

collection's – groundbreaking mandate, however, there are times when *One Step over the Line* does not quite transcend its conference origins. The essays work best when they reflect the comparative framework of the collection itself, but this framework is not always maintained. For instance, Margaret D. Jacobs's attention to the removal of Native American children to boarding schools would have been enriched by some comparison with residential schools in Canada, either in the essay itself or if another essay on residential schools north of the border had been included. Curiously, although Jacobs invokes comparisons between the American schools and the Australian schools to which the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children were subject, Canada goes unmentioned. Similarly, Helen Raptis's engagement with the role of white women in the education of interned Japanese Canadian children during the Second World War cries out for a comparison with the education of Japanese American children during this time period. A further puzzling exclusion in the collection is the fact that, amongst the several important discussions of mixed-race society developed as a consequence of the fur trade, references to British Columbia Governor James Douglas omit the fact that he himself was of mixed-race descent.

Essays primarily focussed on retelling the lives of Western women would have benefited from further analysis of these lives and their implications, as the fascinating personal histories are often left to speak for themselves a little too much. An exception to this quibble is the inclusion of excerpts from Cheryl Foggo's *Pourin' Down Rain*, which effectively and eloquently punctures the myth of Canada's racial tolerance through Foggo's experiences of growing up African Canadian in Alberta.

On the whole, however, these first steps across the lines of nation-state and gendered borders successfully argue for a dislodging of the primacy of male-centred approaches to the histories of both Canadian and American Wests. Perhaps most effectively, several essays foreground the methodological challenges of focussing on the histories of women in the North American Wests, exhibiting a self-reflexivity and a desire to proceed as ethically as possible in this emerging field of women's cross-border history.

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Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, £24.95/\$34.95). Pp. xiv + 318. ISBN 978 0 520 25301 8.

The flamboyantly tailored zoot suit, with its wide shoulders, cinched waist, and ballooning trousers, was one of the most outlandish fashions of the 1940s. Worn primarily (though not exclusively) by African American and Mexican American youth, it was emblematic of a culture that emphasized style, pleasure and recreation, which blurred racial boundaries, and which developed amid the leisure and consumer opportunities afforded by the wartime economy. For those in authority, however, it symbolized juvenile delinquency and the threat of home-front instability, and was a fad that needed to be repressed. In this excellent book, Luis Alvarez explores the significance of zoot culture in the United States, and places it into a

wider context of war-related social, economic and political change. Facing restricted access to the jobs created in the wartime economy and continued racist discrimination, Alvarez argues that African American and Mexican American youth used style and popular culture to challenge the status quo and assert their own distinctive identities. While he is careful not to ascribe a single meaning to the zoot and recognises the multiplicity of zoot-suiters' experiences, he argues that style was just one way by which non-white youth questioned dominant ideas of American identity and claimed personal dignity in a society that denied them full rights at home yet encouraged them to fight for freedom abroad. Alvarez also points out the contradiction inherent in the zoot-suiters' actions. While they resisted segregation and challenged constrictive notions of race and gender on one level, the relationship between zoot-suiters reinforced traditional gender roles and, moreover, "zoot suiter consumption fueled the wartime economy that helped alienate them to begin with" (11). The questions that this poses lie at the heart of this study.

Influenced by the classic accounts of youth subcultures written during the 1970s by members of the Birmingham School, Alvarez's work is a notable contribution to the literature on subcultures, style and resistance. Moreover, the zoot culture it describes is a precursor to the consumption-driven youth culture of later in the century. Alvarez recognizes the power of consumption as an expressive, sometimes subversive, force, and this study can be placed alongside work that investigates the origins of youth culture and the history of consumption. When describing changes to the wartime economy or the series of race riots that rocked American cities during 1943, Alvarez pulls together an impressive range of source material, notably press reports, government papers, and other archival sources, but the book fizzes into life in the sections that discuss the intricacies of zoot fashion, style, music and dance. These rely heavily on oral history, in particular a series of in-depth interviews with former zoot-suiters (including the author's great uncle), to capture the voices of those involved, something often missing from previous scholarship on zoot culture. The result is a book that is likely to become a defining work on the subject and will become required reading for anyone interested in the history of youth style in America.

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Patricia Appelbaum, *Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture between World War I and the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, \$39.95). Pp. 330. ISBN 978 0 8078 3267 7.

This well-researched and timely book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of twentieth-century pacifism, not as it was abstractly theorized but as it was lived by several generations of Americans. Echoing *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, Charles Payne's classic study of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Patricia Appelbaum contends that "religious pacifism was, and by implication is, a culture, not only an ethical and moral commitment" (2). Yes, pacifists had their intellectual heavyweights – Kirby Page, A. J. Muste, and Georgia