

book is that he is well aware of this difficulty. “What,” he asks, “if the theory fails not because the theory is bad but because the problem is firmly moored in the soul of the nation?” (p. 155).

In addition, given the author’s aim to offer a theory of racial power that befits the increasing complexity of racial subordination, it is unfortunate that he does not wrestle with the current complexities of the U.S. racial formation beyond the simplifying idea of a binary black—white racial dynamic. Relatedly, his concerns about Mills’s notion of white domination may lead him to underestimate the continuing significance of white power and whiteness when he refers broadly to “the typical American citizen” who fails to act consistently to affirm moral equality “in the face of race” (pp. 51, 161). Finally, Lebron’s notion of social value is similar to Max Weber’s notion of status groups, which thinkers like Nancy Fraser and Richard Ford have used to theorize racial inequality. Therefore, he seems to overestimate the novelty of his view that the problem of racism is at root a problem of social value.

These are small quibbles when measured against Lebron’s achievement. He artfully joins Rawlsian-inspired theorizing about social justice with critical race theory’s focus on ongoing racial injustice to illuminate what is needed to develop a distinctly *political* theory of racial justice. In so doing, he also sheds light on the role of popular culture and national character, or civic culture, in perpetuating the gap between venerable American ideals and deplorable American racial realities. His central question for his fellow Americans might be summarized as follows, “Why don’t you feel more ashamed?”

The Politics of Social Welfare in America. By Glenn David Mackin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 226p. \$90.00. doi:10.1017/S1537592714001960

— Daniel Béland, *University of Saskatchewan*

In the United States, “welfare” has long been a derogatory term and a highly contentious political issue associated with the enactment in 1996 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). In *The Politics of Social Welfare in America*, political theorist Glenn David Mackin does not explore the advent or the consequences of that controversial and widely studied piece of legislation. Instead, from different angles, he explores the social construction of need and welfare in the United States. More specifically he shows “the ways in which neediness frames broader issues in political life, including the proper scope of ‘the political,’ and its relation to ethics, the nature of citizenship, and the meaning of equality” (p. 12). For Mackin, “the symbolic politics of neediness” (p. 12) is about the “redrawing of the boundaries of the political” (p. 13), which is why it is so relevant to the understanding of issues of citizenship, democracy,

and inclusion. In fact, one of the main objectives of his book is to bring people in need—such as welfare recipients—to the center of political life, rather than excluding them from democratic participation in the name of their very social and economic deprivation.

This is not an easy book to summarize because it takes the form of a series of essays on related topics, rather than being structured like a traditional monograph. Typically, in each of the core chapters, Mackin brings in a concrete example used as the starting point of an in-depth analysis of the politics of neediness in the United States. For instance, in his case study about Rebecca, a severely mentally impaired young woman, the author shows how she becomes “a political actor who is offering a specific critique of the hierarchical world constructed around the practice of cognitive testing, and who is also inaugurating new modes of equality and new spaces in which they can be demonstrated” (p. 27). In this case study, as elsewhere in the book, he goes back and forth between the concrete example at hand and the work of theorists (in this particular case, Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas, and Jacques Rancière).

Then, in a different study, Mackin analyzes a famous anti-welfare speech of Republican Congressman John Mica of Florida (“Please Don’t Feed the Alligators”) to explore what he calls the aporia of social rights: “[T]he welfare state must produce the very citizens who are supposed to will it; otherwise, it runs the risk of reproducing the very silences and inequalities it means to remedy” (p. 64). In his analysis, the author compares Mica’s depiction of the welfare recipient as corrupt and deviant with the apparently more charitable vision of “the welfare recipient as a needy dependent—pathetic, incompetent, corrupted, and deserving of sympathy, even if sympathy should take the form of removing welfare benefits” (p. 70). For Mackin, these contrasting visions have the same effect of positioning the welfare recipient “as outside the normal boundaries of citizenship and participation.” (p. 70) Considering this, such exclusionary welfare discourses are highly problematic from a democratic standpoint. This remark points back to the aporia of social rights, which is then discussed in relationship to the work of Kevin Olsen.

In the next case study, engaging with authors such as Lawrence Mead and Anna Marie Smith, Mackin turns to the issue of “new paternalism” in welfare reform. Here, the author suggests that Smith’s utopian and progressive vision features traces of paternalism, a paradoxical situation considering that she also offers a strong critique of Lawrence Mead’s well-known “new paternalism.” In the end, for Mackin, what truly matters is the political mobilization of the welfare poor, which he studies through a detailed analysis of the welfare rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Starting from a new reading of the 1965 Moynihan Report (*The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*), which features two

distinct visions of the African American poor (one as politically active and the other as socially damaged), the analysis addresses both the depoliticization of neediness and its reverse image, the emancipatory political mobilization associated with the welfare rights movement. For Mackin, this movement's claims "inaugurated new worlds, new identities, and new relations between them" (p. 186). Here, as elsewhere in his book, he celebrates the creative and emancipatory power of democratic mobilization and its capacity to call into questions existing forms of exclusion.

Well grounded in both the social policy and the political theory literature, *The Politics of Social Welfare in America* is a rich and multifaceted piece of scholarship that addresses key issues relevant for democracy as well as welfare reform. This book is quite dense and its narrative structure is somewhat fragmented, which may confuse readers used to a more traditional, Cartesian approach to political theory. Yet Mackin cleverly uses concrete examples and political quotes alongside theoretical discussions devoted to the work of major political theorists. Although the material in the book is not always conducive to clarity and conciseness, its heterogeneity is fascinating, making for an especially interesting read.

An important point is that the title of the book is slightly misleading, as this is not a study of welfare reform in the United States but a discussion of neediness and democratic inclusion that focuses on welfare. Certainly, a comparative and international perspective could have further enriched the discussion of neediness and welfare, perhaps by stressing what is both unique and common in the United States. However, this might be asking for too much, as this book is already so luxuriant. In this context, other scholars could draw on Mackin's work to explore the politics of need in a comparative and international perspective that could shed further light on the democracy—welfare nexus.

Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States.

By Teresa Anne Murphy. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 240p. \$42.50.

doi:10.1017/S1537592714001972

— Karen Green, *Monash University*

This is a history of women's history in the United States from the late eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, the period that was the crucible of the suffrage movement. It covers the same period as Nina Baym's *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1860* (1995), but Teresa Anne Murphy disagrees with Baym, who condemned later nineteenth-century women writers for offering a debased form of identity politics, and argues that the discussion of domesticity and gender difference in histories of women during the period was part of a larger political debate over the way that citizenship for women should be conceived (p. 6). In this, Murphy is

undoubtedly correct. National and cultural identity is inextricably tied up with the construction of national and cultural history. The inclusion of women in that history inevitably raises, and is typically motivated by, questions of gendered citizenship.

Murphy does not define "women's history," but it is clear she does not mean history written *by* women. Mercy Otis Warren's history of the American Revolution is not discussed. Women's history is, implicitly, the history of women's place in society, and merges into the new discipline of sociology. Indeed, the subject of the last chapter, Caroline Dall, was instrumental in the establishment of sociology about the United States (p. 185). According to Murphy:

"Women's history had developed as a genre in the waning years of the eighteenth century when a sense of nationhood and related ideas of belonging began to expand in regions throughout Europe and the Americas. The genre emerged, however, not with a cry of defiance or shout for women's rights, but as a lengthy exploration of women's intellectual and political shortcomings" (p. 2).

Glancing beyond the United States, Murphy might have distinguished theories of women's contribution to the progress of society, which emerged as part of the history of civilizations, from earlier "histories of women" that go back at least to Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) and recount stories of notable women, in pursuit of the aim of improving women's social position.

Some of the U.S. works mentioned, such as Hannah Mather Crocker's *Observations on the Real Rights of Women* from 1818 (pp. 66–68) and Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* from 1843 (pp. 70, 92–98), show many features of the earlier genre, while Sarah Josepha Hale's rehabilitation of Eve (pp. 141–43) has multiple antecedents in earlier works. A wider and more critical definition of women's history would have provided the opportunity for comparison with this earlier tradition, and avoided its annoying excision.

Murphy identifies the origins of women's history in the United States with William Russell's 1774 translation of Antoine-Léonard Thomas's essay on the character of women, *Essay on the Character, Manners, and Genius of Women, in Different Ages*; William Alexander's *The History of Women: From Earliest Antiquity to the Present* (1779); and Lord Kames's "Progress of the Female Sex" from 1778 (pp. 13–14). She follows Karen O'Brien in emphasizing the influence on women of Scottish Enlightenment figures, such as Kames and John Millar, claiming that it was in the context of their accounts of the development of civilization that "the first women's histories came to be written" (p. 28). Mid-eighteenth-century British works, such as George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*, are ignored, and although Murphy acknowledges that Thomas and Alexander drew on material from the earlier "tradition of celebrating female worthies and