

## Reviews

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801216739

Mark S. Reinhart, *Abraham Lincoln on Screen: A Filmography of Dramas and Documentaries Including Television, 1903–1998* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Co., 1999, £37.50). Pp. 292. ISBN 0 7864 0602 x.

The first known screen representation of Abraham Lincoln appeared in 1903 and he continued to be an extremely popular subject until the 1940s. Viewed with great reverence, most interpretations saw him as a down-to-earth, compassionate man guiding the country through the troubled times of the Civil War. The Lincoln cult reached its climax with the release of *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) and *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1940), permanently fixing the parameters of the screen Lincoln. In the post-war years, the decline Abe suffered in cinematic representation has been, at least partially, compensated by a varied diet of popular TV dramas and documentaries. Recently, Lincoln has been subjected to rather gentle satire. For example, an episode of *The Simpsons*, entitled *Mr. Lisa Goes to Washington* is both a perceptive commentary on the Lincoln cult and a knowing reference to Capra's classic, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939).

Mark Reinhart has lovingly and meticulously assembled production details, cast and commentaries on over two hundred dramas and documentaries of Abraham Lincoln on large and small screens. Many titles come from the early silent era where information needed painstaking reassembly. Reinhart points out that historians have shied away from using film as a source. He rightly criticises Merrill Peterson's recent treatment, *Abraham Lincoln in American Memory* (1994), for its failure to give adequate space to screen interpretations. While the point is well taken, nevertheless, he fails to acknowledge the substantial methodological progress made by historians outside Lincoln studies. One only has to think of the work of Francis Couvares on censorship, Steven Ross on the working class and Edward Countryman on westerns to appreciate the strides taken by the discipline. The innovative approaches they, and others, adopt find no place in *Abraham Lincoln on Screen*.

Reinhart benchmarks films against a never fully elaborated "historically accurate" view of Lincoln and his life. While this approach – by bringing to bear what we know about the man up against filmic speculation – has the advantage of deflating the more preposterous flights of fancy, it does neglect the equally serious intellectual challenge which is to explore the ideological and cultural relationship between drama and society. "Accuracy" is never the judge of fiction. The author only half glimpses the alternative approach. Nevertheless, Mark Reinhart does film studies a tremendous service by assembling this material. This book will be launch pad, or the bricks and mortar, for historical treatments of the

screen Lincoln. Historians, who still have much further to go in their use of film, would do well to take the advice of the Abe appearing in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989), "Party on, dudes."

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ANDREW DAWSON

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Clare Colquitt, Susan Goodman and Candace Waid (eds.), *A Forward Glance: New Essays on Edith Wharton* (Newark: University of Delaware Press and London: Associated University Presses, 1999, £34). Pp. 247. ISBN 0 87413 667 9.

This collection of thirteen essays offers a critical reappraisal of Wharton's life and work through studies of a wide range of material. Beginning with an essay by Susan Goodman on the main biographies of Wharton from 1940 to 1994, and ending with a review of *The Children* by Ellen Pifer which examines Wharton's successful attempt to adapt her writing to the "new world" of the twentieth century, these essays tackle issues of sexuality, race, gender and aesthetics as well as exploring the genres of travel writing, biography and autobiography.

Especially interesting are those on less-well-known material. In "'Garden Talks': The Correspondence of Edith Wharton and Beatrix Farrand," Mia Manzulli offers a fascinating account of the letters which aunt and niece sent to each other during a long and intimate relationship. While it is common knowledge that Wharton was a keen gardener, these letters reveal not only a truly passionate and highly professional interest in the subject, but also, as Mazulli states, "what it means to be a woman, artist and friend." Similarly, in "Edith Wharton's Italian Tale: Language Exercise and Social Discourse" Gianfranca Balestra expands our knowledge of Wharton's gift for languages and of her sympathetic attitude towards servants through a detailed study of this unfinished short story. If Balestra's date of 1908 for the story is correct then it shows that Wharton possessed this attitude early in her career, not later as has been suggested by some critics.

Katherine Joslin "rehabilitates" a somewhat neglected novel in "Architectonic or Episodic? Gender and *The Fruit of the Tree*." As Joslin points out, this novel has suffered from a reading which privileges the "architectonic" aspects of the story – that of paternalistic industrial and social reform – above the "episodic" aspect – the story of Justine Brent – which is both "at the core of the novel" and "the driving force behind" it.

However, amidst all the acclamation of Wharton's work, Frederick Wegener sounds a note of caution in his essay "Form, 'Selection,' and Ideology in Edith Wharton's Antimodernist Aesthetic." Through an examination of her "inhospitable" reaction to some modernist works Wegener, basing his argument on Wharton's critical writings of the time, finds a complex mix of aestheticism and "regressive social and political values" which makes uncomfortable reading for Wharton's "cultural guardians."

With other essays by Denise Witzig, Maureen Honey, Jerome Loving, Mary Suzanne Schriber, Judith L. Sensibar, Stephanie Batcos and Anne MacMaster this

book is essential reading for anyone interested in current critical thought on Wharton.

University of Glasgow

MAUREEN STILL

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Pierre A. Walker (ed.), *Henry James on Culture: Collected Essays on Politics and the American Social Scene* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, £34.00). Pp. 226. ISBN 0 8032 2589 X.

Henry James continues to attract feverish critical attention and yet there has never been a complete, or even reasonably comprehensive, edition of his work. The eighteen essays reprinted in *Henry James on Culture* were excluded, in whole or in part, from a two-volume Library of America edition of the criticism mistakenly assumed by many to be much more comprehensive than it is.

Walker has divided his material, the bulk of which comes from the final decade or so of James's output, into four sections: "Essays about British Geopolitics, 1878–1879," "Essays on Gender and the American Scene, 1904–1907," "Metaphysical Essay, 1910" (an elaborate title for the mystical meanderings of "Is There Life After Death?"), and "Writings on World War I, 1914–1917." The "Culture" of the title owes less, say, to Matthew Arnold than to Walker's contention that "Henry James should be thought of as a cultural critic, as that term is understood by academic scholars today." Two terms, in fact, "culture" and "criticism," are here conflated in an awkward formulation typical of Walker's introduction; and there can be no consensus about the definition of either. "Geopolitics," moreover, is an anachronism for the early essays, the word not coming into use until 1904, and the "Gender" of the second section can be seen as a modish and reductive appropriation of a category whose confinements James would most certainly have repudiated.

This is a valuable collection, notwithstanding an introduction often unequal to the power and reach of James's amorphous speculations. It is ludicrous, for example, to suggest – quite so starkly, at least – that the "diplomatic conflict between the viceroy of India and the emir of Afghanistan" is similar to the "conflict between Basil Ransom and Olive Chancellor," and this kind of special pleading for significance is redundant. More egregiously, Walker either has a confused sense of his target audience, or he takes a dim view of its intelligence. Few, surely, need to be told that *The American Scene* is "more than just a travel book," and even fewer will be prepared to accept that "the perception of the novel during most of the nineteenth century was not unlike the perception today ... of movies or television shows," and that James was committed, *tout court*, to defending "prose fiction." How James would have recoiled in horror from that totalization of "the novel," forcing him into bed, as it does, with the likes of Ouida.

Walker suggests that three essays – "The Question of Our Speech," "The Speech of American Women," and "The Manners of American Women" – have been neglected because they "can at first strike new readers as trivial, reactionary, and elitist." Such characteristics are more likely to guarantee dissemination,

however, and Walker is guilty of over-stating the extent to which these essays have been ignored. Readers on larger scale, in any event, are now in a better position to make their own assessments of James's abhorrence of universal education ("the American common school") and his linking of it to what he saw as the disease of democracy, and the consequent disappearance of discriminating speech, fostered by the "American newspaper" and the "Dutchman and the Dago." "Reactionary might be regarded by some of these readers as too muted an appellation for essays that regret a loss of fear among liberated American women. Such women, "thanks to our particular social order," have no "form of discipline to pass through" and, unlike European women, who find "something to be afraid of," are not "made to pay for" their violations. Enter Isabel Archer, perhaps, if not the viceroy of India.

Walker believes that James's admiration of British soldiers (1878), with their "tight blue trousers following the swelling lines of their manly shapes," is evidence for his same-sex orientation. But it is precisely this naïve sense of "evidence" that has been so effectively disabled by Judith Butler's concept of "performativity" and its application to James's texts by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and others. Sedgwick would make short work of what James calls his "heavy-handed picture" of the "Life Guards," even without taking into account the bizarre carousals with "tipsy" young troupers revealed in "The British Soldier." Amidst the horrors of the First World War, and its thwarting of James's trajectory of history, aesthetic concerns continued to dominate. In "The Long Wards" (1916), James begins to cast abject Belgian soldiers as yet another fictional *donnée* as he reflects on "the charm ... of the tone and temper of the man of action ... reduced to helplessness." Similarly, in a rare interview (and one of the great delights of this collection), James drifts into talking less about the American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps in France, and rather more about the "semicolon" and the modern loss of "any sort of sense at all for the pluperfect tense and the subjunctive mood." "But what on earth are we talking about?" he asks. This is the question, good as *Henry James on Culture* is, that Walker fails to address.

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PETER RAWLINGS

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Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, \$30). Pp. 320. ISBN 0 679 42740 6.

This book seems to promise an ambitious sweep through the last century of American culture and social history, but its project is more modest than the title and sub-title suggest. Rather, this is a book that charts the metadiscourses of critical and academic writing on the subjects of culture and leisure. As Kammen puts it in his introduction, he sets out to map "changing views of leisure and American preferences concerning its growing array of uses." "Leisure," however, seems to mean here the consumption of the products of mass culture; there is no acknowledgement of the growing field and influence of the discipline of Leisure Studies, which doesn't merit inclusion even as a footnote.

Kammen does however display an impressive range and breadth of knowledge of writings and the debates surrounding definitions of mass and popular culture. His focus is not restricted to the American intellectual tradition: he regularly cites Adorno and other luminaries of the Frankfurt School and clearly draws from a British Left cultural tradition. A chapter on “More Recent Times” invokes a number of British media and cultural critics, and Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams are presiding spirits throughout the text. The use of European critics remains strangely limited though; Barthes and Bourdieu might be thought to be key figures in the theorising of popular cultural forms and practices, but, while Barthes features only in a footnote referring to Williams (and which does grudgingly acknowledge his influence on American critics), Bourdieu is entirely absent, as is Foucault. This seems odd in a book so concerned with the discourses surrounding leisure pursuits and the consumption of culture; the citing of consumer surveys and polls on leisure activities, and a chapter headed “Mass Culture: Passive and/or Participatory,” cry out for the sociological and theoretical precision which Bourdieu can bring to such material.

The arguments and debates that Kammen charts in his survey of post-war popular leisure are of importance to a range of disciplines, from leisure studies and social history to media and cultural studies; although each of these disciplinary frames are likely to find absences and generalisations in his analysis. Kammen tends to write in broad brushstrokes – racing chronologically through the decades from the 1920s to the 1930s; identifying key moments and debates as he goes. None the less, this is a useful and very careful survey, meticulously footnoted; Kammen clearly knows his material well and has a solid sense of the historical contexts which allow for particular American ideas of “mass culture” to gain purchase. But this is a book that seems both over-ambitious, and not ambitious enough, while it aspires to an all-encompassing historical sweep, it shies away from more challenging recent theorizations of culture, leisure and consumption.

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DEBORAH PHILIPS

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Perry A. Hall, *In the Vineyard: Working in African American Studies* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999, \$26). Pp. 264. ISBN 1 57233 054 6.

Rigorously engaged in authenticity and epistemology debates, this book traces the history of Black Studies in higher education institutions, from the 1960s through to the contemporary establishment of African American Studies departments. Incorporating autobiographical content and sociological models, Hall focuses on the inseparably intellectual and political role of Black Studies. He emphasises its “instrumental mission” within the black community, and consequent rejection of “ivory tower elitism.” Adapting Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness in order to dramatise a complementary duality, Hall analyses the competing ideological imperatives which shape the discipline: including Afrocentric, integrationist and (the preferred) transformationist approaches. In defence of a “pure African sensibility,” this book concentrates on

the “folk/popular” form (read music), as a marker both of black difference to, and influence on, white mainstream culture. Hall applies the issues he has raised within African American Studies, such as an Afrocentric curricula and Ebonics (“Black English”), to a contemporary context. He not only analyses the political impetus behind a range of social surveys engaging with black identity, but also explores pedagogical developments in primary and secondary education.

*In the Vineyard* informatively analyses the (continuing) impact of Afrocentrism in the history of Black/African American Studies. Furthermore, Hall gives an interesting (albeit sketchy) account of the foundational role of black music as a means to understand African and American social and aesthetic interpretative communication. Nevertheless, the theoretical premise of this text is marred by key limitations. In evoking a “black cultural tradition” as his “critical anchor,” Hall privileges personal insights by an essentialist paradigm; clearly, his definition of African American Studies precludes contributions by white academics. Furthermore, the position of black women’s studies within the discipline is introduced dismissively as “yet another element” to discussion. Hall one-dimensionally interprets “African-based orality” as offering privileged insights into the (vaguely defined) “black story.” He thereby sets up a problematic adversarial relationship between orality and literacy as mutually exclusive African and Western forms. In addition, this focus on oral culture distorts the significance of black literary production.

Overall, this book effectively draws attention to the critical need for self-reflexiveness in approaches to fundamental issues within African American research. These include: contextualising individual agendas; theorising representations of gender and race; complicating oral and literary models; lastly, understanding the functions of the discipline. However, *In the Vineyard* needs to be scrutinised for its tendency toward generalisation, obfuscating sociological data, and separatist desire to demarcate an “indigenous Africanity of spirit.”

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CELESTE-MARIE BERNIER

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Douglas M. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999, £31.95). Pp. 264. ISBN 0 8156 2793 9.

Historians of the American antislavery movement have made much of the internecine struggles between William Lloyd Garrison and his followers, whose brand of perfectionism required that they withdraw from the established institutions of church and state, and the main body of abolitionists, who sought to achieve their ends through electoral politics. The Garrisonians, it is said, maintained their ideological purity at the cost of alienating practically everyone, while the anti-Garrisonians only managed to advance their cause by forming alliances with groups whose motives were distinctly self-interested.

These accounts, according to Douglas M. Strong, oversimplify the situation. For a start, they are based on what the leaders of the opposing factions said rather than on what the great mass of the movement’s supporters believed. They also fail to take account of the underlying perfectionist theology out of which Strong,

as a professor of Christian history, sees abolitionist thinking as having evolved. Looked at from a theological viewpoint, it emerges that rather than there being two distinct groupings, each with its own brand of abolitionism, there existed a broad spectrum of beliefs ranging from anarchistic perfectionism at one extreme to moral pragmatism at the other. In the “burned over” district of up-state New York, so-called on account of the successive revivalist movements that swept through it, abolitionists generally attempted to steer a middle course. Most were millenarians of one kind or another, believing that the time in which they lived belonged to the thousand-year period that would end with Christ’s Second Coming. In preparation for that event they saw it as incumbent on individuals to strive for moral perfection. As slavery was a notorious breeding ground for all the worst human vices, it followed that they should seek its overthrow. That, however, did not require that they go to the Garrisonian extreme of withdrawing from existing institutions on the grounds that they were corrupt. Sanctified individuals needed sanctified institutions to achieve their ends. In the first instance, therefore, they should strive to purify institutions from the inside, although when that proved impossible they might find it necessary to establish new ones. This was a doctrine that gave rise to much ecclesiastical disruption and the founding of many new churches. In up-state New York, the Liberty Party derived most of its support from a network of some 300 abolition churches, some long established, others newly founded.

By drawing attention to the close correlation between perfectionist beliefs, church membership and political abolitionism in upper New York State, Strong helps fill out the picture given by Gilbert H. Barnes, Dwight L. Dumond and others of the way the religious revivalism of the 1820s turned into the antislavery activism of the 1830s and 40s. Religiously motivated Christian action groups remain a feature of American political life. Despite the arrival of the new millennium, however, the disappointments of the past century make it difficult for them to summon up quite the same degree of optimism and millennial fervour as that manifested by their early nineteenth-century predecessors.

*University of East Anglia*

HOWARD TEMPERLEY

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Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, \$19.95). Pp. 327. ISBN 0 8078 4786 0.

Ten years ago Saul Cornell published “Aristocracy Assailed: The Ideology of Backcountry Anti-Federalism” in the *Journal of American History* (76 (1989–90), 1148–72), an incisive and much-cited essay that announced his intention to rehabilitate the Anti-Federalists. The publication of Cornell’s much-revised doctoral dissertation goes well beyond this original intent, for the author strives to demonstrate not only that the Anti-Federalists were an important and influential part of the post-Revolutionary American political mainstream, but also that they and their ideas had an enduring effect upon American politics.

For over two centuries those Americans who opposed the Constitution proposed by the Founders have been derided as parochial men of limited vision,

localists who opposed the necessary strengthening of central government in order to protect traditionally localist conceptions of government. Yet, as Cornell argues, while “the structure of American government was crafted by the Federalists, the spirit of American politics has more often been inspired by the Anti-Federalists.” In recent years both scholars and legal theorists have recognised that the Anti-Federalists represented a valid and indeed viable strand of political and constitutional thought. Such recognition has not brought consensus, however, since there is profound disagreement over the meaning of Anti-Federalism, and scholars have not hesitated to associate it with everything from the fall of republicanism to the development of republicanism to the rise of liberalism.

The greatest strength of Cornell’s book is his willingness to embrace Anti-Federalism as a broad, often contradictory movement, built upon a variety of different foundations. He traces Anti-Federalist thought and argument through the most popular and influential of their publications, most of which are not amongst the often more articulate and sometimes better reasoned examples found in the scholarly editions we consult today. It was plebeian radicalism, in the form of a vigorously argued radical localism, Cornell contends, that inadvertently gave shape to an inchoate mass of Anti-Federalism, as the other elements of the movement gathered together under a rather less vigorous platform, seeking to distance themselves from dangerous radicals.

Cornell then goes on to explore the ways in which these popular and influential Anti-Federalist texts shaped Democratic Republican thought, giving resonance to the opposition to the policies and ideologies of the Federalist administrations. He presents the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions as vital in their reformulation of the Anti-Federalist position, laying out as they did the proper authority of state and federal governments, and the options available to citizens and states when the central government exceeded its powers. The third and final section of the book examines the enduring significance of Anti-Federalism in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, during which time it was less centrally significant in political discourse but of considerable importance in legal and constitutional discourse, climaxing in the nullification debates of 1828.

This is an extremely well-researched and well-written work, and Cornell succeeds in demonstrating that those who opposed the Federal Constitution and the powerful centralised government it created were not so much losers as they were active participants in early national law and politics.

*University of Glasgow*

SIMON P. NEWMAN

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Kathleen A. O’Shea, *Women and the Death Penalty in the United States, 1900–1998* (Westport, CN and London: Praeger Publishers, 1999, £51.95). Pp. 404. ISBN 0 275 95952 x.

During the period 1973 to July 1998, 113 women were sentenced to death in the United States; 470 executions were carried out of 467 men and three women. Ironically, Betty Lou Beets was executed in the state of Texas at the time of



writing, bringing the total number of women executed in the US since 1973 to four, including two in that state alone. Thirty-one US states or jurisdictions have executed women at some time in their history.

O'Shea's study takes the form of a collection of state-by-state potted histories of execution rates and methods, those executed, and short synopses of the women in each state previously sentenced to death, executed, commuted, reprieved, and/or still awaiting execution. Most of the fifty or so women currently on death row are incarcerated in remote and isolated institutions, hidden from public gaze. O'Shea attempts to place these women back in the public domain and to give them back a voice. Racism, domestic violence and other forms of mental and physical abuse, the absence of dignity and respect, and the paucity of sources of support for these women permeate their stories. However, while the individual histories and memoirs of women on death row are poignant and vital, this study is curiously flat, largely because of its narrative emphasis. O'Shea does not engage with the wider issues, debates and conflicts that her material brings to the fore. For example, the gender, race and class biases so evident in every state's treatment of capital convicts points to widespread institutional neglect and discrimination, but deeper analysis and understanding of the reasons for this, and the penal agenda if you like, are missing.

The existence and interaction of race, gender and class hierarchies at the heart of differential enforcement and treatment is central to pioneering studies of women in prison in the nineteenth century. O'Shea's study provides material to enable us to carry these explorations and exposes into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but one gets little sense of how gendered capital punishment has been affected by changing economic, demographic, social and cultural patterns in the twentieth century, and particularly since the *Furman* decision of 1972. Ultimately, this study raises a host of questions for future scholarship on this subject. For example, does the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial/service-consumer society affect states' treatment of female offenders convicted of capital crimes? The extent to which O'Shea's study challenges long-held popular assumptions about the relationship of the feminist movement to rising crime rates and women's criminal proclivities also needs to be addressed. Further, in what ways and to what extent does the newly emerging prison industry and the continued "medicalization" of the techniques of execution reinforce retributive punishment according to gender as well as race and class?

In sum, this work demands that we give due attention to a group of women long overlooked by criminologists and historians, and about which we continue to know very little: women sentenced to death. O'Shea provides a good compendium of women on death row and a useful starting point for scholars working on capital punishment history.

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VIVIEN MILLER

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Mary Chapman and Glen Hendler (eds.), *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, £30). Pp. 227. ISBN 0 502 16210.

This is a valuable collection which explores the relationship between models of masculinity and the concept, one particularly trenchant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of the sentimental. At times, however, a more basic assertion of *why* the masculine is so important as a political category might have been desirable. Historicist in its approaches, the book is also entrenched in an historical period, with its earliest essay covering the period from 1790 to 1820 and its latest looking at the gendered and pedagogical incoherencies of Frank Norris's theoretical writings on fiction from the early 1900s. The particular historical provenance of the essays might have been signalled in the book's title, as might its overwhelming emphasis on the literary, in its broadest sense.

All of the essays are marked by a very real sobriety and professionalism. The sense of scholars working in cautious and acknowledging dialogue with key commentators on masculinity and sentimentality is very strong indeed. At times, however, this form of dialogue sometimes inhibits another kind which the reader might like to see – that between the critic and the text. This is particularly true of those essays which look at Herman Melville. Vincent J. Bertolini's essay on bachelorhood left me with the sense that he had a lot more to say about Melville than the discursive parameters of this collection were allowing, as did Tara Penry's essay on sentimental and romantic masculinities in *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*.

This is probably why the best essays in the book focus on lesser-known texts which give the critic (and the reader) more imaginative space. John Saillant's "The Black Body Erotic and the Republican Body Politic" looks at the ideological functioning of eroticised white representations of black male bodies between 1790 and 1820. The far from canonical texts which Saillant considers – translated and anonymous narratives published in books and newspapers – require a close and curious engagement, of which Saillant is admirably capable. Similarly, Scott A. Sandage's "The Gaze of Success," which looks at the genre of begging letters from the 1890s, taken from the Rockefeller archive, is obliged to engage closely and independently with a quite unique textual corpus and to trace its negotiation of the masculine and the sentimental in the specifics of the text, not in the pressures of critical assumption.

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DENIS FLANNERY

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801306734

Timothy Dow Adams, *Light Writing and Life Writing: Photography in Autobiography* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, £39.95 cloth, £17.95 paper). Pp. 298. ISBN 0 8078 2513 1, 0 8078 4792 5.

In his *Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography* (1990), Timothy Dow Adams considered the role of fiction in life writing, and his new study continues his work on the complexity of the genre. This book proceeds from the belief that a

recognition of the fictive component in autobiography gave rise to an expansion of critical interest in subgenres like letters, travel writing, and performance art. *Light Writing and Life Writing* concerns itself with photography, noting that, because photographs have been seen traditionally as straightforwardly referential, criticism of the art seeks to problematize its factuality. This interconnectedness in theorizing about these two forms allows Adams here to use photography to further his thinking about life writing.

The study is divided into three sections dealing with autobiographies relevant to a general reading of photography, autobiographies that actually include photographs, and autobiographies of photographers. The first section, including a reading of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976), emphasizes how the individual who emerges through autobiographical discourse occupies an equivocal position similar to that of the photographer, conflating subject and object. Kingston herself describes photographs and their contexts in her prose, so that her writing draws connections between biography, autobiography, and fiction. The second section, including a reading of N. Scott Momaday's *The Names* (1976), uses the interplay between words and photographs to underline the heterogeneity within and between autobiographical texts. Specifically, Adams explores the connection between metonymic and synecdochic tropes to understand the relationship shared by various forms of life writing. The third section, including a reading of Edward Weston's *Daybooks* (1990), explores the connection between autobiography and other arts in the hands of a photographer. By using the diary form and recording his observations between dusk and dawn, Weston's form mirrored the revelatory function of the darkroom. The *Daybooks* allowed Weston to be both responsive and subtle in his writing, two qualities that also defined his visual compositions.

Adams is able to use his work on autobiography to reveal the fictive in photography; his conclusions about photographs, in turn, are relevant to a reconsideration of autobiographical discourse. While one might be well advised to begin a study of autobiography with Adams's earlier work, this text does provide in its introduction a good grounding in relevant debates. Combined with a first-rate bibliography, then, *Light Writing and Life Writing* presents something of value to all readers interested in autobiography and visual art.

University of Lethbridge, Canada

CRAIG MONK

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David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, £40). Pp. 504. ISBN 0 8047 3444 5.

Unusually for contemporary Asian American scholarship, David Palumbo-Liu's latest work interrogates both the "Asian" in America, and the "America" in Asia. Focussing upon the "Pacific Century," Palumbo-Liu's main thesis in this book is that the negotiation and re-negotiation of Asian American identities during this period serves as an index to the formation of contemporary America. In the manner of an "and/or" configuration, Palumbo-Liu tells us, "Asian/

American” functions as both “the distinction between ‘Asian’ and ‘American’ and a dynamic, unsettled, and inclusive movement.” Palumbo-Liu adopts an interdisciplinary case study approach to his examination of the interpenetration between Asia and America. He looks at the history of the so-called “Yellow Peril” in America from the mid-nineteenth century up to and during the 1930s; the relationship between the American nation and periods of Asian exclusion; the efforts of various Asian American literary and cinematic representations to define and imagine Asian America; the connections between biracialism and both the historical conditions of migration and the social inscription of the Asian American body in literary narrative; the politics of space as both psychological and physical; and the role of memory in relation to these various questions. In order to effect this extensive analysis, Palumbo-Liu uses the organising triple rubric of body–psyche–space, which helps to connect otherwise quite disparate analyses. Nevertheless, I did at times find myself lost in this book: in covering such a wide historical and contextual range of examples, the book at times seems to struggle to maintain both momentum and cohesion. (This is a problem I suspect other reviewers encountered: the dust-jacket reviews variously describe the book as “massive,” “vast” and “wide-ranging”). I found the individual sections entitled “Reinscripting the Imaginary” and “Race, Nation, Migrancy, and Sex” most useful. “Reinscripting the Imaginary” examines a range of little-known literary and filmic materials, including H. T. Tsiang’s *And China Has Hands* (1937), and Frank Capra’s 1933 film, *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (based upon the 1930 novel by Grace Zaring Stone). “Race, Nation, Migrancy, and Sex” contains an intriguing discussion of the technologies of race, such as cosmetic surgery, in relation to biraciality and visible identity (although this is an argument which has also been developed elsewhere). Despite its size (at times unwieldy) and length, this book is a substantial contribution to interdisciplinary Asian American scholarship, especially in the attention Palumbo-Liu pays to the historical split between Asian and American, and in its extensive historical focus.

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HELENA GRICE

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Jan Nordby Gretlund (ed.), *The Southern State of Mind* (Columbia University of South Carolina Press, 1999, £22.50). Pp. 233. ISBN 1 57003 312 9.

In contrast to traditional “devotional” and “celebratory” views of the South which tended to define its history and literature in terms of “organic cultural continuities,” Gretlund’s introduction to *The Southern State of Mind* effectively positions this collection within an interdisciplinary framework, which offers challenging new ways of redefining varied aspects of contemporary Southern culture. The juxtaposition of literary and historical dimensions offers a kind of “double vision,” whereby the essays produced by the historians analyse “*the origin*” of current debates about Southern identity, while the essays from the literary critics are more focused upon “*the present and future*” of Southern culture.

The contributions from the historians reveal a general waning of optimism towards biracial relations from the 1970s to the present. Charles Reagan Wilson

exposes how, despite the considerable influx of African Americans to the South in the 1970s, their attempts to re-examine the roots of Southern culture have been met with a backlash from white middle-class Southerners. Tony Badger offers a bleak view of the current Republican Party as dominated by the white vote and allied to the Christian right. Paul M. Gaston provides a particularly penetrating insight into the way in which Civil Rights history has been “*anesthetized*” by Hollywood films such as *Mississippi Burning*, which celebrates the role of the FBI while marginalizing the importance of blacks and the creed of non-violence. Nevertheless, Gaston expresses hope that documentaries such as *Eyes on the Prize*, which investigates the Civil Rights Movement from a more specifically black perspective, will continue to challenge conservative ideology.

The perspectives provided by the literary critics concentrate upon ways in which contemporary Southern writers are paradoxically both alienated from yet still haunted by their region. Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. discusses how writers such as Cormac McCarthy place their fiction within the context of the West, thereby risking the charge of escaping from the burdens of Southern history. Richard Gray insightfully divides contemporary Southern authors into “expatriates,” “mavericks,” and “homekeepers,” all of whom are responding to the way issues such as a globalization and cultural commodification are reshaping Southern identity.

The effectiveness of this book is generated by the plurality of approaches to Southern states of mind. It will form a valuable reference point for critics of comparative and Southern culture.

*University of Nottingham*

HELEN OAKLEY

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801336733

Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, £10.95). Pp. 234. ISBN 0 521 46588 5.

*The Atlantic Slave Trade* is written for a non-specialist audience and offers a broad introduction to the African Diaspora. The book can be broken into four sections, detailing the origins of the transatlantic trade; the economic structure of slaving; the slave trade’s demographic, social, and economic costs; and the causes and consequences of abolition. Klein is successful in presenting the current thinking among scholars working in the field, but the lack of footnotes makes this book frustrating for those expecting a detailed map of the literature. This omission is partially counterbalanced by a good bibliographic essay at the end of the book.

Klein forcefully argues that the European decision to choose African labor in the Americas was fundamentally based on economic forces. He dismisses the notion that whites embraced slavery because of differences in physical appearance or because Africans were considered “alien.” Slavery existed for centuries in a variety of forms in the Middle East, Africa, and in Europe, and its extension into the New World was the product of international market pressures. Klein explains that the size and proximity of Africa’s pre-existing slave trade made blacks the cheapest labor option for America’s developing economies. By tapping into African slave markets, Europeans found success in a variety of colonial ventures, including the mining of precious metals and the production of sugar, coffee,

tobacco, and other staple crops. Without African slaves, colonies such as Brazil and those of the greater-Caribbean would not have achieved the economic prominence they enjoyed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Klein's discussion regarding African society and economy is particularly interesting, and he does an excellent job describing West Africa's export trade both before and after the appearance of Portuguese explorers in the region. With the introduction of long-distance Atlantic trade in the 1400s, the focus of Africa's slave trade slowly shifted westward via an expansive network of rivers. This transition in the flow of slaves was fueled by America's demand for labor and the mobilization of European credit. By the seventeenth century, the Atlantic trade was responsible for the majority of slaves exported from Africa. Although this migration had an adverse impact on African societies, Klein insists that "Africans were neither passive actors nor peoples innocent of the market economy, and were able to deal with Europeans on the basis of equality."

The strongest portion of the book focuses on demographics of the slave trade and slave societies in the Americas. Klein distills a massive literature from specialized journals into an easily accessible account of the diseases, environment, and mortality rates experienced on board slave ships. Although this section is grounded in statistical data and presents a number of tables and graphs, Klein does not overburden the reader with technical prose.

This book works well as an introduction to the literature on the slave trade while serving as a reference source for general statistics on the slave trade. I suspect that some students may find the tone detached, but Klein's objective has been to write an academic book that is grounded in testable facts and figures. In this regard, the book is a success and fills a gap in the literature of Atlantic history.

*University of Houston*

DAVID RYDEN

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S002187580134673X

Kris Lackey, *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, £9.95). Pp. 180. ISBN 0 8032 7981 7.

In this short but densely packed work, Kris Lackey muses upon more than ninety years of American road writing, accounts of travel sometimes by motorcycle or bus but mostly by automobile, that began with Horatio Nelson Jackson's *From Ocean to Ocean in a Winton*, published in 1903. Sixty or so books are considered, both fiction and nonfiction, and both texts with a canonical status, like *The Grapes of Wrath* and *On the Road*, and texts obscure or esoteric, like *By Motor to the Golden Gate* (1916) by Emily Post, whose butler ensured that she travel with plenty of pheasant paté, and *South of Haunted Dreams* (1993) by Eddy L. Harris, a black biker and self-styled "road warrior." As Lackey himself announces, before *RoadFrames* is a systematic study for academic specialists, it is an "extended meditation," "ruminant" in kind, and addressed to "a general audience." The end product is a book that is at once intellectually stimulating, freshly illuminating, and broadly accessible.

The highway narrative regularly manifests a pastoral yearning or recapitulates

the picaresque adventure, but Lackey demonstrates that its most immediate American antecedents are to be found in the writings of the three major literary Transcendentalists, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. Archetypally, from the century's first decade onwards the automobile driver leaves behind him (or, surprisingly often, her) the suffocating city, either grimy and industrial or bourgeois and restrictive, to seek a truer self, free and independent, amidst the simplicity or the grandeur of nature and of those who live closer to nature, which is to say, of course, the Indians, preserved on their reservations. Indeed, the vehicle itself may become almost impalpable, until the motorist may seem to take on an existential kinship with Thoreau in his "Walking" and Whitman on his Open Road "Afoot." Unlike the railroad, which could be associated with conquest, invasive crowds, and linear regimentation, the automobile was originally felt to be historically innocent, with no element in it of the future's sinful gas-guzzler. Few have been those continually mindful of its materiality, whether of the stultifying labour involved in its manufacture (Henry Miller, nicely described as "the Calvinist of American driving," being the exception here), or of the intrinsic worth and essential dignity of its technology (in this respect Robert Pirsig apart).

The neo-transcendentalist journey towards self-fulfilment is, however, an option only for those privileged by at least a modicum of economic and social security, whether the Whitmanesque William Least Heat-Moon following his *Blue Highways*, or Ian Frazier traversing his *Great Plains*, or even Ken Kesey's Pranksters providing Tom Wolfe with the materials for his *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. For narratives of the poor and dispossessed, on the move out of compelled necessity, literary naturalism must be the model, as it was for *The Grapes of Wrath*; whilst for the black traveller there is another universe of experience altogether, requiring a quite other kind of story. He travels, or has often travelled, in a world not of promise but of threat, not of imaginative pleasure but of imaginative dread, not of the evanescent ideal but of omnipresent reality, where there are "no epiphanies." The view through "the Nigger Window," as is entitled the chapter devoted to the journals of black drivers, never afforded the luxury of either serene contemplation or leaping exuberance, and from this perspective the machine and the road were never innocent. It will be an unfamiliar but importantly corrective view to most of the white readers who will constitute the larger part of the wide, general readership that this informative and richly instructive book deserves.

*University of Essex*

R. W. (HERBIE) BUTTERFIELD

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801356736

Donald T. Critchlow, *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion and the Federal Government in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, £22.50). Pp. 307. ISBN 0 19 5046579.

In too many accounts, the battle over abortion is to be understood simply as a struggle between feminists and anti-feminists. The abortion rights movement is identified with the argument that it is the involuntarily pregnant woman who must decide her fate, while the anti-abortion movement's professed concern for the "unborn child" is seen as concealing its true agenda of policing women's

bodies to ensure their continued subordination. In this book, Critchlow shows in considerable detail why we must resist at least one side of this equation. The Supreme Court's 1973 decision to strike down state anti-abortion laws, it has often been noted, was argued in the context of its earlier decision to condemn legislation against birth control as unconstitutional. But this was not the only link. The campaigns for both contraception and the legalisation of abortion had important overlaps of belief and personnel, and a crucial factor was a fear of overpopulation.

How precisely we are to understand this concern is crucial. A number of writers have claimed that the population lobby was driven by the belief that America's access to the world's resources was endangered by increasing numbers in the Third World. Domestically, too, those who worked to reduce the birth-rate had a sinister motive – to restrain the growth of particular social groups and particular races. This argument is most associated with feminist scholars, but it has been made by Marxists, by black nationalists and, intriguingly, by anti-abortionists. Critchlow's enviable access to recently opened material in the Rockefeller Archives enables him to bring new light to bear on these arguments. A profoundly complex picture emerges. If, for the Catholic Church, abortion and birth control were crimes against both God and man, for New York's United Black Front it was a racist (and Jewish) plot. In 1932, the governor of Puerto Rico responded to a furor over a Rockefeller Foundation-funded birth-control programme by declaring that the excessive quantity and inferior quality of the island's birth-rate had to be faced. Forty years later, however, John D. Rockefeller III appears to have been genuinely persuaded by his daughters, his niece and his assistant, Joan Dunlop, that abortion was a matter of women's rights and not only for relieving population pressure.

Access to archives that reveal more about one side of a debate does not mean that we also better understand its opponents. Critchlow's discussion of the anti-abortion movement does not reveal much about its inner workings and leaves much to be done in understanding both the relationship between its often male leadership and its largely female rank and file and that between its stance on abortion, its internal divisions on contraception and its campaign against euthanasia. But on the development of the movement for population control and its impressively successful efforts to influence government policy, this is a major addition to our knowledge.

*University of Wolverhampton*

MARTIN DURHAM

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801366732

Dwight A. McBride, *James Baldwin Now* (New York: New York University Press, 1999, \$19.95). Pp. 440. ISBN 0 8147 5618 2.

Even before his death of cancer in 1987 at the home he made for himself in the *midst's* sunlit, painterly Saint-Paul-de-Vence, Baldwin's literary stock posed a challenge. On the one hand, there were the echoing, Bible-intense essays of American racial close encounter, and within it his own interwar Harlem upbringing, which make up *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), *Nobody Knows My Name*



(1961) and *The Fire Next Time* (1963). Where, better, did he write than in a great iconographic triumph like “Stranger in The Village,” himself, as he recovered from a Paris breakdown in the Swiss Alpine home village of his lover Lucien Happersberger, made over into the very *figura* of black amid white (“I am not, really, any longer a stranger for any American alive”). On the other hand, and by the time of *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (1985), his *discursus* on Atlanta’s black-child murders for which Wayne Bertram Williams was indicted in 1981, opinion rightly or not had grown that the eloquence was weakening into self-indulgence, a talky, fussed prose which had lost real direction.

If, likewise, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (1953) ranked as his landmark novel of black dynasty, the remembered Dixie of the Grimes family brought north into Pentecostal Harlem, the later fiction increasingly provoked an opprobrium which at times bordered on the brutal. From *Another Country* (1962), with its Greenwich Village menu of pansexuality and cross-race relationship, through to *Just Above My Head* (1979), with its saga of black musicianship spanning the Apollo Theatre to Paris and London and as told through the lives of the gopeller Arthur Montana, his lover Jimmy, and Jimmy’s sister, the evangelical Sister Julia, the charge became one of ever baggier monsters, of shapelessness and stridency.

Had not the writer frayed into the “Jimmy” of the media rounds, a kind of studio celebrity? What, it was asked, had happened to the fierce, grounded precision of the voice behind the essays first published in *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*? Where, as the years went on, was the acuity which once fed his accounts of all the fevers and hex of America’s colour line and of ghetto and the black church, or portraiture like that of Martin Luther King, the Panthers, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, or, on a more literary note, his own intriguing, reflexive intimacy with the likes of Wright, Faulkner and Gide?

Not the least of the blurring was the post-Stonewall claim for him as a Gay icon. It was a role which, whatever his own uncloseted sexuality or the triangle of androgyny in *Giovanni’s Room* (1955), notably left him uneasy on the grounds that it elevated but one component in his life and work above all others. The endless round of interviews, the silks and rings which increasingly became his costume, even the famous gap-toothed smile, protrusive eyes, and smoker’s breathy voice, seemed to add to the view of him as a figure for whom publicity weighed far more than it should. *The Price of The Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction 1948–1985* (1985) may well have given one line of witness to the sheer volume, and grit, of a lifetime’s writing. But it also sharpened the notion of a disconnect between early and late Baldwin.

Some rethinking has already been in evidence, whether W. J. Weatherby’s *James Baldwin: Artist on Fire* (1989), Quincy Troupe’s memorial volume *James Baldwin: The Legacy* (1989), or the recent biographies by James Campbell and David Leeming. But the fourteen essays which make up *James Baldwin Now*, to their credit, and however varying their strengths, take the debate into fresh reaches. In its editor’s words the aim is “a revival of sorts,” a Baldwin, at least, put under a latest American generation’s “culture studies” and ideological and gender auspices.

Marlon B. Ross’s opening essay gives a characteristic emphasis: the nexus of inter-racial homocentric sexual desire and its implications for black and white

raciality in general. The account not only gives a sharp local reading to *Giovanni's Room* (1956), but draws on enlightening analogies with Chester Himes's key prison novel, *Cast The First Stone* (1952), and a Langston Hughes blues poem of different sexual styles like "Café: 3 A.M." The ensuing contributions yield a shared edge and span. Rebecca Arnerud, for instance, on Baldwin and white liberalism mines his "White Man's Guilt" (1965) to considerable profit: the excoriations and yet his own white friendships. Lawrie Balfour pursues Baldwin's struggle with the preemptive nature of white and black as idiom and with what Toni Morrison eulogized in him as his search, against odds, for "a shareable language."

Queer Baldwin gets a full, assiduous airing by William J. Spurlin on sexual identity politics, Nicholas Boggs (in an innovative use of Baldwin's *Little Man Little Man*) on the gay child body, James A. Dievler on *Another Country* as a novel of Harlem to Greenwich Village internal sexual exile, and Sharon Patricia Holland on Gay subjectivity in a well-turned comparison of *Giovanni's Room* with Randall Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989). Josh Kun takes up Baldwin's reverence of Bessie Smith, her music, blackness, and the plural sexuality he shared with her. Baldwin's codings of "witness," one of his greatly favoured locutions, to the Harlem of his family beginnings, to the Paris of Richard Wright, and to the America he and Richard Avedon registered as text and photographic image in *Nothing Personal* (1964), attract persuasive scrutiny from Joshua L. Miller.

These, together with a helpful Select Bibliography, make for a collection to welcome; a timely rethinking, for sure, of Baldwin's challenge.

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A. ROBERT LEE

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801376739

Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The US Crusade Against the Soviet Union, 1945–56* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, £45.00). Pp. 301. ISBN 0 7190 5694 2.

In recent years the world of US diplomatic history has been wracked by its own version of the "culture war," with old-fashioned devotees of high diplomacy slugging it out with young turks interested in applying such concepts as culture and gender to the discipline. Scott Lucas's *Freedom's War*, an examination of the role of ideology and private citizens groups in early US Cold War foreign policy, is clearly a work of the "new diplomatic history," but it also displays the qualities of wide learning and assiduous research valued by the old school.

The book begins with the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, an event which irreversibly established the Cold War as an essentially *ideological* conflict between Communist "tyranny" and American "freedom." Subsequent chapters document the Truman administration's increasing use of "psychological warfare" as a weapon in this conflict, both at home and abroad, emphasising in particular the contribution of George Kennan, and the elements of liberation detectable in the US crusade long before John Foster Dulles appeared on the scene. Indeed, when the focus shifts to the Eisenhower years, the stress is more on the hesitant, faltering nature of the American campaign, with influential "psy-

warrior” C. D. Jackson’s desire for an all-out war of liberation constantly frustrated by the cautiousness and prevarication of the president.

Throughout this survey Lucas demonstrates an impressive command of detail and mastery of the sources, as well as a good eye for the humorous anecdote, for example concerning the State Department’s reluctance to balloon-drop packs of bubble-gum containing anti-Communist propaganda into Eastern Europe for fear of “counter-measures mixing poison-bearing balloons with harmless ones.” However, the most valuable passages of the book are those concerned with what Lucas usefully calls the “State–private network,” that is the alliance of government agencies and an extraordinary variety of citizens’ groups, ranging from émigré organisations to the Yale Glee Club, which underpinned the American ideological effort. Freedom’s war, Lucas convincingly argues, involved the mobilisation of all sectors of American society.

Not every aspect of the subject is covered in such depth: there is little analysis, for example, of the rhetoric of the American campaign, and Lucas side-steps the admittedly thorny question of the actual impact of US psy-war measures on their target audiences. However, some omissions are perhaps inevitable in a work of this scope and ambition. *Freedom’s War* should be essential reading for any serious student of the American Cold War effort.

*University of Sheffield*

HUGH WILFORD

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801386735

Jared N. Day, *Urban Castles: Tenement Housing and Landlord Activism in New York City, 1890–1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, £30.50 cloth, £12 paper). Pp. 315. ISBN 0 231 11402 8, 0 231 11403 6.

The originality of this thoroughly researched book lies in its aim to shed new light on the role of tenement landlords as key players in designing and shaping America’s urban landscape in the turn-of-the-century decades. The role of landlords is examined on what Day identifies as many “*basic historical levels*,” social, political and economic. In so doing, *Urban Castles* successfully brings together two fields of historical inquiry: real estate history and social history. A few studies have already tried to bridge these two disciplines (Elizabeth Blackmar’s *Manhattan for Rent*; Donna Gabaccia’s “Little Italy’s decline: Immigrant Realtors and Investors in a Changing City”); however, Day’s study, while building on previous scholarship, identifies new key areas of investigation. In particular, his aim is “to approach the process of city building and the growth of tenement districts as the products of class-based competing agendas brought forward by rental consumers, on the one hand, and class-based internal conflicts within rental housing providers on the other.” Not surprisingly, Day’s approach is very similar, on the methodological level, to the work carried out by social and labour historians, only that such kind of work has normally neglected a systematic analysis of the role of small-scale entrepreneurs.

Having contended that urban landlords “stood upon the very faulty lines of class, ethnicity, and race,” it is rather disappointing that Day decides in the end not to address in detail two critical aspects – gender and race. Race, in particular,

would have fallen well within the scope of this otherwise wide-ranging and perceptive study.

*University of Nottingham*

ANNA NOTARO

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801396731

Paul Eli Ivey, *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States, 1894–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999, \$49.95). Pp. 227. ISBN 0 252 02445 1.

In *Prayers in Stone* Paul Ivey takes seriously the idea that buildings signify. His commendable goal is to explicate the meanings embedded in one specific group of buildings, Christian Science churches, particularly those designed in the classical style during the early twentieth century. The period was a critical one to Christian Science. What present-day scholars would call a “new religious movement,” Christian Science began to grow exponentially in the mid-1890s, reaping the fruits of Mary Baker Eddy’s two-decade struggle to establish the legitimacy of her interpretation of Christian Scripture. Architecture, Ivey argues, served as a visible statement of the arrival of the religion. As the *Christian Science Journal* crowed in 1895, “think of the year’s achievements in the erection of the Mother Church. ... Read in its granite and marble and iron, the story of triumph and history! See in its solid walls the emblem of the unchanging Truth it typifies!”

This triumph was most often articulated in the classical aesthetic popularized by the White City of the World’s Columbian Exposition. From the massive Renaissance Revival Mother Church Extension in Boston (1906) – featuring a semi-circular entry portico with Corinthian columns surmounted by a pediment and topped with a massive dome – to similar, though more modest, buildings in towns like St. Joseph, Missouri (1907), South Bend, Indiana (1918), and Oakland, California (1922), Christian Scientists throughout the United States selected the classical style as most appropriate for their congregational needs.

Asking why the style resonated so strongly, Ivey explores both internal and external sources of meaning. Writers felt that the rational articulation of the “concepts of symmetry, purity, and unity,” characteristic of classicism, coordinated precisely with both the foundations of the belief system and the goals of Christian Science within urban landscapes. For a Neoplatonist religion in which “mind is the fundamental principle of the universe,” these classical ideals undoubtedly resonated. Eddy herself characterized the Extension as a “mental monument.” External factors were also important, however. As Christian Scientists worked to legitimate their religion, their selection of the classical style, mirroring that of many civic buildings, and their tendency to locate their churches in the heart of commercial and governmental districts identified the denomination with progressive urban development.

Effectively illustrated, *Prayers in Stone* offers a helpful analysis of the ways in which churches function within multiple-meaning systems, both religious and secular. In so doing it significantly deepens scholarship on Christian Science and broadens that on the early twentieth-century urban landscape.

*Macalester College*

JEANNE HALGREN KILDE

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801406736

Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, £11.50). Pp. 573. ISBN 0 691 04870 3.

Ellen Schrecker remarks that she began this book many years ago because she could not find a satisfactory “general” book to explain McCarthyism to her students. The 150 pages of notes on sources suggest that the author has come to look beyond a purely student readership, but the “general” structure remains. The book’s great value is that it brings together recent work on McCarthyism and wonderfully illuminates the relationships between the component parts of that protean creature, and its own extensive original research enhances its authority.

The story is a complex one, encompassing among other elements the highly secretive nature of the American Communist Party itself, the network of anti-communist groups that long preceded McCarthy, the Cold War demonisation of the communist image, the central role of the FBI, the mechanics of the job purge, and the implication of and impact on organised labour. Several fascinating tales are told along the way, such as the rendering of the rather hapless Gerhard Eisler into the personification of evil, and the extraordinary ramifications associated with the making of the radical film *Salt of the Earth*. To Schrecker, it was when government took up the anti-communist cause in the Cold War years that it acquired its real potency. McCarthyism was “primarily a top-down phenomenon,” and the conditions for it were essentially put into place between 1946 and 1949. Schrecker also provides a long final chapter speculating intriguingly on the baneful consequences of McCarthyism.

While Schrecker lays bare the complex mechanics of McCarthyism, there is little that is distinctively new about her main interpretative thrusts. She and other scholars have already developed many of the arguments used here, which makes it rather surprising that the book ran into a storm when it was published in the United States. This probably had something to do with its indictment of Cold War liberals, who on this account failed to take an adequate stand against McCarthyite forces. As with that formulation, some of the book’s arguments may be queried. That Washington, DC played a major role in fashioning Cold War anti-communism is effectively demonstrated, but the part played by the anti-communist constituencies and popular or grassroots pressures deserves greater attention. Certainly the late 1940s was a critical period in the development of the instruments of anti-communism, but arguably it was the Korean War which provided the fulcrum for the larger crusade. It is easy to agree that anti-communism had bleak consequences, but, once McCarthyism became a smear word, liberalism enjoyed some respite. The political right could be dismissed as extremist, which may have made possible the Kennedy–Johnson presidencies and their return to a reform agenda.

One may not agree with everything in this book, but it is a true work of scholarship. The depth of Ellen Schrecker’s research, her careful analysis and her elegant prose command respect.

*Lancaster University*

M. J. HEALE

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801416732

Lendol Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999, £17.95). Pp. 378. ISBN 0 691 05827 X.

A generation of scholars, working at the intersection of cultural history and business history, has examined the consumer culture that flourished in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In studies of advertising, marketing, department stores, and specific consumer goods, these historians have laid out the myriad means of buying and selling that appear central to modern American culture. Lendol Calder's definitive book, *Financing the American Dream*, examines one of the mechanisms that underpinned these processes of buying and selling: consumer credit. While there have been other studies of American credit systems, most notably Martha Olney's *Buy Now, Pay Later*. Calder's engaging work is innovative in two important respects. First, Calder revises the chronology by which credit is usually considered. By so doing, Calder argues against what he calls "the myth of lost economic virtue," a presumption that Americans were once thrifty and financially prudent, before being seduced into profligate spending by available credit in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century. Although Calder does not deny the growth of credit in these decades, he does take issue with the implicit "narrative of decline." While focusing primarily on the period between 1890 and 1940, he situates the beginnings of modern consumer credit in the 1910s, but with roots stretching back to any instance of borrowing and lending in the nation's history. Furthermore, Calder argues that, as monthly payments began to dictate the shape of personal finances, the growth of credit may have led to a greater sense of fiscal discipline, rather than a spendthrift attitude toward household budgeting.

Calder's work is exceptional, however, not only in its content, but in its approach. He is, first and foremost, a cultural historian. While he surveys and records the forms of credit available in particular eras, from personal borrowing to instalment plans to credit cards, he admits to not addressing many of the technical questions that may be asked about consumer credit. Instead, Calder mines an impressive array of primary source material in order to ascertain what credit meant, and continues to mean, to American culture. Drawing on personal letters, magazine articles, cartoons, budget studies, prescriptive literature, and government statistics, among others, Calder explains that, rather than putting the American Dream within easy reach, the availability of credit instead extends that Dream indefinitely, limited only by the imagination of the American consumer.

*University of Glasgow*

MARINA MOSKOWITZ

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Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (eds.), *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, £40.00). Pp. 220. ISBN 0 7190 5450 8.

Stemming from a conference held in 1996 at King Alfred's College, Winchester, the edited volume *Domestic Space* collects nine essays together with an

introduction, all of which focus on what the editors term “interior architecture” in both American and British contexts. The term “architectures” here refers to not only the physical structures that people and goods inhabit, but also the social, cultural, and economic structures that dictate the conditions and processes of this habitation. Taken together, the essays in *Domestic Space* persuasively argue for a reconsideration of the notion of “separate spheres” as an organising principle for understanding nineteenth-century domestic culture.

The authors do not necessarily reject the idea, but add nuance to it, trying to draw out distinctions between different people’s experience of the same interior spaces. Moira Donald discusses how the supposedly “tranquil havens” of middle-class homes in Victorian Britain were also sites of hard work for domestic servants. S. J. Kleinberg shows that, in the American context, while domestic service in middle-class households may have declined, economic activity still frequently took place in working-class homes. Furthermore, an early emphasis on home-ownership may have actually impelled women to take on a greater role in the family economy than they might otherwise have done. While raising these questions of different experiences within domestic interiors, whether based on race, class, gender, age or other factors, the authors also complicate the ideal of privacy often associated with these spaces. Martin Hewitt brings out one of the central ironies of district visiting: that middle-class volunteers, trying to inculcate their own values among the working class, often violated working-class notions of privacy. Lynne Walker and Vron Ware discuss female abolitionists’ incorporation of their political work into the domestic sphere through material culture, again calling into question the binary opposition of public and private, or domestic and political, spheres.

While raising similar issues, other essayists focus more on the literary representation of domestic interiors, including Carolyn Steedman’s examination of the works of Elizabeth Gaskell and Alan Louis Ackerman, Jr.’s study of Louisa May Alcott and the relationship between the theatre and the home. In fact, while “reading the nineteenth-century interior,” most of the authors in *Domestic Space* rely heavily on written texts as their primary form of evidence. Walker and Ware, Donald, and Sarah Milan, in a study of gas lighting, are particularly helpful in providing models for the incorporation of material evidence as well.

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MARINA MOSKOWITZ

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Udo J. Hebel (ed.), *The Construction and Contestation of American Cultures and Identities in the Early National Period* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999, Sfr. 78). Pp. 479. ISBN 3 8253 0893 6.

There has been a recent outpouring of important scholarly works on the early national period of American history. For example Simon P. Newman, *Parades and Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) and David Waldstreicher’s, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism 1776–1820* (University of North

Carolina Press, 1997) have both applied the methodologies of cultural theory and analysis to the politics of the new republic. These works have reshaped our understanding of early American politics. The volume under review is a wide-ranging collection of twenty-four essays on the United States during the first decades after independence. It demonstrates the fecundity of the early republic, so long neglected, as a field of study. Although these essays do not neglect politics or political culture, they emphasize the literary and cultural history of the United States during the years after the revolution.

Thirteen of the essays in this collection were given at an American Studies conference held at the University of Potsdam in 1997. The remaining pieces were written specifically for the collection. Twelve of the essays are literary studies. Among the authors who receive consideration are Phyllis Wheatley, Daniel Webster, Washington Irving (who has three essays devoted to aspects of his work), Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and Herman Melville. The balance of the volume consists of essays on a range of subjects from Native Americans, to families, to economic nationalism and merchant society. The diversity of subjects is a strength of this volume because the essays address a central theme, namely the creation and contestation of American identities in the decades after political independence was won. Naturally the authors do not always concur, and the essays vary in quality. None the less, in the main this volume is characterized by high-quality scholarship which should command the attention of students of early American history and literature. *The Construction and Contestation of American Cultures and Identities in the Early National Period* is largely the work of German-based scholars. The publishers of the volume, Universitätsverlag C. Winter, brought the book out in English presumably to attract a wide readership in the United States, Britain, and beyond. They should be praised for this decision as the work deserves a wide readership. The book is a reminder to British scholars of American Studies that they should not always fix their gazes westward across the Atlantic but should also occasionally glance eastward across the Channel.

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FRANK COGLIANO

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Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (1997. Paperback Reprint. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999, £22.50 cloth, £11.50 paper). Pp. 338. ISBN 0 300 07750 5.

Martha Hodes study of sexual and racial relationships in the South is both fascinating and horrifying in equal measure. Although her focus is on the nineteenth century, and specifically the changes to both black and white lives brought about by the Civil War, her narrative travels between the colonial period and the present day in order to uncover the contradictions and the cruelties that attended the complex subject of mixed-race relationships in the American South. Under the South's peculiar institution, Hodes argues, "white Southerners could respond to sexual liaisons between white women and black men with a measure of toleration; only with black freedom did such liaisons begin to provoke a near-



inevitable alarm, one that culminated in the tremendous white violence of the 1890s and after.”

Hodes's research into the subject of white women's relationships with black men in the South is both detailed and powerfully presented. Relying mainly, though not exclusively, on court records, Hodes focuses on the experiences of a range of individuals, from the marriage, in 1681, of Nell Butler and Charles, a black slave, in colonial Maryland to the case of Dorothea Bourne, who was sued for divorce by her husband, Lewis, on the grounds of having an affair with a slave. In each case, Hodes is concerned “to demonstrate that when such liaisons did occur, white Southerners could react in a way that complicates modern assumptions.” Specifically, as Hodes shows, many Southerners were willing to accept, or at least to tolerate, a relationship between a white woman and a black man so long as it did not disturb the status quo. When pregnancy or an accusation of rape forced the matter into the public arena, reactions remained mixed, but were generally more hostile. It was not the case, however, as Diane Miller Somerville's work has also shown, that the hostility was always directed at the man in question. If a case was not necessarily judged purely on its merits in the antebellum period, neither was it prejudged before it came to court. All this changed after the Civil War, when “Southern dialogues on sex between black men and white women moved beyond the realm of village crossroads and into the arena of sectional and national politics.” Hodes's discussion of the violence of the Reconstruction period is all-too familiar, but no less horrifying for that. After the Civil War, with “only the one-drop rule to guard white supremacy, all white women had to give birth to all-white children.” By the end of the century, the middle-ground of covert disapproval and reluctant toleration had long since given way to overt cruelty and extreme violence.

Ultimately, Hodes's observation that the mixed-race children resulting from the relationships between white women and black men directly threatened the racial and social order of the South is neither new nor surprising. Yet in accepting this fact it is too easy to ignore the repercussions of it. Hodes's study has broken new ground in this regard, and raises questions deserving of further study. How, for example, did the North react to mixed-race relationships? How, too, did the children of these relationships, many of whom were denied or abandoned by their parents if they survived at all, come to terms with a society which had produced and then rejected them? The historical record may be silent on this last point, but Hodes has shown how historians might begin to reconstruct the past in a vivid and complex way even when the evidence is, at best, patchy. From the very first example she offers, that of Nell Butler and Charles, it is clear that the response to mixed-race relationships, and specifically to the offspring that resulted, epitomised the Southern confusion over property and person, colour and class, sex and status. The children born to such confusion were both victims and representatives of nineteenth-century Southern society. Divided along racial, social and economic lines, it was a society in conflict with itself and, as Hodes shows, with the painful but unavoidable reality of human relationships.

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S-M. GRANT

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801456738

Diane Simmons, *Maxine Hong Kingston*, Twayne's United States Authors Series No. 711 (New York: Twayne, 1999, \$32). Pp. 185. ISBN 0 8057 4621 8.

To publish a single-author study nowadays, especially of a contemporary writer who may “date” the book by producing another novel, usually means becoming part of a series, with all the constraints thereof. The extent to which a critic can use the format without straitjacketing the argument is variable, to say the least. Diane Simmons’ study of Maxine Hong Kingston follows the usual Twayne format, providing biographical details, a chronology, studies of individual novels and an annotated bibliography, plus an interview with her subject. Kingston is, however, an excellent choice for a study of this nature, which effectively only has three major works to engage with and sensibly spends almost half the space on *The Woman Junior*, giving Simmons plenty of room for manoeuvre, with none of the pressure of the speedy survey. (Kingston’s fourth major work was destroyed in manuscript, along with her home and possessions, in the Oakland wildfire of 1991.) Essentially Simmons argues that Kingston is a writer with a mission, to humanise those whose humanity is in danger of erasure by fear and violence, whether at the hands of Chinese or American society or, in the case of the unforgettable Wittman Ah Sing of *Tripmaster Monkey*, both. Indeed Kingston is as much the product of the antiwar 1960s as of any ethnic imperatives, as much concerned with liberating Chinese men as Chinese women from damaging stereotypes. Simmons treads gracefully through the mantraps of Asian American critical debate and the crisscrossing minefields of postcolonial and multicultural theorisations. She notes, for example, that, whatever one now makes of Jade Snow Wong’s *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, the very fact of seeing a character something like herself had a powerful effect on Kingston. Simmons provides a useful account of the savage attacks by Chinese American male writers on Kingston (charging her with pandering to white racism), the exoticising of the early reviews (describing her as doll-like or inscrutable), and the slap-happy publishing practices which saw one feature illustrated with Japanese maidens and Mount Fuji. One might have liked more on the process by which Kingston became the most widely taught living author on American college courses (the position of honour for the dead probably went simultaneously to that other three-name woman, Zora Neale Hurston.) This reviewer would make no pretensions to scholarly knowledge of the Cantonese spirit world, or of the literature of China, outside translations, but the material on myths and legends, earlier literature and the cultural context seems extremely helpful to the Western reader. One point was worth pursuing further: the implicit hostility towards the Anglo reader evinced in *Tripmaster Monkey*, with its regime of punishment by tough fiction, might well have been extended in relation to this as a developing phenomenon in other contemporary fictions: Morrison’s *Paradise*, for one.

*University of Nottingham*

JUDIE NEWMAN

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801466734

Howard Sounes, *Charles Bukowski: Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life* (Edinburgh: Rebel Inc, 1999, £10). Pp. 309. ISBN 0 86241 906 9.

Sounes's biography of Charles Bukowski is the first credible attempt to provide a definitive and comprehensive account of his life and work. Academics, critics and publishers have so far fought shy of this, partly because apparent relations between Bukowski and his readership, and his writing and its ostensible generic description, look anomalous on close inspection. Bukowski was a cult author who sold a lot of books. He was thus also a popular author, but one that declared a hatred of people. His nonconformism attracted a countercultural audience whom he mocked and a college audience whose left and liberal sensibilities he delighted in offending. The stories he wrote and told were autobiographical and fictional, verisimilar and iconic and were concomitantly published in limited editions and pornographic magazines.

The biographical research that Sounes has undertaken is thorough, and has the stated and worthy aim of contextualising and hence verifying and/or demythologising the Bukowski myth. He summarises Bukowski's miserable, violent childhood in and around downtown Los Angeles in the 1920s and 30s. His parents were an American building contractor of German extraction and a German migrant seamstress. From an early age Bukowski despised his father for beating him and his mother for not preventing his father from doing so. After leaving home in the early 1940s he drifted south then east taking manual or menial jobs (railroad worker, farm labourer, blood courier) before returning to LA at the beginning of the 1950s and eventually securing a long-term job as a mail-thrower in a post office, an experience he would later turn into his first novel *Post Office*. Up until this time his employment has been continually disrupted by his two other main occupations, writing and drinking. The former produced stories and poems intermittently published in small magazines and eventually in chapbooks. The latter brought him, bleeding internally and almost fatally, to the LA County Hospital in 1955. The experience prompted a decrease in his consumption of alcohol and an increase in his production of stories, including a powerful, ingenuous yet arch account of his hospitalisation, *Life and Death in the Charity Ward*. This particular story was not written until after Bukowski got his two big breaks in the second half of the 1960s – a column in the underground newspaper *Open City* that transferred to the hip, widely distributed *LA Free Press*, and the patronage of John Martin who paid Bukowski a wage to write poems, stories and, for the first time, novels for Black Sparrow Press. Bukowski became relatively wealthy, promiscuous and alternately fêted and maligned for the drunken, confrontational persona he adopted in public. In her letter that ended their relationship, one of his longer-term partners, Linda King, convincingly identified this persona not only as defensive and self-glorifying but also as an equivalent of his fictional alter-ego, and thus, arguably, accomplished an effective literary as well as a personal criticism of him.

However, if this criticism has force it is only because the writing, and especially the six novels, that Bukowski produced in the second half of his life are worthy of it. Sounes does not offer any very useful critical assessment of this work, but

he does provide some of the means to do so by citing Bukowski's influences, many of which derive directly from the literature and indirectly from the philosophy of European modernism. Bukowski admired Knut Hamsun, Louis-Ferdinand Celine and Jean-Paul Sartre, all of whom wrote about actual experience but in a style that was more personal and appreciative of its alterability and strangeness than that of their nineteenth-century realist antecedents. This concern with the unpredictability of events which are only, and incompletely, apprehended subjectively, and with an account of them that respects their consequent inscrutability, can be seen in the writing of the first phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl, who so influenced Heidegger and Sartre. For him, a fact of experience was not objective or positive but contingent. It might always have been and might yet be otherwise and so is not best *explained* (because it cannot be, at least not fully) but *individually described*. Bukowski continues the very modern practice of subjective, non-judgemental description, and in doing so provides something like a phenomenology of poverty and destitution. What happens in his stories is not what should, might or even does happen to a drunken bum called Bukowski or Chinaski, but what happens to happen to him. He does not expect to be rushed to hospital or to face death although, given his drinking, he might have done so. He is then expected to die but lives. The doctors tell him that if he drinks again he definitely will die. He does drink again, and doesn't. He reports all of this with resignation, candour and ironic reference to the conclusions a realist text "should" arrive at: "I waited to die. You know god damned well I didn't die then or I wouldn't be telling you this now." Granted this kind of interpretation, Bukowski's art looks both less indulgent and more artful than dismissals of it, which are quite common, concede. It is thus worth hoping that someone will write a text about Bukowski that will be as thorough critically as Soune's text is factually.

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MARTIN MURRAY

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Joanne V. Gabbin, (ed.), *The Furious Flowering of African American Poetry* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999, \$59.50 cloth, \$19.50 paper). Pp. 342. ISBN 0 8139 1840 5, 0 8139 1841 3.

In African American culture, poetry has always been the poor relation. While the music and the novels have received widespread recognition, the poetry has never caught on outside committed enclaves. One index of this is how parasitic a lot of the poetry is on its more successful cousin, jazz. Langston Hughes, Michael S. Harper and others have poems which are "inspired" by be-bop or blues, but it's hard to imagine the composers or musicians caring quite as much about the poets' output. Joanne V. Gabbin's book, which came out of "the now-famous Furious Flowered conference in 1994" at the James Madison University in Virginia, attempts to draw attention to and celebrate what she and the other participants consider the important achievements of African American poets. Unfortunately the book is not persuasive as advocacy, and will be of only limited use to academics interested in the area.

The book is made up of transcriptions of dialogue sessions and papers presented at the conference. Gabbin divides these into three sections, “African American Poetry and the Vernacular Matrix,” “Critical Theories and Approaches in African American Poetry” and “Writing a Literary History of African American Poetry.” However, one gets little sense that contributions themselves belong to one or other of these groupings and regrets that Gabbin did not direct the conference participants more strongly in addressing these topics, as well as pushing them to develop their conference papers into full-blown articles. There are, however, some exceptions, not least Gabbin’s own wide-ranging and interesting essay on the early poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, which revises the received notion that Brooks’s poetry was not concerned with Black politics before 1967. Raymond Patterson provides a helpful historical overview of African American epic poetry. Aldon Lynn Nielsen challenges accounts of post-modern poetry that omit the contribution of a poet like N. H. Pritchard, among others. And Therese Steffen offers an engaging extended reading of Rita Dove’s collection, *Mother Love* (1995).

Perhaps the most eloquent example of the insular critical ideas that trouble this area is Joyce A. Joyce’s advocacy of a literary history and critical theory for African American poetry that is based purely on concepts that come out of African and African American contexts. There is nothing wrong with this idea, per se, but one sees in practice that it entails one’s throwing about a few phrases from Bantu and a grapeshot dissing of the white “establishment.” Thus: “Instead of following the tradition of isolation and despair that characterizes much contemporary Euro-American poetry, African American poetry celebrates life, is life affirming.” This admixture of Oprah and Malcolm X is unlikely to get African American poetry all that far, and it is noteworthy that the younger poets are not convinced by it.

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JUSTIN QUINN

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Barbara Rodriguez, *Autobiographical Inscriptions: Form, Personhood, and the American Woman Writer of Color* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, £30.00). Pp. 228. ISBN 0 19 51234 7.

Auto/biography studies have taken a noticeably multicultural, as well as feminist, turn in recent years. Early feminist work on autobiography (Estelle C. Jelinek’s edited collection *Women’s Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, Domna Stanton’s edited *The Female Autograph* and Elizabeth W. Bruss’s *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre*) revisited the territory of male autobiography criticism, in order to highlight the absence of women’s texts from the critically created corpus of auto/biography. Two later collections, Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck’s *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women’s Autobiography* and Shari Benstock’s *The Private Self*, built upon this by theorising works of autobiography by women previously excluded from the canon of autobiography. Most recently, the work of Sidonie Smith (*A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography and Subjectivity, Identity and the Body*), Françoise Lionnet (*Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender,*

*Self-Portraiture and Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity*), Leigh Gilmore (*Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Self-Representation*) and Linda Anderson (*Women and Autobiography in the Twentieth Century: Remembered Futures*) has furthered the critical discussion of women's auto/biography by developing sophisticated analytical approaches specific to women's auto/biographical writing as a genre. Yet, with the exception of Lionnet's work, none of these studies offer a sufficient account of the intersection of ethnicity and gender in relation to autobiography. Anderson only briefly discusses Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Both Gilmore and Smith discuss Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* at length, but, in each case, Kingston's text emerges as an ethnic variation of women's reworking of autobiography.

Barbara Rodriguez's study is one which seeks to rectify this omission in contemporary feminist studies of autobiography. Explicitly aiming to "expand upon these reconsiderations of autobiography, treating as one of its subjects the critical practices of inscription and re-inscription ... and adding to the conversation about life-writing an analysis of form and personhood in autobiographies by American woman writers of colour," Rodriguez takes as her subject the writings of Zora Neale Hurston, Harriet Jacobs, Maxine Hong Kingston, Leslie Marmon Silko and Cecile Pineda. In analysing the work of these ethnic American women writers, Rodriguez aims to highlight the "intersections of form and structure with issues of race and gender." Her emphasis upon the relationship between form and personhood is especially innovative. She takes a deliberately expansive definition of life-writing, which enables her, for instance, to read non-textual modes of inscription alongside more conventional forms. Harriet Jacobs' tombstone is one such example, which is read in juxtaposition with Jacobs' more conventional life narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

The four writers who are the principal focus of this study have generated a fair amount of critical attention, not to mention controversy, over the years; however, *Autobiographical Inscriptions* brings a fresh perspective to their study, and one which will also contribute to – even revise – theories of women's life writing.

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HELENA GRICE

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801496733

Christopher Bigsby, *Contemporary American Playwrights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, £42.50 cloth, £15.95 paper). Pp. 440. ISBN 0 521 66108 0, 0 521 66807 7.

Many of the writers featured in this new volume of writing from Christopher Bigsby have lived almost their entire adult lives after what has often been perceived as the golden era of O'Neill, Miller and Williams had ended with the onset of the 1960s. In this sense, Bigsby appears to be engaged in an attempt to ascertain whether or not contemporary American drama is as worthy of our attention as those works of the 1940s and 1950s about which he has already written. Through his perceptive readings of an impressive number of plays by ten relatively well-known but by no means classic playwrights, and through his

obvious enthusiasm for dramatic writing, Bigsby is successful in suggesting not only that American theatre is a vibrant expression of cultural identity, but also that it deserves greater critical attention.

The book is simple enough: a short preface followed by ten lengthy chapters, each devoted to a single writer. Although a bibliography would have been an extremely helpful addition (especially given the relative difficulty of researching contemporary drama), this simple approach contributes much to the success of Bigsby's project. We are introduced, via biographical detail, interviews and a brief overview of the dramatist's main concerns, to each of these writers' works. Bigsby then discusses a succession of plays, dealing with them in chronological order but always foregrounding the thematic and structural elements which make each play the writer's own. Thus, we learn of John Guare's fascination with the power of language, of Tony Kushner's attempts to create a political drama without being prescriptive, and of Paula Vogel's examination of the boundaries between the real and the fantastic. And so on through all ten dramatists.

As such, the book works as both a critical text (Bigsby is unafraid to suggest where a writer's experimentation moves from radical vitality to dramatic failure) and also as a general introduction to an important subject area. This is not a book for those who wish to find a complex theoretical account of American drama, an attempt, perhaps, to uncover what Raymond Williams called the drama's "structure of feeling." Rather, Bigsby has noted the apparent marginalisation of drama within the academe and attempts to address such a gap (which exists in our teaching as much as in our research) through a book like this one. As noted in the preface, the play can be as sensitive a barometer of social change as the novel, and therefore the work of the dramatists discussed in this volume ought to yield further interesting studies. That surely, is the point of Bigsby's work here.

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DAVID J. EVANS

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Jay A. Gertzman, *Bookleggers and Smuthounds: The Trade in Erotica, 1920–1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, £26.50). Pp. 418. ISBN 0 8122 3493 6.

*Bookleggers and Smuthounds* is a detailed publishing history of erotica in the 1920s and 1930s, focusing closely on the activities of publishers – Gertzman pitches the book as a commemoration of their work – and on the efforts of censors to regulate the trade in erotica. For example, Gertzman details the life and work of Samuel Roth as an example of the “the talent needed to sell prurient sexuality effectively in the interwar years, the social pressures the erotica dealer encountered, and his or her public and psychic responses to these pressures,” and includes a chapter on the activities of John Saxton Sumner, Anthony Comstock's successor at the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (and the “smuthound” of the title). Though focusing on the life history of individual publishers and on the tactics of Sumner, Gertzman does broaden this out to include institutional responses to the trade in erotica, detailing the efforts of the Post Office to define certain printed material as unmailable and including material

on court cases and legal decisions from the 1920s through to the 1950s (and, in the epilogue, beyond). He argues strongly that the censorship of erotic literature was often tied together with discourses of Americanism, given that most of the publishers he discusses were members of Jewish immigrant families and that some of the concern expressed was about the importation of European literature. Gertzman also suggests that the account of erotic literature is integral to a social history of American literature and, indeed, of modernism (Roth, for example, published *Ulysses* in expurgated and complete editions). The book is extremely detailed, clearly very well researched, and succeeds in opening up to scrutiny an under-researched area of American literature. It will be useful also for scholars interested in the history of censorship.

The detail of the book is certainly one of its strengths but also one of its weaknesses, for Gertzman's prose is clogged with names, dates and legal decisions. He does not adequately explain the importance of the various court cases and legislation listed, and never sets in place a clear outline of the principal moments in a history of the regulation of erotica in this period. As a consequence, the book is quite hard to read; there is important information here but it is hard to get to. Linked to this problem of detail and clarity is the lack of sustained attention to the broader context of cultural contestations of the 1920s and 1930s. Gertzman mentions, in passing, Prohibition, but does not pursue the social and political context of the regulatory concern he details. He may also, for example, have thought productively about the regulation of cinema in this period, a period which saw the creation of the so-called Hays Office and the Production Code (and indeed, some material on the "exploitation" genre would have deepened Gertzman's account of the trade in erotica). Gertzman treats the trade in erotica and its regulation in isolation from broader social and cultural contestations, and this is a mistake. The book will certainly be a useful resource, but its account of the broader issues at stake in the culture wars is flawed.

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LEE GRIEVESON

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Jan Lewis and Peter S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999, £13.50). Pp. 280. ISBN 0 8139 1919 3.

This important volume brings together a number of the key voices in Jefferson studies. It is the result of the first of two groundbreaking colloquia addressing the Jefferson/Hemings relationship held at the Universities of Virginia and Richmond in 1999 and 2000, respectively. In November, 1998 the findings of Dr Eugene Foster's DNA testing of descendants of the third president and his slave Sally Hemings were published. The controversy over their alleged relationship took a new turn: science was set against the hagiography of those like Dumas Malone who had pronounced a sexual relationship as "virtually unthinkable" for the "fastidious" Jefferson.

It is almost two hundred years since journalist James Callender first challenged Jefferson in print over the relationship, as Joshua D. Rothman details in his essay



here. Later, in 1873, Sally Hemings' son Madison's oral testimony published in an Ohio newspaper provided a very different take on Callender's slurs. Dianne Swann-Wright and Lucia Stanton of the Monticello Foundation follow the oral tradition down the centuries in their essay "Bonds of Memory," from the earliest stories to the Getting Word project of interviewing Hemings' descendants that they began in 1993. But African American oral traditions could be discredited, especially when countered by Jefferson's own discussions of race in *Notes on the State of Virginia* which made sharp distinctions between the races. Many historians refused to see what they could not countenance: that Jefferson could have been romantically linked with a slave for 38 years following the death of his wife. The difficulties of reconciling Jefferson's egalitarianism with his slave-holding status continue to gnaw away at Jefferson scholars, as Jack N. Rakove discusses in his contribution to the volume. Sally Hemings was half sister to Jefferson's wife Martha: she was "one of the family" to borrow a phrase that resonates at the heart of this controversy over miscegenation, and he could have loved her. It wasn't until Fawn Brodie published *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* in 1974 that Sally Hemings's side of the story was mooted. Brodie's biography was enjoyed by the public, but she was castigated by members of the profession, as was Barbara Chase-Riboud for publishing a best-selling novel about Sally Hemings three years later. Jan Lewis shows in "The White Jeffersons," that it was Jefferson's evasion on the topic that allowed his family and biographers to perpetuate its denial, and Annette Gordon-Reed exposes in "The Memories of a Few Negroes" the complicated feelings that revelations about the relationship have wrought.

Contributors to this volume include many of those experts called upon for comment following the scientific evidence that Jefferson fathered at least one of Sally Hemings' children. Rhys Isaac's essay here argues that there were two Monticellos: the first a retreat for white family and friends, the second, more real, the place in which Jefferson fathered a family with Sally Hemings. Across the collection contributors agree that, since black-defined realities have historically been obviated, the first Monticello was legitimized, the second elided. A false racial heritage is only now under historical review – what was once exclusively white is being retold as biracial national narrative.

As Philip D. Morgan's research shows, interracial sex was neither a rarity nor necessarily shocking in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake, and his essay helps to clarify the context in which Hemings' relationship with her master may be comprehended. Most interesting, in this collection, Winthrop D. Jordan looks back more than thirty years to the publication of *White Over Black* in 1968 and assesses his unwillingness then to devote more than a few pages to the relationship, despite his study being the first to give any kind of mainstream credence to it. His "Hemings and Jefferson: Redux" is enlightening. All the essays collected here are timely and tightly written and the volume is a significant contribution to a discussion that continues into the twenty-first century.

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SHARON MONTEITH

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Patricia McKee, *Producing American Races: Henry James, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison* (London: Duke University Press, 1999, £35 cloth, £11.95 paper). Pp. 241. ISBN 0 8223 2329 X, 0 8223 2363 X.

Deeply flawed but also highly interesting, Patricia McKee's overly ambitious treatment of three major American writers in terms of the question of race reproduces both the vices and the virtues of one strand of current work in American Studies. *Producing American Races* is part of Duke University Press's *New Americanists* series, published under the general editorship of Donald Pease. It constitutes a good example of what might be expected from the series in its energy and commitment but also in its uncomfortable allegiance to literary theory and to the turgid, leaden prose that seems too frequently to accompany it. The philosophically inflected parts of this study show every kind of weakness. The logic is embarrassingly poor and breaks down repeatedly. Some demonstration of familiarity with the history of philosophy would have prevented the ascription of very old positions to very recent writers. Knowledge of this history would have helped the author not to stumble so happily into very old traps. The book as a whole would have been many times better without its ritualised gestures to Lacan and Habermas, Kristeva and Derrida, which often undermine the points the author is trying to make. In fact, the book would have been better without its rather confused major argument which tries to associate the culture of the visual with whiteness, and aural and oral culture with African American identity. This is not a new view, and it is one that is worth pursuing, but the author is so lacking in control of her argument that she often contradicts her own case without noticing what is happening.

If, however, the overall structure of this study is shiveringly weak, some of its readings of individual texts are extremely acute and stimulating. McKee is a very intelligent critical reader who has illuminating things to say about each of the six texts she considers here. Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*; William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*; Toni Morrison's *Sula* and *Jazz* are each afforded a chapter's worth of analysis. And, while it is difficult to tell why this particular assortment of authors was selected for detailed comment (James seems particularly out of place), McKee's readings are full of moments of real value. The chapters on *The Wings of the Dove*, with its attention to varieties of blankness, and on *Sula*, which discusses *Sula* as a scapegoat who allows the black community to function as ethically complete, are particularly good. These essays are too good to miss. It is probably best to ignore the argument and give the separate essays the attention they do richly deserve.

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KATE FULLBROOK

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801536737

Anne Varty (ed.), *Eve's Century: A Sourcebook of Writings on Women and Journalism, 1895–1918* (London: Routledge, 2000, £15.99). Pp. 260. ISBN 0 415 19545 4.

Anne Varty has assembled a very useful collection of pieces from a range of periodicals, many of which resonate with current temporal and spiritual debates: “The Closing Century – Its Losses and Its Gains,” “The Future of Society,” “Ladies Who Preach” and “Unwomanly Employments.” Also included in the volume is an international nineteenth-century bibliography of suffrage journals taken from the *Englishwoman's Review* of 1900. Varty selects from a range of writers on both sides of any argument and on both sides of the Atlantic; she also provides a context for the stories or articles selected at the beginning of every themed chapter. Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, writing in *Great Thoughts and Christian Graphic* in 1895 projects “national disaster” if the franchise is extended to women, advocating instead a return to single-minded devotion to motherhood; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, characteristically, harnesses the trope of the well-regulated household to the larger social duty of the woman of the twentieth century in the *Woman's Journal*: “She who now makes home so comfortable, and who, when she comes bravely out into this ‘harsh,’ ‘sordid,’ ‘weary,’ ‘bitter,’ ‘cold and cruel’ world, will clean house promptly, settle and put it in order, and make it what it should be to us all, – our home.” The sample of prophecies made by writers in turn of the century journals show, in general, a business-like prescience beyond the usual wish fulfilment of the utopianists, both in terms of practical innovations and projected political and social reforms, and make entertaining reading. The retrospective as well as prospective view is incorporated in the collection, and the international dimension is represented not only by American journals but by accounts of the war-time and colonial experience of women, as in “Women’s Medical Work in India,” from the *Monthly Packet* of September 1891, and advice on thriftiness during times of war from the *Ladies' Home Journal* of June 1917. One article from the 1901 *National Review* provides data from a survey of school-children in England, Germany and the United States, yielding such gems that, whilst 15 per cent of American girls and 34 per cent of English girls wanted to be men, 50 per cent of German girls “were not allowed to answer the question because such speculations might unsettle them,” the author of this piece assembling her arguments in support of exporting co-education as practised in the United States to Europe. This is a timely collection, very useful as an introduction to research in periodical material and adding substance to the body of work being reclaimed from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century journals.

*Manchester Metropolitan University*

JANET BEER

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801546733

Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2000, \$40). Pp. 865, ISBN 0 375 706 364.

Fred Anderson's great insight in his enormous and enthralling grand narrative about the most important war of the eighteenth century is that we need to stop seeing the Seven Years' War as a mere prelude to the greater event of the American Revolution, but should start thinking of the Revolution as a postscript to a much earlier and much more important conflict. It is an obvious point, once you think about it, but few have seen America in the 1760s as a postwar rather than a pre-revolutionary society mainly because we have lacked until now a contemporary and comprehensive account of what Americans sometimes called the French and Indian War. Anderson gives us an account for our time, re-establishing forcefully the importance of Indians and French in the conflict. Difficulties over Indians on the frontier both cause the war, shape its outcome, and determine its postwar problems. Ousting the French from Canada also receives due attention, although Anderson attributes little of the British victory to James Wolfe – a vainglorious man seeking the bubble reputation of a glorious death in battle, Anderson argues, who fluked an amazing victory. Anderson is especially astute on the effect of wartime experience on alienating American colonists, especially New Englanders, from their colonial masters. He also provides much information about how British commanders failed to understand how to win colonial (and Indian) affections and, indeed, how they drew entirely the wrong lessons from their extended acquaintance with colonials. *The Crucible of War*, in short, gives us a first-rate account of a major event in American history, an event that has long needed a modern chronicler. For that we are all in Anderson's debt. He writes vividly and fluidly, making this book of interest not only to specialists but also to general readers. It seems churlish to criticise such a major achievement. But it could, and should, have been even better. Anderson concentrates so single-mindedly on the war in America that the worldwide dimensions of the conflict are underplayed – two pages on Clive's great victories in India and limited coverage of the war in the Caribbean and in Europe are insufficient for a conflict which was more than just an American concern. It is a pity that the whole war was not surveyed in a book of this length. But what we have been given is still most satisfying. *The Crucible of War* deserves a wide readership. We will be unable to discuss either the Seven Years' War or the American Revolution without constant recourse to Anderson's work

*Brunel University*

TREVOR BURNARD

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Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2000, £16.50). Pp. 273. ISBN 0 674 005392.

In 1841, Chancellor Johnson of the South Carolina Supreme Court agreed that a slave in a disputed transaction could not be replaced by a cash payment: “Can you go to the market, daily, and buy one like him, as you might a bale of goods, or a flock of sheep? No. ... Perhaps you might be able to find one of the same sex, age, color, height and weight, but they differ in moral qualities of honesty, fidelity, obedience and industry.” It is an extraordinary statement for a judge to make – that “property” cannot be exchanged for other types of “property” of equal value. It is also untrue: slaves were bought, sold, and exchanged daily in slave markets all over the antebellum South without regard to their particular “moral qualities.” But, as Walter Johnson shows in his thoughtful and important work on the meanings inherent in the antebellum slave market, Southerners displayed the same curious ambivalences and misconceptions about buying and selling slaves as they did in all other areas of slavery. His most important finding is that the ideology of paternalism that underwrote all aspects of slaveholder/slave relations in the nineteenth-century American South operated even in the slave market. Of course, the language of paternalism that buyers used was misplaced and hypocritical. Buyers were not acquiring new family members but fresh inputs of labour. They were also buying, as Johnson shows with a wealth of supporting testimony, the social position that being a slaveholder signalled. That they found it necessary to couch such straightforward economic and social decisions in the language of paternalism shows how all powerful this discourse was for slaveholders, and illustrates that much more than money was at stake in a white man’s entry (women were sidelined) into the world of the slave market. Naturally, even more was at stake for blacks, subject to humiliating inspection and frightening future prospects. Not surprisingly, slaves attempted to shape the sale in their favour as much as they could. Their human presence and interventions marked out the slave market as peculiar – it turned people into produce, but the fact that the products were humans shaped that transformation profoundly.

Johnson is concerned in this study with stories and with the construction of narratives by all three parties in slave sales – buyer, seller, and black chattel. Surprisingly, for a book concerned with the market, Johnson eschews economics and quantitative data in favour of postmodernist reflections on reading bodies and marking race. Readers will turn first still to Michael Tadman’s impressive book on the economics of the slave market for their first guide to the subject. Some will be put off by Johnson’s fondness for the latest fashions in language – to bewilder instead of to conflate, for example – but in general Johnson writes well, has based his study on extensive documentation, and provides lots of fascinating insights. An important and revealing book.

*Brunel University*

TREVOR BURNARD

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Sonia Saldívar-Hull, *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, £28.50 cloth, £10.50 paper). Pp. 226. ISBN 0 520 20732 7, 0 520 20733 5.

In recent years “the border” has become a signifier for issues of Chicana identity. In *Feminism on the Border* Sonia Saldívar-Hull redefines and reanalyses these issues through readings of early poetry as well as contemporary Chicana narrative. Various “non-sanctioned sites of theory” including anthologies, autobiographies and a range of cultural theorists from both sides of the US–Mexico border form the critical framework for her study. At the same time personal narratives such as “Reading Tejana, Reading Chicana” also distinguish her approach by providing an expression of experiential considerations that both attest to the veracity of the ethnic experiences which she explores, as well as contributing to the production of a theory of border feminism as a “lived and shared experience.” More specifically this movement between local processes and the more explicit “global concerns of Chicana cultural workers” is an important strategy of material and feminist engagement. While moving between various geopolitical locations, it is employed by Saldívar-Hull in order to direct attention towards “the specific socio-political issues that Chicana feminist texts display.”

This concern with the material specificities of Chicana writing forms the basis of *Feminism on the Border*. The literature, situated firmly within the province of Chicana oppositional politics and acts of resistance, is considered as “a practice of intervention” with a complex agenda that takes on board both the internal domination as well as the external repression of the Mexican American woman. Taking some of the “movement poetry” of the Chicana activist Angela de Hoyos as her starting point, Saldívar-Hull traces the “revolutionary thought in Chicana literary discourse” by drawing attention to the subaltern political aesthetics and identity politics which are developed in a range of border narratives, including those of Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros and Helena María Viramontes. The chapters which deal with these authors build on previously published material, but this does not detract from the overall contribution of her study. By re-situating the literature within its “concrete material location,” Saldívar-Hull not only provides methods of literary analysis, she also uncovers various repressed histories of Mexican American working-class women’s lives.

To this end *Feminism on the Border* is a valuable resource for scholars of Chicana literature everywhere. But, beyond the evident concern and commentary on the realities of Mexican American life, Saldívar-Hull’s border feminism also develops a wider reaching analysis of some of the more urgent inequalities which continue to affect contemporary North America.

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ELIZABETH JACOBS

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801576732

Joe Moran, *Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America* (London: Pluto Press, 2000, £45 cloth, £14.99 paper). Pp. 187. ISBN 0 7453 1519 4, 0 7453 1524 0.

In this important book in the field of American Cultural Studies, Joe Moran examines the celebrity star system which has engulfed the public persona of many post-war US writers. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of a semi-autonomous "field" of cultural production, Moran resists simply blaming the star system for debasing authorial authenticity in order to examine the complex cultural relationships and meanings which contribute to such a phenomenon and to assess "how celebrity authors themselves have grappled with and added to these meanings in their work." The thesis of *Star Authors* is that literary celebrity simultaneously affirms authorial personality at the same time that it jeopardises individualism. But, rather than this argument leading to an apocalyptic account of "vulgarised fame" in contemporary American culture, Moran provides a sensitive and balanced critique of the ways in which "authors actually negotiate their own celebrity rather than having it simply imposed on them."

The book divides into two sections: the first discusses the cultural machinery of celebrity, and charts the transition from the nineteenth-century "author talks" of Dickens and Twain to the emergence of emblematic journalism in *Time* and *Life* magazines and an "image-centred" late twentieth-century culture. By deploying a range of cultural voices – Adorno, Barthes, Baudrillard, Benjamin, Bourdieu, Jameson, Macdonald – Moran offers critical insight into the way in which self-publicists like Mailer and recluses like Salinger are actually twinned within a culture that incorporates "diverse and unassimilable elements to its own ends," by arguing that the disappearance of the author works, either intentionally or not, as an "inverted form of self-promotion." The second section provides a series of close textual and intertextual readings of four acclaimed and self-reflexive authors – Updike, Philip Roth, DeLillo and Acker – who are suspicious of the very system from which they have benefited. The readings range from commentary on the writers' own thoughts on their celebrity – for example, Updike's attempts to preserve his private identity in the autobiographical *Self-Consciousness* (1989) and Roth's efforts to define (and sell) himself as a "redface" writer who fuses two distinct American literary traditions – to extended textual analysis of significant novels such as Roth's *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981) and DeLillo's *Mao II* (1991). The last chapter on Kathy Acker is particularly interesting in rethinking the contemporary avant-garde in terms of what Elizabeth Wilson has called the "bohemianization of culture," as the oppositional nature of the avant-garde itself has been compromised, if not entirely neutralised, by the celebrity system which markets it as cult writing. Moran concludes *Star Authors* with a discussion of the Americanisation of British publishing, the fetishisation of book fairs and the emergence of an academic star system, arguing convincingly that the cult of celebrity is an all-consuming phenomenon "which cuts across cultural boundaries."

University of Leicester

MARTIN HALLIWELL

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Christopher Bigsby and Don B. Wilmeth (eds.), *The Cambridge History of American Theatre. Volume Three: Post-World War II to the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, £55.00 cloth). Pp. 582. ISBN 0 521 66959 6.

The third volume in this useful series is presented in the same format as the previous two. A series of closely cross-referenced essays by eminent scholars address the time period in question and a number of features make the text a particularly attractive one for undergraduates. A detailed, sixty page “timeline” allows major American theatrical productions to be checked against significant world events, and each chapter carries a highly informative bibliography. The study bears witness to the significant economic, demographic and cultural changes affecting North American theatre in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the text makes every effort to historicize its subject. For instance much is made of the cyclical occurrence of radicalism evident in this period of US theatrical history, including the increasingly politicized agit-prop of the late sixties and early seventies in response to Vietnam.

This volume in the Cambridge series covers diverse aspects of theatrical development, from the movement away from Broadway and Off-Broadway productions to an increasing support for the burgeoning regional and alternative theatres. The study also shows a willingness to look outwards to paratheatrical forms, and many sections offer analysis of productions which incorporate cinematic and multi-media techniques. In his chapter on theatre design, Ronn Smith describes an American stage which is now more influenced by MTV, Walt Disney, and Las Vegas than by the conventions of the classical theatre. The text provides interesting analysis of a national drama which has always been read and viewed as paradigmatic, and proves particularly adept at engaging with Albee’s description of the theatre of the last century as “a lament for a world in which communication had proved impossible.” It also analyses the highly reflexive stage works of the “me generation” thoughtfully, supporting Spalding Gray’s statement that the plays prove that looking inwards is necessary “in order to look out.”

If I have any criticism it is that, as many of the chapters deal with the period decade by decade, inevitably some repetition does occur. To avoid this it would have been necessary to have each author deal with a decade or theme comprehensively in an exclusively chronological study. To do this, however, would not have allowed for the deeply considered, personal reflections on the *fin de siècle* condition of the American stage which this study provides.

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KATE RHODES



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Ben Gove, *Cruising Culture: Promiscuity, Desire and American Gay Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, £16.95). Pp. 207. ISBN 0 7486 1361 7.

This book examines various representations of the “avowedly promiscuous gay male perspective” in gay literature as well as gay and straight objections to it. Interested in the tensions around promiscuity, Gove complicates the categorical distinction between monogamous and promiscuous relationships to argue that “the intrinsic promiscuousness of [all] sexual desire” creates an interdependence between these two positions. Separate chapters explore the writings of John Rechy, Larry Kramer, and David Wojnarowicz.

The introduction accomplishes several substantive tasks, addressing dominant and marginalized understandings of “promiscuity” among other keywords (notably the regulatory fictions “masculine” and “feminine”). It also presents an overview of the construction of urban American gay space and identity, including how racism has compromised African Americans’ sexual possibilities. Gove is equally clear about the political stakes here: though dedication to promiscuous sexual freedom says nothing about one’s larger political vision, he insists on the importance of linking sexuality to other social relations.

Identifying anxieties and inconsistencies in Rechy’s writings that question the “masculine” image of gay promiscuity, Gove contemplates the influence of gender ideology on gay identity and troubles the inadequacy of “gay (or any other) male allegiances to ‘masculinity.’” The treatment of Kramer is equally cogent; (in)famous for his attacks on gay promiscuity, Kramer has repeatedly linked the (supposed) stability of monogamy to a stable social order and blamed promiscuity for any adversity within gay male culture. Yet Gove reveals a more complicated picture in Kramer’s fiction, something he also finds in Wojnarowicz’s narratives, where he uncovers how fantasy disrupts the normative notion of stable monogamous desire *and* “monogamous yearnings” that disrupt an unproblematic notion of promiscuity.

*Cruising Culture* develops an important reading of the cultural contradictions of gay promiscuity, but a topical approach that included more authors would have given a fuller sense of these debates. While the conclusion’s examinations of several writers “glancing back” on promiscuity’s “golden age” in the 1970s diminishes this criticism, those retrospective texts necessarily say something different. Explaining his focus on white authors, Gove lands himself in trouble: he refers to Rechy as white yet still discusses Rechy’s “mixed” ancestry and dismay at not being included in Chicano anthologies. Gove’s observation that Rechy’s “gay-oriented texts never draw attention to their narrators’ ethnicity in any detail” is also true of Kramer’s and Wojnarowicz’s characters. These shortcomings are significant. Nonetheless, future discussions will be strengthened by Gove’s analysis of the complexity of American culture(s of desire).

San Francisco, USA

SCOTT BRAVMANN

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S002187580160673X

Charles K. Ross, *Behind the Lines: African Americans and the Integration of the National Football League* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2000, \$35). Pp. 201. ISBN 0 8147 795 4.

Two outstanding African Americans – the boxer Jack Johnson, knocking out white men and going out with white women in the first decade of the twentieth century; and Jackie Robinson, the first black player in major league baseball, from 1947 on – have come to symbolise the long and painful story of race relations in American sports. More recently figures such as Arthur Ashe and Mohammad Ali have articulated that story, as well as making their own contributions to the success of African Americans in world sport. Concentration on great individuals naturally tends to obscure the contributions made by others, and Charles Ross's story of the integration of football adds much-needed detail to this narrative. It is a measure of the problem tackled here that the story Ross tells was only written at the end of the twentieth century.

The detail is needed in part because the sport itself was comparatively obscure until the last quarter of the century. A college game evolved from rugby, American football quickly developed into a professional game; but the sport was dominated by the colleges, while baseball remained the leading team sport. Football was perhaps too dangerous to participants to succeed as a professional sport (severe injuries and even deaths remained common until rules were revised, and body armour was developed, from the 1920s). None the less the fledgling professional game always – unlike major league baseball – had a sprinkling of black players. Ross delves into comparative obscurity to bring us the names and lives of these pioneers, one of whom was Paul Robeson, whose personal battle against racists on his own team led to a nose injury which, Ross tells us, affected his later singing career.

Before 1933, this small group of black players made a significant contribution to their teams' success. But there followed not an increase but a diminution, a decade of increasing apartheid under racist team owners. After World War II, the linking of black players to success, and white to failure, integrated the league (the least successful National Football League team by far in the late 1950s, the Boston Redskins, was the last to integrate, in 1962). By the end of the 1950s both the NFL and its rival American Football League were, that one team apart, integrated; currently African Americans are the majority of every professional side's playing staff – though as Ross points out, this dominance is not reflected in the quarterback position, or in coaching.

It was only when it integrated that professional football began to become a sport with global pretensions. Since the 1960s, football has been broadcast, and played, all over the world; the early-1990s moment of the London Monarchs, playing home games at Wembley with teams largely drawn from African Americans towards the end of their careers, against teams representing other European capitals, did not lead to the establishment of the sport in Britain (which would need the same infrastructure which has, in the case of soccer-mom America, given soccer grassroots whose lineage includes the 1999 Women's World Cup). Because it was no longer white, football could at least dream of

becoming a global game; in the long-term the pioneers whose story Ross recounts defeated the athletic apartheid of American team sport. We must be grateful for that achievement, and to Ross, for telling its story.

*King Alfred's College, Winchester*

ANDREW BLAKE

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801616736

Hanes Walton Jr., *Reelection: William Jefferson Clinton as a Native-Son Presidential Candidate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, £31.50 cloth, £14 paper). Pp. 308. ISBN 0231 11552 0, 0 231 11553 9.

In 1985, following Walter Mondale's presidential general election defeat, Bill Clinton and like-minded Southern politicians founded the Democratic Leadership Council in order, according to Walton, "to reshape the party character and image from liberal on race to conservative." By this time, Clinton had won eleven elections in Arkansas (1974 Congressional primary and runoff, 1976 Attorney General primary – the general election was unopposed, 1978 gubernatorial primary and general election, 1980 primary – he lost the general election to Republican Frank White, 1982 gubernatorial primary, runoff and general election, and 1984 gubernatorial primary and general election). The foundation of the DLC, with its think tank Progressive Policy Institute and magazine *The New Democrat*, was the result of Clinton's long-standing determination to "transform and reinvent the Democratic Party and reposition it to be more acceptable to his region and to the country." In 1986, Clinton, as incumbent governor, beat in the primary of that year a figure from a previous era: former Governor Orval Faubus. The repositioning strategy continued, according to Walton, in the 1992 distancing from Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, throughout the presidency, and into post-1996 attempts to pave the way for the Southern native-son presidential victory of Al Gore. Walton locates the dynamic of Clinton's strategy in the native-son identity, assumed in the early Arkansas campaigns. "Just as James Carter became Jimmy Carter in local southern politics, and remained Jimmy as president, so William Clinton had become Bill Clinton in his initial political race in Arkansas, and remained Bill Clinton on the national and international stage." For Walton, the transformation of the Democratic Party came "at the expense of the party's and native-son Clinton's own electoral savior, the African American electorate."

Between 1974 and 1996, Clinton fought 21 elections, winning 19. All are analysed in detail in this book. Arkansas election return data, at county and state level, are examined with particular reference to the (generally pro-Clinton) Black Belt counties. The focus of Walton's professional interest is on the "native-son contextual variable," first identified by Harold Gosnell in the 1940s. He advocates a historical, political party approach to electoral studies. Clinton is seen to have constructed an impressive response to the Republican hold on the South. The future fortunes of the Democratic Party in the South would seem to depend upon continuation of the strategy of having Southerners lead the party. Walton's psephological investigations are sophisticated and impressive. Most readers,

however, will probably be less interested in the “native-son contextual variable” than in the light that Walton throws upon the early background and political emergence of Bill Clinton.

*Keele University*

JOHN DUMBRELL

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Roger D. Feldman (ed.), *American Health Care: Government, Market Processes, and the Public Interest* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, The Independent Institute, 2000, \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper). Pp. 444. ISBN 1 560 00430 4, 0 765 80676 2.

Bill Clinton’s proposals for health care reform were announced in 1993. His proposals made very tentative steps towards a more liberal and, some might say, a socialised health care system. It might be remembered from press reports at the time that Bill and Hilary Clinton both advocated moderate health reform in the media. In the early 1990s, the Clintons regarded the modernisation of health care as pivotal to their plans for social democratic reform in health and other sectors. The Clintons regarded the modernisation of health care in a similar way to the Labour Government in the UK in the new century. Both the Clintons and the “Clintonisation” of New Labour saw the importance of health care modernisation and regarded the priority of health care reform as a political holy grail.

By September 1994, however, the tentative steps toward social democracy in the US health care system had been halted and reform had been stopped in its infancy. The Clinton’s project of social engineering, as the writers of this book call the plan of reform, was aborted on September the twenty-second and had failed to become policy.

At one level, the collection of essays in the book is an analysis of the social, historical, economic and political reasons for the plan’s failure. A more cynical eye might even say that the book is part post-mortem on the Clinton’s failure, in terms of their inability to change US society and to modernise health and social care provision. The rhetorical images of Bill Clinton as a natural political successor of John F. Kennedy and the promise of a new “I have a dream” generation in liberal America have been illusions too easily shattered. At another, perhaps more deep level of analysis, the authors offer very detailed information on the mechanics of the US health care system and the various barriers to reform that will inevitably be encountered by potential reformers.

The view reached is best summed up by the book’s foreword, as a conclusion to draw the strands of analysis and argument together is sadly lacking. Pauly writes in the foreword: “The book recognizes some things that have only lately dawned on many policy analysts: that the ability of actual governments to achieve ideal outcomes is limited, and that Americans fear government mistakes in health care financing and regulation as much as they fear market failure. That both the government and market might be imperfect does not represent political prejudice. Rather, a great deal of modern political economy supports such a view.” The book’s focus on struggles between the free market and the state or

Democratic government is certainly integral in the analysis of the politics and economics of the US health care system. There is a tendency to downplay the role of antagonistic forces to social and health care reform in favour of viewing the failure of the plan as an inclination of the US public. Republican interests that were against the Democrat's plans are presented in the book, as are the media's negative views and multinational and corporate strategies, but middle America is seen as the main culprit that led to the failure of reform. Middle America is seen as antagonistic to reform rather than being the target of ideologies against change of the health care system. In other words, the "fear" of the American public is not seen as being moulded by political interests but is largely taken as a natural predisposition. The book also treats issues in health largely in terms of consumer advantages, medical savings and private health contracts.

Certainly, there are interesting socioeconomic and political tensions that may be reflected upon as regards reform and modernisation in health care. For the UK reader, there is a visible similarity in Bill Clinton's and Tony Blair's strategies for health care modernisation. The political and cultural contexts of health care reform are certainly one way forward in future debates.

*South Bank University*

BENJAMIN GRAY

*Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 3. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875801636739

Maria Lauret, *Alice Walker*, Modern Novelists Series (London: Macmillan, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, £14.99). Pp. 252. ISBN 0333 59270 0.

Alice Walker's stock has fallen steeply: a process beginning when acclaim of *The Color Purple* began to be matched by accusations that it stereotyped black males along racist lines or collusively endorsed the American dream by its "fairy-tale" ending. Subsequent novels have failed to mollify her critics, and Maria Lauret necessarily evinces why this has happened and how Walker's omnipresent polemical bent caused her increasingly to resort to a defensive, "self-serving" representation of herself as a species of "elder" who "brooks no contradiction." Yet, refreshingly, Lauret mostly segues around such hostile exchanges and gets back to the novels themselves: how they "talk back to the tradition of black male emancipation" and engage with global, diasporic and ethnographical concerns through their narrative deployment of an increasingly activist content. After first showing how Walker's fiction and non-fiction are "integral to each other," noting both how her essays relate to her life and how she uses her autobiography as her first line-of-defense, Lauret concentrates on close textual analyses.

These are always rooted in instructive, flexible historicization – mainly in two interwoven modes, aesthetic and historical. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is placed up against the 1965 Moynihan Report to show why the novel's representation of the legacy of slavery, sharecropping, poverty and enforced child-neglect is inflected by resistance to their consequences, with something being born[e] out of these "kinds of shit" for a mid-twentieth-century African American "dysfunctional" family. *Meridian* is related both to artistic contexts (the collages of Romareo Bearden, her involvement with the "Spiral Group" and her

and Fannie Lou Hamer's engagement with Civil Rights) and social contexts (SNCC's 1966 decision to reject white assistance). *The Color Purple* is identified as in part a metafictional comic commentary on the white Western literary tradition and as a homage to African American alternatives (Zora Neale Hurston, her engagement with the oral, and how the oral understands the Blues). *The Temple of My Familiar* is related to both the Jungian concept of *zurückphantasieren* and Western museums' actual use of live "exhibits" of aboriginal "specimens." *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is identified as a novel having further Jungian debts (his fifth Tavistock lecture of 1935) and an uneasy relationship to anthropological and ethnographic sources.

If at times Lauret's desire to "explain how the work works without requiring agreement that it does" occasionally softens critical verdicts (it is not until the conclusion that it surely emerges that "activism and writing don't mesh" in *Temple*), the balance between explication and critical assessment overall is judicious. Thus, though the analysis of *Third Life* clearly establishes this novel's qualities, it is also made plain why it is "messy and bloody as well as contradictory and confused." Similarly, Lauret's reading of *Possessing* both illuminates why the sequence Tashi > Evelyn > Evelyn–Tashi > Tashi–Evelyn is exactly appropriate since "the secret of joy" is *both* clitoral sexual pleasure and "resistance" and shows why its polemical message is fatally undermined as Jungian case-history predominates over ethnography. And over-archingly astute is the indictment of Walker's worsening tendency to "mistrust her text, her readers or both" (climaxing in *By the Light of My Father's Smile*). Insights like these ensure that Lauret's study, particularizing Walker outside the field of black women's writing, fully rewards all readers and becomes a necessary undergraduate port-of-call.

*The Nottingham Trent University*

R. J. ELLIS

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Hildegard Hoeller, *Edith Wharton's Dialogue with Realism and Sentimental Fiction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000, £47.95). Pp. 224. ISBN 0 813 01766 1.

Hildegard Hoeller's somewhat prosaically titled book offers an account of the ways in which Edith Wharton "negotiated the limitations of the realist method and explored the possibilities of the sentimental tradition." Hoeller refutes orthodox readings of the trajectory of Wharton's career (early realist triumph marred by a subsequent lapse into sentimentality) and proposes that, in Wharton's work, the relationship between the two modes is one of simultaneity rather than consecutiveness. Crucial to the "dialogue," and central to Hoeller's argument, is *The House of Mirth* which, as she explains, was regarded by Wharton's contemporaries "both as a realist, even satirical, novel and as a sentimental story of spiritual triumph" – an insight which unfortunately rather undercuts the novelty of her own thesis.

Nevertheless, Hoeller is perceptive about Wharton's awareness of critical and readerly expectations of her work, and offers an interesting reading of the mock

reviews which Wharton attached to the manuscript of her juvenile novella *Fast and Loose*. She is thorough in her collation and analysis of contemporary criticism of Wharton's writing, and clearly demonstrates the contradictoriness of the (readerly and critical) imperatives which Wharton was required to satisfy. Her best chapter is the one in which she considers the various tropes of motherhood and illegitimacy in Wharton's fiction (although I was surprised not to see *Summer* discussed here).

Hoeller repeatedly draws attention to the "self-referential" or "self-conscious" nature of Wharton's writing. However, these two terms remain woefully under-interrogated (no Linda Hutcheon, no Patricia Waugh; we are told only, and inaccurately, that "'Self-referentiality' itself has been used to distinguish high art from low art") and thus shorn of some of their undoubted potential.

This exemplifies one of the problems with Hoeller's argument. In order to make her point, she is forced to simplify Wharton's complex manipulation of the two forms, to assert contradiction where there may, in fact, be a continuum. She lapses into a regrettable essentialism (repeatedly distinguishing between "female sentimental fiction" and "male realism") which is belied by the detail of her own argument (specifically, by her emphasis on satirical and ironic elements) and by Wharton's writing.

Hoeller's is a thought-provoking study, although the lengthy and ponderous plot summaries (necessary for some of the lesser-known short stories, but surely not for *The House of Mirth?*) and paucity of theoretical support for her views belie the promise of her thesis.

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Judith Yaross Lee, *Defining New Yorker Humor* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000, £13.60). Pp. 427. ISBN 1578 06198 9.

*New Yorker* occupies a special place in the history of American journalism. Debuting in 1925, the magazine came to set new standards through its probing biographies, conscientious reportage and, especially, its unique brand of humour. Under the helmsmanship of its founding editor, Harold W. Ross, *New Yorker* refined an urbane and sophisticated wit. Decidedly metropolitan in outlook, the magazine was – as Ross himself expounded – categorically “not edited for the old lady in Dubuque.” Coinciding with *New Yorker's* seventy-fifth anniversary, Judith Yaross Lee presents a timely, scholastic and highly entertaining account of this magazine's first five years, giving special regard to its influential *œuvre* of humour and satire.

Drawing extensively on *New Yorker's* archival records (open to researchers only since 1994), the author traces the emergence of an editorial formula geared to a growing local audience of affluent, young sophisticates. Above all, Yaross Lee argues, *New Yorker's* mode of address was epitomised by its distinctive comic style. Wry and sardonic, *New Yorker's* humour had a playfully modernist inflection. Establishing ingenious relations between illustration and caption, its

cartoons issued “an invitation to the reader to discover the joke,” while regular contributions from aspiring literary talents such as James Thurber and E. B. White crafted the magazine’s reputation for sharply observed irony.

Though largely a textual analysis of the magazine itself, Yaross Lee’s study shows with clarity (and an admirable eye for detail) how the success of *New Yorker* was constituent in the broader transformation of American city life during the 1920s. Breaking new ground in the way it targeted specific consumer audiences, the author demonstrates how *New Yorker* was a magazine tailored to the lifestyles of the “smart set” – the rising class of young, moneyed and liberal aesthetes who were providing a ready market for the growing constellation of metropolitan theatres, galleries and commercial recreations. It is, though, the revisionist elements to Yaross Lee’s account that are especially fascinating. Whereas Harold Ross is traditionally cast as a somewhat bumbling editor who fortuitously stumbled across a winning formula, Yaross Lee presents an image of a businessman whose eccentric persona belied an astute and calculating grasp of the consumer market. Moreover, while often attacked for its sexism and misogyny, Yaross Lee identifies in the early *New Yorker* a “radical feminist humour” hitherto side-lined by its critics. With numerous women among its contributors, and consciously cultivating a female readership, *New Yorker* is shown to be a magazine that made specific appeal to the independent and dynamic “new woman” of the 1920s.

*Defining New Yorker Humor* provides historians of American journalism with an incisive account of how the magazine’s editorial policy was shrewdly honed to developments in the consumer market. More generally, the book provides a lively and engaging view of metropolitan popular culture during the Jazz Age and, with its array of cartoons (many never before reprinted), extracts of comic narration and verse, it will appeal to a wide readership – possibly even to “the old lady in Dubuque.”

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John R. Hall, Philip D. Schuyler, and Sylvaine Trinh, *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe, and Japan* (London: Routledge, 2000, £14.99). Pp. 382. ISBN 0 415 19277 3.

Since the deaths of over nine hundred people in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978, public discourse has intertwined new religious movements and mass suicide in a powerful, if distorted, cultural narrative. Interrogating this linkage, sociologist of religion John Hall analyzes five religious groups involved in suicide or murder scenarios – the People’s Temple of Jonestown; the Branch Davidians of Waco, Texas; Aum Shinrikyō of Japan; the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland, France, and Québec; and Heaven’s Gate of Rancho Santa Fe, California – and generates a theoretical model of apocalyptic violence. Devoting a full chapter to each group, Hall and his co-authors (Trinh and Hall co-write the chapter on Aum Shinrikyō and Hall and Schuyler the one on the Solar Temple) search for “how



Apocalypse unfolds,” focusing on the development of apocalyptic meanings within each group and the processes through which they resulted in violence and death. Hall brackets these chapters with an Introduction and Epilogue in which he uses comparative analysis of the groups to develop a two-pronged model describing the cultural structures and processes that link apocalyptic ideas with violence.

Locating apocalyptic thought within a post-modern context of dissolving authorities, Hall argues that some groups embrace a “warring apocalypse of religious conflict” while others adopt a “mystical apocalypse of deathly transcendence.” The first stance is apparent when groups already enmeshed in cultural paranoia stemming from disjunctures in contemporary life locate their enemy outside themselves, in demonic forces that they ultimately equate with persons and organizations attempting to curtail their activities (such as government and private “cult-busters”). These groups’ violent behavior is contingent upon interactions with dissenters and opponents. For instance, when pressed by a child-custody suit and Congressman Leo Ryan’s investigation, Jim Jones and his followers attacked their persecutors and then chose suicide as a statement of resistance. The Branch Davidians, Solar Temple, and Aum Shinrikyō also support this interpretation, although each exhibited strikingly individual trajectories. Hall finds the second, mystical, alternative evident in the Heaven’s Gate suicides and those of several Solar Temple followers, all of which were done in the absence of outside pressure. In this second category, the faithful use ritual performance as a means to escape earth entirely and achieve a radically transformed existence. In the Heaven’s Gate example, members would achieve, through earthly death, a new level of existence on the spaceship hidden behind the Hale-Bopp comet.

This book is particularly valuable in its comparative perspective, which compellingly refutes the view that all mass suicides are parallel. *Apocalypse Observed* demonstrates that a complex variety of cultural meanings and structures inform those instances that have culminated in profound religious violence.

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JEANNE HALGREN KILDE

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Horace Clarence Boyer (text) and Lloyd Yearwood (photography), *The Golden Age of Gospel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, \$19.95). Pp. 272. ISBN 0 252 06877 7.

In *The Golden Age of Gospel*, Horace Clarence Boyer focuses on the “golden” period of gospel, between 1945 and 1965. Boyer’s knowledge of and immersion in the subject matter cannot be questioned. He sets out gospel’s history in a sequence of concise and informative pen portraits of every significant gospel figure, from pioneers such as Thomas Dorsey, to James Cleveland, the 1960s ‘Crown Prince of Gospel.’ The text is leavened throughout with dozens of stunning photographs of gospel performers, which themselves justify the book’s existence.

There is a sense, though, that Boyer is not overly concerned with the historical context of the music. *The Golden Age of Gospel* suffers from Boyer's reluctance to discuss in detail the wider significance of the music. For example, Boyer testifies to the popularity of gospel recording artists such as Mahalia Jackson, but never reveals any sales figures, nor does he examine the influence of such singers on other performers, which would have provided a deeper understanding of gospel's development and its impact on American culture. Boyer also hints at the tension that existed behind its transcendental ecstasy – between its Christian devotion and its secular audience – but never fully explores this subject, which is especially apparent in his examination of Sam Cooke. Boyer's off-hand dismissal of Cooke's soul career suggests that it was a relative failure – a severe underestimation of Cooke's legacy – and this piece sorely needs an examination of Cooke's rejection by the gospel firmament. Despite this problem, the section on the second half of gospel's golden age is the most engaging of the book – Boyer's delight that gospel had reached a wider audience shines through. However, it also suffers from Boyer's lack of confidence when discussing the social and cultural atmosphere in which the music operated. Most glaringly, the birth and burgeoning popularity of soul music – partly attributable to Cooke – and gospel's links with the civil rights movement are barely mentioned.

Perhaps the major shortcoming of this book is Boyer's structure. By examining the singers and groups in isolation, Boyer fails to evoke a sense of communication – which was an essential feature of the gospel movement. As such this leaves the book reading more like a source book on gospel singers and groups. In itself, *The Golden Age of Gospel* will convert those needing an introduction to the careers of gospel's major figures, but readers wishing to contextualise gospel within American culture will, most likely, remain agnostic.

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Donna Krolik Hollenberg (ed.), *H.D. and Poets After* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000, \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper). Pp. 309. ISBN 0 87745 721 2, 0 87745 709 3.

As Donna Hollenberg informs us in her introduction, of the twenty essays that make up *H.D. and Poets After*, “half are by American poets writing about their literary engagement with H.D., and half are by critics writing about H.D. in relation to these same poets.” In no respect, however, are the procedures of poet and critic assumed to be opposed; the “poets” write also as critics, whilst many of the “critics” are themselves published poets. The relationship between the pairs of essays is complementary and dialogical.

This is not a book about “influence.” From the start, that terminology is set aside, both Hollenberg and Carolyn Forché distancing themselves expressly from Harold Bloom. Instead, the authors talk of “affiliation,” “entrancement,” “inspiration,” and spiritual kinship. For Sharon Doubiago, H.D. is an “Eternal Person”, for Frances Jaffer, “a guiding voice”, and for Robert Kelly, a

“presence,” who, years after her death and though he had never met her, “stood there in the room beside and above me,” while he was reading her notebooks and typescripts. Alicia Ostriker all but deifies her: “I hold her in such awe. She is so like a goddess to me.” If the concept of influence is employed, it is stood on its head: thus, Rachel Blau DuPlessis remembers herself and other feminist poets in the late 1970s “inventing H.D. We influenced her work, how it was read, what parts of it were read, why it was interesting.”

The H.D. that most of these poets first encountered was H.D., the quintessential imagist, as she was represented in the earlier anthologies; Pound’s H.D., it may be said, of course unfairly and inaccurately. Nathaniel Mackey, for instance, found that “the image of her that had so much currency – classical, chaste, austere – probably got in the way of [my initial] reading.” But eventually, for all those assembled here, it was H.D. in her middle and later years, the poet of *Trilogy*, *Helen in Egypt*, and *Hermetic Definition*, who came to speak most powerfully. The kinds of her connection with them, or the forms of her inhabiting them, are various, multiple, contradictory indeed: spiritual seriousness, for one; mystery and silence, for another; or “the alignment of poetry, magic, and healing”, or “the inseparability of sexual union from divine love”, “romantic thralldom,” yet also gender ambiguity; “a critique of masculinist war culture,” alongside an awareness of “violence in every landscape”, the destabilization of the authorial “I”, the rejection of the fixed self. However, not all is piety and devotion. Brenda Hillman, intermittently impatient with H.D.’s lofty esotericism, admits on such occasions to the desire to exclaim: “Stop fakin’ it, girl, let’s go outside and smoke.” Overall, though, what this collection of essays confirms, as they interweave impassioned, personal confession with judicious, impersonal investigation, is the size and scale of H.D.’s lifetime achievement. Her *œuvre* is not only fine; it is large and has so much to offer. She is assuredly, in DuPlessis’s phrase, “a poet of grandeur.”

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Catherine J. Golden and Joanna Schneider Zangrando (eds.), *The Mixed Legacy of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (Newark: University of Delaware Press and London: Associated University Presses, 2000, £32). Pp. 235. ISBN 0 874 13688 1.

As the title of this collection of essays states, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the writer, social reformer and champion of women’s rights, has bequeathed us a very “mixed legacy.” Looking back on her life and work from the vantage point of the end of the twentieth century, the contributors to this edition paint a picture of Gilman which is both heroic and disturbing.

The collection is dedicated to the memory of Elaine R. Hedges, who died in 1997, a few weeks before the Second International Charlotte Perkins Gilman Conference at Skidmore College (to which occasion this book owes its existence), and many of the contributors honour the pioneering spirit of the woman whom

Hedges celebrated in 1973 in her “Afterword” to the Feminist Press edition of “The Yellow Wall-Paper.” Since that time, Gilman has been the subject of much research. As we learn more about her life, and as more of her articles are unearthed from previously obscure sources, many unpalatable facts about her racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-Semitism are emerging. In some ways, it is no bad thing to see Gilman “warts and all.” As Gary Scharnhorst argues in conclusion to his essay, “Historicizing Gilman: A Bibliographer’s View,” we have to be prepared to read *all* that Gilman wrote, not just those writings that match our conception of her as a hero, and, more importantly, to read them within the historical context: “Rather than read her writings selectively, rather than appropriate from them only those ideas we can adapt to our purposes, rather than remake Gilman into some kind of femme ideal or role model, I believe that as scholars we should read all of her work we can find but read it critically, measuring her achievement on a historical template, situating her not only in our time but in her own.” Reinforcing this argument and supplying data for its implementation is Denise D. Knight’s work on the Gilman diaries. Knight’s essay, “On Editing Gilman’s Diaries”, gives a detailed account of the difficulties and rewards of her project and also makes a good case for the importance of the diaries, however apparently trivial the recorded events, as social documents and as a research resource. As she states: “From the inception of this project, then, it was my objective to document the daily *living*, trivial events included, and to encourage students and scholars to use the published diaries as a tool to facilitate their own research.”

The diaries provide irrefutable evidence of Gilman’s racism and also of her surprising compassion towards at least one individual African American. While many of the essayists deal with this split in the Gilman psyche and current reactions to it, others deal with a wide variety of issues. Amongst them are useful comparisons of her work to that of three contemporary writers: Frederick Wegener compares her to Edith Wharton, Charlotte Margolis Goodman to Edith Summers Kelley and Ann Heilmann to Oscar Wilde. There is also a detailed interpretation by Heather Kirk Thomas of that “enigmatic signifier” the yellow wall-paper as an example both of late Victorian interior decoration and of Gilman’s skilful subversion of a common cultural artefact.

The range of depth of this collection reflects that of Gilman’s work. Despite her undeniable short-comings she has left us a substantial legacy in her fearless intolerance of the inequities for women which were, and are still, perpetuated within a patriarchal social and economic order.

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MAUREEN STILL