blue-collar," "ordinary," and "plebian," as if these words and the characters they describe are ultimately synonymous. This might stem from Bodnar's focus on Hollywood's representation of the working class, as opposed to how the process of class itself has been represented in popular film. Contradictorily, this seems to limit his history of the filmic working class, which he identifies through "a range of types—such as miners, gangsters, or fallen women," (xvii). This focus on characterization seems to result in the rough charm of the working class, and not their labor, as that which marks them in this reading. Though *Blue-Collar*

proves such an analysis worthwhile, it raises the question of whether these films (and the history they constitute) form the culture industry's cumulative argument about the working class, or conform to Bodnar's formulations of the working class and its history.

However, *Blue-Collar* as a whole is far-reaching and provocative, and Bodnar has provided an immense resource to a field that is always in need of more work.

Carnegie Mellon University

Victor Cohen

MEMORY AND POPULAR FILM. Edited by Paul Grainge. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2003.

Recent criticism argues not only that modern culture is propelled by memory but also that memory occupies a narrative channel opposed to history, as if history luxuriates in metanarratives of dominance while memory clutches at tatters of the oppressed. But power expresses itself on multiple axes of dominance, and a memory already straining to reconstruct along one axis may be unable to account for a broad social context. Introducing the present anthology, editor Paul Grainge embraces Marita Sturken's claim for a "cultural memory" that is not necessarily oppositional but "is socially produced and is bound in the struggles and investments of cultural and national identity formation" (2). His collection's goal is to discuss "issues of memory *in* film and of film *as* memory" (12).

Memory is variously labeled in these essays: cultural, prosthetic, collective, flash-bulb, even post-. The second half of the book is driven by Alison Landsberg's essay on prosthetic memory: memory constructed by commodified media technologies in the service of empathy. The idea is lost in Landsberg's effort to rescue not only cinema but even commodification from the broad charge made by Fredric Jameson and others that contemporary films replace history with amnesia. Subsequent essays in the collection stretch the idea, perhaps most successfully in Neil Campbell's close reading of John Sayles's film *Lone Star* as a hopeful piercing of borders and in Jeffrey Pence's analysis of Atom Egoyan's "elaborate play of technologised memory" (252). Less persuasive are Philip Drake's plea for music as a language of "retro" films such as *Jackie Brown* and editor Grainge's construction of *Pleasantville* as new technologies' repudiation of claims to a Hollywood "authenticity" made by nostalgists such as opponents of Ted Turner's colorization scheme. Robert Burgoyne uses prosthetic memory to argue that contemporary film increases its claim on the past, becoming meaningful "in terms of emotional and affective truth" (223). Computer morphing creates "its own time and duration, its own synthetic spaces," and provides "a deep understanding of . . . the way the past itself changes under the pressure of new perspectives" (228, 231). But Burgoyne's argument, like others here, breaks down in linking new technologies' boundary-busting to a "blurring of boundaries of race, gender, and nation" (228). Burgoyne would claim that the best way to show that a narrative has lost its political center is through technologies that facilitate decentering. This undermines the very justification for prosthetic memory: why empathize when the site of suffering has been morphed or pixilated? Perhaps not surprisingly, Landsberg celebrates John Singleton's *Rosewood* by reducing racism to atomized personal prejudices and claims that "mass cultural commodities . . . pose a powerful challenge to the concept of private property" (151). No Hollywood commodity, high-tech or not, constructs prosthetic memories of the world's millions of refugees and transcontinental migrant laborers who, unable to afford a movie ticket, are unlikely to be the subject of a popular film anytime soon.

The collection's more conventional first half contains useful studies of consumption, such as Sarah Stubbings' reading of elderly Nottingham residents' memories of old films and Heidi Kenaga's examination of the appropriation, by California's Diamond Jubilee organizers, of the film *The Pony Express*. Sharon Monteith usefully observes that contemporary films of the civil rights movement resolve problems only in the private, domestic sphere. And John Storey argues that films of the Vietnam war "produced a particular regime of truth" that would be invoked during the Gulf War (113). Ironically, that memory is being challenged in Iraq today.

Washington State University

John Streamas

EYES OFF THE PRIZE: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955. By Carol Anderson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003.

Carol Anderson's account of the postwar period and its significance for African Americans is a tale of intransigence and opportunism, sacrifice and ambition, violence and public relations, principled diplomacy and politics-as-usual. She points us to one more legacy of the Cold War, how a truly international movement for human rights, powerfully enabled by the participation of black Americans, was stifled just when it seemed so possible. Even as the minions of National Socialism were taking their "racial theories" to the bunkers and the gallows, a new order—a United Nations—was being founded on the tenuous alliance of the victors, none of whom had shed their imperialist, expansionist aspirations. While there have been other studies of the United Nations, African American diplomacy, Cold War foreign policy, Anderson's is a more vigorous amalgam than most, fueled by her extensive research into the archives of key players and organizations.

The narrative of *Eyes Off the Prize* follows the efforts of black leadership in America, particularly the troika of Walter White, Roy Wilkins, and W.E.B. Du Bois with the NAACP, "to make human rights *the* standard for equality" (2). That such efforts would be met with the stiffest kinds of resistance from white southern Democrats and nearly everyone in the Truman State Department is the well known part of that history. But Anderson shows how Eleanor Roosevelt and Truman proved their support of African American causes to be primarily symbolic, at home and in the negotiations of a UN charter. While human rights were being stigmatized as leftist, socialist, and communist in the ongoing Cold War dynamic of superpower competition, White, Wilkins, and Du Bois took turns battling each other to determine the direction of the most powerful black advocacy group in the country, and their differences at various times weakened the NAACP's efforts. Du Bois saw the necessity of an international front to establish human rights and battle the racial oppression in America, while Wilkins and White, committed anti-communists, at other times turned the NAACP into a vehicle of apology for the status quo. The extent to which political conviction, personal pique, and ego detracted from the vital unity is dismaying.

A brief notice like this one cannot do justice to the complexity and intricacy of Anderson's study, but one point must not be lost. The exemplary research here is infused with an emotional intensity not to be found in much scholarship today. We too often argue because we can, not because we need to, but one grasps quickly what Anderson knows is at stake here. In the fiftieth anniversary year of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the concomitant retrospectives on the "Movement," Anderson's contribution is an

“agonizing reappraisal,” to borrow a phrase from Dulles that echoes throughout the book. Yet, unlike many of these re-evaluations, the dominant tone here is not disappointment or scholarly disinterest—it is anger, righteous and raw.

Saint Xavier University, Chicago

Nelson Hathcock

THE LAVENDER SCARE: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government. By David K. Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2004.

Joining a growing body of work on pre-Stonewall gay and lesbian life in the United States, *The Lavender Scare* challenges the status of the 1969 rebellion as pivotal in either queer history or gay liberation. David K. Johnson shows us a well-established, if underground, gay community in Washington, D.C., already in place by the 1940s. He then documents their efforts to survive the homosexual purges and eventually to fight against them, years before Stonewall. More importantly, Johnson’s research fills a gap in our understanding of Cold War culture by anchoring the history of the homosexual purges in the late 1940s, prior to the rise of Joseph McCarthy. This allows him to trace the development of anti-homosexual public discourse vis-à-vis Cold War culture. At its most compelling, *Lavender* connects the homosexual purges to a combination of Republican reactions against the New Deal reforms and a general malaise about the implacable march toward bureaucratization.

Using sources as diverse as popular pulp journalism and internal government memos, Johnson demonstrates that both the New Deal and bureaucracies were seen as emasculating, feminizing trends in American politics, enacted by men who didn’t have the backbone, courage or strength to lead the nation. Johnson’s careful archival work successfully connects the late 1940s effort to “remasculinize” America with the increasing homophobia of the period. Despite this first-rate historical analysis, the book stops short of entering an in-depth study of the cultural complexities of the relationship between masculinity and homophobia in Cold War America—but Johnson does lay the groundwork and pose the questions for future study. As the book centers around the Federal purges, it naturally serves as a history of the gay and lesbian communities of Washington. When read in conjunction with other recent studies of local queer communities, *Lavender* may point scholarship in some new and interesting directions. At present, the historical literature focuses on the development of a national gay and lesbian movement and its concomitant culture; but works such as Johnson’s suggest regional differences that were significant not only in the development of a national social movement, but which produced and continue to produce diverse regional gay and lesbian cultures with different social and political strategies throughout the United States.

Politically, *Lavender* contains a wealth of contextual data that might explain the kinds of strategies Washington’s gay men and women espoused in the 1950s and 60s during the purges, which would give depth and complexity to both their personal and political choices. Instead, Johnson relies on standard explanations of “conciliatory” gay politics, thereby leaving unchallenged some of the more troublesome assumptions in gay and lesbian historiography. With the data he uncovered, Johnson could have moved the cultural historical discourses several steps away from the “radical” vs. “assimilationist” rubric, toward a more complicated model of sexual politics anchored in the experience of a particular social context, in a particular locale, at a particular historical moment. In all, however, these are minor complaints that point not so much

to *Lavender's* weakness as to exciting new areas for future work in the cultural history of gay and lesbian America prior to Stonewall.  
University of San Francisco

J. Todd Ormsbee

POLICING THE POOR: From Slave Plantation to Public Housing. By Neil Websdale.  
Boston: Northeastern University Press. 2001.

What are the historical roots of policing in the United States, especially for people of color, and how do changes in policing since the 1960s reflect the emergence of America's postindustrial political economy, with its underclass of the permanently unemployed? These questions frame Neil Websdale's useful and troubling account of police and the poor, an interdisciplinary study of police-community relations in Nashville's predominantly black public housing projects.

*Policing the Poor* focuses on community policing, a reformed practice adopted in the wake of the Kerner Commission Report (1968), whereby police officers were encouraged to enter poor, urban communities on foot or on bikes as "problem solvers," charged with improving police-community relations as well as arresting lawbreakers. Websdale's study documents the failure of this reformed policing either to curb crime or to stop the descent of poor communities and families into poverty and violence.

Websdale approaches his topic as an outsider, with many questions and an open mind. The result is a series of chapters in the form of exploratory essays on related topics that this reader found quite disarming. We are invited to consider these puzzles: why has the rate of domestic battering gone up even though street crime as a whole has gone down? If community policing is saturation policing, why don't inhabitants welcome the protection from violent criminals that it offers? How are incarceration rates connected to larger trends in the economy such as unemployment? (Large prison populations artificially hold down the U.S. unemployment rate, compared to those in Europe).

Websdale's ethnographic descriptions of Nashville's projects are especially compelling. Being scrupulously fair means listening to the viewpoints of police officers as well as prostitutes and crack dealers, victims of violence and convicted felons, and this Websdale does, recounting his experiences as observer and ethnographer in Nashville's poorest housing areas. He discusses the disproportionate arrest and incarceration rates of blacks and the disenfranchisement of "felons." The author of the recent *Rural Woman Battering and the Justice System: Thousand Oaks, California* (Sage 1998), he suggests that the success of community policing in black neighborhoods exacerbates black male "frustrated patriarchal privilege" which in turn increases incidents of domestic violence, while police enforcement of the classist and racially discriminatory crack laws results in high incarceration rates of blacks and consequent demonization of black men by conservative politicians and media. He reminds readers of the context: a welfare state that invests only 15 percent of GDP in social programs, in contrast to the 25 percent investment made by other Western democracies.

Websdale is highly critical of the literature on policing, which he characterizes as "a blinkered literature, . . . technical and administrative in nature, dull to read, and largely silent on all the major social and historical roots of crime, violence, and urban blight" (192). He offers *Policing the Poor* as a corrective that brings together literatures in critical sociology and history with ethnographic description. If his use of the work of historians is somewhat superficial (he appropriately cites the work of Howard Zinn, David Oshinsky and Lawrence Friedman, but where are Linda Gordon, Rickie Solinger, and Jacqueline Jones?), his attempt to historicize the twenty-first century ghetto and

link it to the abysmal violence and degradation of the slave-trade and the plantation are a much needed corrective. It is hard to fault Websdale's insight that we find ourselves at present in a period of "redemption" (8), a backlash against the gains of the civil-rights era which parallels the post-Reconstruction era of Jim Crow (1872-1896). In this context, community policing emerges as simply another way to "feed bodies into the system" of the "justice juggernaut" (6). In conclusion, this book provides a very useful overview of the criminal justice system in a modern American city. Written in clear, jargon-free prose, *Policing the Poor* would be excellent for undergraduate classroom use in sociology, criminology, or social policy courses.

Auburn University

Ruth Crocker

THE BROTHERS' VIETNAM WAR: Black Power, Manhood, and the Military Experience. By Herman Graham III. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2003.

Herman Graham's *The Brothers' Vietnam War* explores how black soldiers and sailors made sense of their lives while stationed in Asia. Using gender and race as his organizing principles, Graham's book contributes to the surprisingly small body of work on the black experience in Vietnam.

The quality of the book's analysis seems dependant on the author's use of sources. The book's strongest chapter, "Black Power GIs," is propelled by materials that reveal complicated relationships between race, gender, and culture. Sources used to construct this chapter include a Congressional Black Caucus report, author interviews with veterans, black and white newspapers and periodicals, and a Columbia University oral history collection. "Black Power GIs" helps readers understand how soldiers used their bodies as tools of resistance against a military structure that devalued their contributions and their lives. One of the chapter's most interesting discussions is of how black troops used handshakes and hairstyles not only to differentiate themselves from whites, but also to define themselves as men. Graham comes to several exciting conclusions in this section of the book, among them that manhood was as much an organizing principle of the black power movement as blackness. Graham also illustrates how "ritual, rhetoric, and rumor" (118) were key cultural sites where black soldiers asserted "racial solidarity as a source of power and gender identification." (118) These ideas help us understand black nationalism not only as a racial matter, but also as a gendered one.

Unfortunately, the scope of sources used in several of the book's other six chapters are not as ambitious, and the analysis suffers as a result. A chapter on Muhammad Ali's draft resistance fails to capture how Vietnam veterans viewed the fighter's stand against the war, and overlooks a number of key sources that would have bolstered the narrative, among them a series of interviews by journalist Wallace Terry that gauged GI response to Ali over the years. While Graham achieves an acceptable synthesis of stateside public opinion towards Ali, he fails almost completely to capture how the experiences and perceptions of black soldiers in Vietnam were affected by the champion's refusal to be drafted. Although the author claims that "Muhammad Ali's draft refusal was particularly important to African American GIs because it suggested that they could define their manhood with militant antiwar politics rather than the hegemonic warrior role," (67) he does not back this conclusion with evidence. This chapter also contains several pieces of information that went unnoted. Graham's assertion that Ali's lawyer was a colonel in the Illinois National Guard who had reserved a spot for the fighter therein is very interesting, but the endnotes fail to reveal from where it came.

Overall, the book's quality is uneven, sometimes achieving new and creative conclusions about how race and masculinity intersected while otherwise merely synthesizing already existing ideas about black soldiers and sailors in Vietnam.  
Sonoma State University Michael Ezra

UTOPIA LIMITED: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern. By Marianne DeKoven. Durham: Duke University Press. 2004.

Rutgers University English professor Marianne DeKoven is an accomplished writer with published works in cultural studies, feminism, and the experimental writings of Gertrude Stein. In *Utopia Limited* DeKoven has put her proven skills of cultural and literary criticism to work in a study of a diverse body of representative texts of the 1960s and early 1970s at the core of the political and counter-cultural radicalism of the time. The book opens with chapters on Herbert Marcuse and Roland Barthes. It concludes with a critical reading of two "postmodern" novels: Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and E. L. Doctorow's *The Waterworks*. In between are analyses of the writings of Thomas Wolfe, Hunter Thompson, and William Burroughs. DeKoven also interprets the Port Huron Statement, R. D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience*, Frances FitzGerald's *Fire in the Lake*, essays by James Baldwin, and various feminist writings. Framing her interpretation of these texts—what she calls the "groundwork for my project" (11)—is a theory of the transition from modernity/modernism to postmodernity/postmodernism. As indicated by two excellent annotated bibliographies on "the postmodern" and "the sixties," DeKoven has engaged an extensive body of multidisciplinary scholarship in support of both her theoretical framework and her textual analyses. Given the importance of cultural studies in the discipline of American Studies, students and established scholars in this discipline should find DeKoven's ambitious book challenging and enlightening.

The proposition at the heart of the book is that a profound "cultural-political shift" (4) occurred during the 1960s and that the texts DeKoven has chosen to analyze bear witness to this shift. What she sees in these texts is "simultaneously the full, final flowering of the modern and the emergence of the postmodern (3; cf., 4, 6). In constituting the point of transition or "pivot" from one cultural configuration ("structure of feeling or lifeworld" 7, 19) to the other, various new social movements reconfigured modernist democratic egalitarianism and individualism into new, postmodern expressions (18). While recognizing a fundamental political/moral continuity, DeKoven argues there is significant change in the utopian sentiments and discourse that separate the two cultural formations. "In the full realization and extension of the popular, egalitarian, subjectivist trajectories of the modern, but in rejection or curtailment of the totalizing, utopian master narratives associated with those trajectories in modernity, the sixties political and countercultural movements were transformed into something in continuity with, but radically different from, those modern master narratives; transformed into the "utopia limited" of the postmodern" (8-9).

DeKoven's use of words like "grandly synthesizing," "totalizing," and "hierarchical master narratives" (13, 16) as definitive of modernity/modernism are, of course, drawn from the jargon of postmodern theory. Given that postmodern theoretical discourse regarding the differentiation and periodization of modernity and postmodernity exposes itself as "grand narrative" in its own right, a degree of skepticism is warranted in response to her theoretical framework. Postmodernity may be "well established" (9) in "cultural studies" and English departments but its meaning and historical significance remains

problematic for social and political theorists. It is also questionable whether DeKoven's differentiation of modern and postmodern utopianism can be sustained by even a cursory reading of the history of utopian writing in the West.

University of Kansas

J. Robert Kent

RACE, CULTURE AND THE REVOLT OF THE BLACK ATHLETE. By Douglas Hartmann. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003.

In 1968, an African American sociologist named Harry Edwards and a sprinter named Tommie Smith attempted to call attention to racism in the United States through a boycott by black American athletes of that year's Olympics in Mexico City. The boycott never happened, but Smith still protested. After winning the gold medal in the 200 meter dash, he and teammate John Carlos (who finished third) each held a black gloved fist upright over their bowed heads while on the victory stand during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner. This has become one of the most widely recognized images of revolution to emerge out of the late 1960's and early 1970's, yet until now, very little has been written about it. In his riveting and detailed reflection on the significance of this event, Douglas Hartmann explores the history and meaning of the 1968 Olympic protest, revealing "how sport is implicated in the history and structure of race and racism (and nationalism and liberalism) in contemporary, post-civil rights American culture" (xix).

Hartmann, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota, illustrates the social and ideological importance of sports to race in his book on the 1968 revolt. Weaving together archival material, interviews, and news sources, he reveals how the boycott movement attracted enormous public attention far beyond the ability of its organizers to successfully achieve their goals. Despite Edwards' failure to organize a boycott, Hartmann shows how the effort undermined a naïve faith in sports as a force for progressive change in race relations within the United States. "The Olympic boycott proposal was . . . an implicit challenge against the progress that had previously defined public conceptions of both sport and race" (91).

At the end of his volume, Hartmann interprets the legacy of the 1968 Olympic protest. In a strange turn of events, Smith and Carlos, once vilified by their actions on the victory stand, became lionized as heroes in popular magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* twenty years after the event. Hartmann draws upon cultural studies and sociological theory to make sense out of this change of heart. Drawing from Michael Omi and Howard Winant's theory of racial order, Hartmann shows how U.S. amateur sports institutions first insulated themselves from the African American revolt, then absorbed the critique to rearticulate the role of sports in maintaining a racial equilibrium.

Hartmann shows how the "Revolt of the Black Athlete" had a powerful impact upon the American sports establishment. It came to symbolize a much larger rebellion by even white athletes against the authoritarianism and exploitation embodied in mainstream American sports institutions. Yet Hartmann's volume, providing both intimate detail and distanced analysis, allows readers to learn about the specific ways that sports have become linked to a racial order. Not only is it relevant to teaching and research in sports history and sociology, but it is a significant contribution to the study of race and social movements as well.

Shippensburg University

John Bloom



INTERRACIAL INTIMACY: the Regulation of Race and Romance. By Rachel F. Moran. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2001.

A law professor with a biracial upbringing, Moran specializes in educational law and policies. Her research in school segregation led her to investigate residential segregation and interracial personal relationships. The result is a unique synthesis of judicial literature, history, and social science. This perspective leads the author to an innovative perspective on central issues of contemporary race relations where the old saying about the personal being political gains new depth.

In her analysis of the history of antimiscegenation laws, the legal organization of the welfare of children, and definitions of race the author outlines an underlying theme in contemporary race relations. Historically, antimiscegenation laws played a crucial role in defining racial identities and inequalities, enforcing gender and race-specific boundaries of acceptable sexual and martial behavior. However, there were great variations of these laws in regard to the various racial groups. It was not until 1967, in *Loving v. Virginia*, that the Supreme Court declared race a biological irrelevancy, but this decision did not change social and psychological barriers to integration. The ideal of colorblindness remains in an unresolved tension to contemporary forms of colorconsciousness. Advocates of colorblindness insist that the government must disregard race in any decision. The proponents of colorconsciousness argue that race also has a cultural dimension based on historical experiences. This view argues that remedial measures are necessary to ensure social justice. This affects record keeping of race specific data including marriage and the census, or custody and adoption decisions. What is in the best interest of the child? Are white parents in a white neighborhood able to teach a black child to deal with racism? Colorblindness can be dangerous when it veils continued forms of segregation.

The author argues that in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement and *Loving* we need a reconceptualization of multiracialism if race is not to become reified again. This new conception has to be more fluid to accommodate the increasingly complex racial identities and to account for the differences in historical experiences of these groups and their relationships with each other. Interracial unions may be more frequent between non-whites and in those with whites the Euro-American heritage may not necessarily be the only point of reference anymore. The welfare of these relationships, families, and especially children depends on such a redefinition.

The analysis in this book provides a fresh, innovative perspective. The author's use of examples creates a well-integrated macro-micro view. Yet while her discussion is in many ways excellent, several important issues were ignored which distorts the debate. Moran states repeatedly that the government does not interfere anymore in the formation of marriages. She completely ignores discrimination against homosexuals. By prohibiting gay and lesbian marriages in this country, the US government does interfere directly and drastically. Many of these gay/lesbian relationships are cross-racial because gay lifestyles sensitizes people involved to issues of discrimination and shared experiences of being marginalized. Furthermore, the issue of race in this country is so closely intertwined with class, as in regard to custody and adoption decisions. Class is also related to the exceedingly high rates of incarceration of black men and their effect on marriage, intimate relationships, and children. Moran does not address these intersections systematically, which ultimately leaves her book incomplete.

University of Wisconsin—Baraboo

Annette Kuhlmann

THE ATHEIST: Madalyn Murray O'Hair. By Bryan F. LeBeau. New York: New York University Press. 2003.

LeBeau (History and American Studies, University of Missouri-Kansas City) offers a biography of America's most famous—some would say infamous—atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair. His sources include O'Hair's diaries, published writings, radio and television appearances, family recollections, court cases, magazine stories, and letters from detractors and supporters. LeBeau argues that O'Hair "was both a product and a shaper of the times in which she lived," appearing "when the Cold War and the perceived menace of atheistic communism made it unthinkable for Americans to question the sacred artifacts of their culture" (305). LeBeau's effort to narrate and contextualize the life of a person who was not only portrayed by others, but even depicted herself in markedly different ways at different times demonstrates both the promises and problems facing academic biographers.

LeBeau begins his study with a brief and useful introduction to "unbelief" in America, noting that the term "atheist" was historically a pejorative broadly applied to people who dissented from the dominant religions of their day. Given this, LeBeau tells us that even believers in a supreme power, for example Deists like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, were labeled atheists by their detractors. This was not the case with O'Hair, however. While the inception of her unbelief is contested in the sources LeBeau provides, it is clear that prior to her participation in the Supreme Court case removing prayer from public schools, *Schempp v. School District of Abington Township* (1963), O'Hair was a committed atheist. LeBeau notes that before *Schempp*, about thirty percent of American public schools held morning prayers and forty to fifty percent practiced Bible reading. O'Hair's active press involvement after the case made her a public figure, dubbed by one newsmagazine "the most hated woman in America." She also became the leading figure and organizer of the American Atheist movement. O'Hair founded associations, a library, magazines, a radio show, and a cable access television program—all of which were dedicated to promoting atheism and fighting through the courts to remove religion from the public sphere. LeBeau suggests that O'Hair's public image faded throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, moving from one of infamous media celebrity to sideshow curiosity. LeBeau ends with an epilogue detailing O'Hair's and other family members' abductions and murders in 1995.

LeBeau does a good job placing O'Hair into the context of Cold War America. He also provides a useful analysis of O'Hair's writings, showing that although her main focus was always the fight against religion, she also promoted civil rights, feminism, nuclear disarmament, and an American exit from Vietnam. While engaging, the book is somewhat less successful in narrating O'Hair's life. O'Hair's diaries and recollections, her converted Evangelical son William's writings, and other sources suggest that O'Hair's life can best be viewed as a battlefield upon which different people vied to provide the "true" story and its meaning. Given this, some readers will want LeBeau's authorial voice and framing to be more explicit in weeding out the messy details of a complex life.

The University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Sean McCloud

MONOCHROME MEMORIES: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America. By Paul Grainge. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002.

Grainge's work looks at the aesthetic commerce in black and white images in the 1990s. In the context of this color-saturated period, monochrome is "a mark of depth in a culture of surface, an aesthetic of slowness in a climate of speed." (3) He sets out to accomplish four goals: 1) to examine how the aesthetic of nostalgia legitimates certain kinds of memory; 2) to show how black and white images are used "to perform specific cultural and memory work" (4); to consider "the imaginary politics of stylized pastness"; and 4) to assess "the unsettled moorings of American national identity . . . and the attempt to resecure these moorings through an appeal to an aestheticized memory of the past."

Each of these goals is competently addressed. Grainge makes good use of *Time* magazine during the period in which it switched from black and white to color, and then, on significant occasions, to monochrome once again. He explores the visual archives brought to billboards and magazine advertisements by Gap and Apple campaigns. The mandatory discussion of Ronald Reagan, the "cannibal-in-shief of past styles," is skillfully done. The more "pastness" is deployed in the service of politics the sharper Grainge's focus becomes.

This monograph is the product of a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Nottingham and carries with it the marks of that form of writing. On the positive side, there is a very useful survey "grounding critical orientations in modern theories of nostalgia (22)," a careful delineation of definitions of nostalgia based on *mood* and *mode*, and a strategic positioning of the author's critical stance between loss and amnesia. On the negative side, the tendency to repeat, to load on the jargon of postmodern theories beyond the carrying capacity of the book's structure, is apparent. Although all the chapters contain fine insights, occasionally the journey becomes a bit of a slog.

The real payoff lies in the concluding section on the film industry, particularly in the last chapter on the colorization controversy and the culture wars of the 1990s. Here Grainge adeptly shows how the rhetorical strategies of nostalgia have been used across the political spectrum. Member of the film industry, particularly directors, lined up alongside critics to excoriate Ted Turner's attempt to tamper with a work of art, distort the historical significance of these film artifacts, or recommodify and appropriate Hollywood productions—take your pick. Meanwhile, conservative critics, politicians, and educational leaders inveighed against the attack on Western civilization and academic standards of multiculturalism—according to their lights. Grainge braids these uses of tradition and nostalgia in a very suggestive way that brings the book to a conclusion that is both fulfilling and promising.

University of Wyoming

Eric J. Sandeen

NOT JUST ANY LAND: A Personal and Literary Journey into the American Grasslands. By John Price. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2004.

John Price begins *Not Just Any Land* by identifying its genre. "This is a memoir," he states (ix). Although the focus of Price's first full-length work is on the writings of four Great Plains writers, his discovery of his relationship with this complex, beautiful, and damaged environment forms his work's narrative. It is this moving personal discovery

which distinguishes *Not Just Any Land* from other studies of the prairie and which gives it a compelling coherence.

Price's story begins as he watches the wild prairie return in its magnificent diversity and mysteriousness following a devastating flood across the fields near his hometown in central Iowa. For the first time he wonders how this land might have appeared prior to cultivation. He determines to familiarize himself with writers who would provide him with "a map of words" explaining how these grasslands have "taken shape over time in the human imagination" and indicating how he himself might develop a relationship with his home place based on "commitment, responsibility, and love" (13). Price's quest, as this language suggests, leads him not only to recognize the grasslands as home but also to create his own map—his memoir—in words both lyrical and powerful.

Widely read in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Great Plains literature from Lewis and Clark to Willa Cather and Wallace Stegner as well as in recent western environmental writers, Price chooses to visit four contemporary writers dedicated to the grassland about which they write—Dan O'Brien, Linda Hasselstrom, William Least Heat-Moon, and Mary Swander. Going falconing with O'Brien in the South Dakota grasslands, Price witnessed the ferocity and nobility of a predatory bird. From this first-hand experience, he perceives that movement rather than stasis characterizes the prairie. The connection of both O'Brien and Hasselstrom to the South Dakota prairie prompted both to believe in the necessity of individuals being grounded in a physical, even animalistic, sense of self. As a rancher, Hasselstrom's sense of identity also comes from working the land from the time she was a child; as a woman rancher, her identity was strengthened by a struggle against gender stereotypes; as one who endured personal tragedy on the land, her identity, Price makes clear, was, in addition, formed through grief and loss. The land thus may signify pain and exile as well as healing and stability.

Price's visit with Least-Heat Moon, author of *PrairyErth*, leads to a troubled examination of his own Midwestern past. *PrairyErth's* emphasis upon the importance of memory—of the personal as well as the communal past—and of the intersection between natural and human history helps Price, in Wes Jackson's well-known words, move forward in the complicated process of becoming "native to this place." With Swander in the Iowa Amish community where she has lived in her recovery from an environmental illness, Price comes to see the moving interrelationship between "body, community, nature, and the creative spirit" (160), the reciprocal process whereby the health of one affects the health of the other. Through his pilgrimage to the prairie and his conversations with those who intimately live with and write about its undulations and grasses, its animals and people, its memories and stories, Price comes to be able to tell his own story of caring and acting both persuasively and poetically.

University of Kansas

Elizabeth Schultz