linked to efforts to assassinate Castro. The CIA counted on mass uprisings by the Cuban people, if CIA assets could "eliminate" Castro, his brother Raúl Castro, and the Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Jones further speculates, albeit he cannot prove, that President Kennedy cancelled air strikes when he learned in mid-April that efforts to assassinate Castro had fallen short (92).

The educated public will enjoy this book. The book jacket appropriately publicizes Jones's writing style as "dramatic," "hard-hitting," and "riveting." Scholars, however, will ask hard questions about the substance of the work. This is the "view-from-Washington" approach. Jones has not interviewed Cubans, used Spanish-language sources, or cited major studies on Cuban history. A review of Cuban sources might lead a scholar to depict the Bay of Pigs as less a US disaster and more a Cuban victory. The Cubans took heavy casualties during the invasion. But Castro led well, his forces fought fiercely, and the population remained loyal to the Cuban Revolution. Jones's extensive research in US records also does not add much to what has already been revealed by James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh (1998), Don Bohning (2005), and Piero Gleijeses (2002). Jones insists that the invasion "marked the beginning of a new and more dangerous era in American foreign relations" (171), and the book is part of a series, Pivotal Moments in American History. But the Bay of Pigs invasion was not a new endeavor. The cast of CIA characters who planned the Bay of Pigs carried out the covert intervention in Guatemala in 1954.

An exclusive focus on US miscalculations and misjudgments may miss a larger truth about President Kennedy's foreign policies. Kennedy acted aggressively, precipitating confrontations with the communist world. He and his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, remained obsessed with Castro's Cuba from 1961 to 1963. But Kennedy has won high marks from presidential scholars because the President behaved in a restrained manner in the midst of crisis. During both the Berlin and Cuban missile crises, he rejected advice that could have led to nuclear conflict. Historians like Robert Dallek (2003) have made the case that Kennedy, with his characteristic caution, would have never followed the military course that President Lyndon Baines Johnson did in Vietnam. An extensive US role during the Bay of Pigs – massive air strikes and the dispatch of US marines – would have had incalculable consequences for US standing in Latin America and the world. A US "victory" could have led to a lengthy, costly, and dangerous occupation of the island. Perhaps President Kennedy deserves credit for turning his back on this.

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Tim Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, $60.00). Pp. lii + 225. ISBN 978 0 231 13544 3.

Hodgdon's book brings ethnographic methods to history in a detailed study that is genuinely interdisciplinary. While the apparent focus is on masculinities of the time, and how they were (and were not) countercultural, the real strength of the discussion reflects the author's analytical skills in making his object interestingly

complex: masculinity is always expressed in and through race, class, sexuality, philosophy, religion and any number of other ways in which the world can be made to "make sense". Because the communities in question are American, the post-colonial framework is exceptionally interesting: Hodgdon records "white" appropriations from colonizing Europe and colonized Asia, as well as from romanticized black and Native American cultures, which have their own "internal" histories.

The interest here is not simply in these appropriations, which Hodgdon documents from memoirs and interviews, but in the way that they were used discursively to construct alliances, and conversely to humiliate and exclude, even in anarchist communities. Overall his thesis is that countercultural males invented themselves and their male-dominated countercultural societies, one way or another, against an "other" of crew-cut, militarized rednecks and grey-suited organization and family men of the 1950s. One of the more bizarre moments is a countercultural masculine identification with black "toughness" via Marlon Brando's leather look in *The Wild One* (1954). Other bizarre moments arise when sex and sexuality, spoken and performed, function as weapons in conflicts between countercultural groups themselves, and not just between them and "the pigs," for instance.

The issues that drive the book are really wrapped up in two social and intellectual revolutions that have intertwined since the late 1960s and early 1970s. In Hodgdon's view these are, firstly, radical feminism, where the political focus shifts from public inequalities in employment and life chances to domestic and thus interpersonal power differentials between men and women, and, secondly, gay liberation, which challenged the pervasive homophobia through which sexed and raced inferiors were constructed discursively and marginalized in practice. The book thus traces a complex process through which the people of the time – including women, who play important roles in Hodgdon's analysis – negotiated their political "otherness" to conventional society using ideas and practices that seem today to be dated and unenlightened, yet in doing so they helped these larger processes along, if sometimes unwittingly. What emerges is that countercultural ideologies and concerns had little to do with the most important social movements of the next forty years in terms that can be overtly traced, yet in their way – and maybe only metaphorically – they were instrumental in remaking America.

When Hodgdon looks back at the past through memoirs and recollections there is very little to be seen of same-sex desire and relationships, and instead an all-too familiar invisibility and homophobia. The situation with respect to women and feminism is rather better, in that he finds some evidence of a developing egalitarianism between the sexes, even though the commonplace ideologies of the countercultural movement traced an American history of sexual difference and male privilege. Mostly these minor forms of equalization occurred in practical and domestic activities without much self-conscious notice, but the discussions of reproduction, birthing, motherhood and childcare are interesting – they seem to track what was going on in the "other world" of conventional society.

What gets rather less time in Hodgdon's vision is the challenge to capitalist consumerism, both urban-based and farm-based. While there is some economic detail, he does not take "free food" and suchlike all that seriously and opts rather swiftly for the sad end of some communities in "decollectivization" agreements. An examination of the prehistory of "green" and ecological ideologies might have been

interesting here, and perhaps in that sense the countercultural histories recounted so thoroughly might look more up to date.

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Michael E. Brown, *The Historiography of Communism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009, £19.99/$25.95). Pp. 256. ISBN 978 15921 3922 4.

At its most innovative, Michael E. Brown's *The Historiography of Communism* perceptively considers why historical study of the American left is important. A long introductory essay and two-chapter reflection on "Issues in the Historiography of Communism" raise a number of signal issues. Commentator–historians such as Theodore Draper and Irving Howe are foregrounded as exemplars of an "anti-communist" mode of historiography (8), ultimately subject to the logic of the Cold War, and useful only because it indicates how "certain claims to know everything that needs to be known about socialism and communism were made plausible" (89). In opposition, Brown offers the notion of a "critical" historiography of the American left, practiced by historians wary of Werner Sombart's 1906 question, "why is there no socialism in the United States?" (4)

He suggests that there have always been portions of the American population ready to embrace radical politics, the historical significance of which should not be judged purely by their inability to capture power within the institutional structures of the "nation" (91–92). Instead, Brown recommends that historians emphasize "extra-institutional forces and processes," thereby foregrounding the experience of "the people" within "society" (93). As such, the left is registered as "a constant manifestation of something immanent to society," rather than a waxing and waning social force capable of ideological confrontation with the state only in moments of crisis (7). However, it is this opposition to "generational" conceptions of left history that raises the first of a number of problems. Brown encourages scholars not to categorize "deaths," "births" or "interim periods" in the history of radical struggle, suggesting that to see certain movements as episodic is to deny their "rationality" (23–25). Surely, though, historical writing is an essentially periodizing process, and each and every left that emerges attempts to define itself (however truthfully) in opposition to its forbearers? To suggest, then, that scholars must be doing radical politics a disservice by mapping generational vicissitudes seems gratuitously idealistic.

Another drawback stems from the fact that the essays collected in *The Historiography of Communism* were originally written in the period 1978–95. Whilst occasional nods to work undertaken in the intervening fourteen years are included, it is hard to excuse a text on this subject published in 2009 that barely engages with the work of Michael Denning, Van Gosse or Maurice Isserman, amongst others. Furthermore, there are formal problems with Brown's writing that are impossible to ignore. First, he composes jargon-heavy, overly circuitous prose that renders comprehension unnecessarily difficult. Second, the term "communism" is never accurately defined. Often it appears to be synonymic with "left." However, its use