economic, cliometric, or institutional theories of technological change. Comparativists may yearn for alternative, or even counterfactual, examples, namely, the why Japan but not Mexico puzzle? What other paths were open for Mexico to catch-up with a continuously accelerating global revolution in technology? Were social factors, such as Mexico's internalized *colonial heritage* caste and class inequalities, as much as proximity to a scientific metropole, also barriers to technological diffusion and agency? Do places further from the Rio Grande reveal more *learning by doing*, as suggested, for example, by the case of railways in Chile? Was technological autonomy feasible in activities associated with deeply Mexican consumption styles (such as tortilla factories) or unique resources (such as henequen or tequila industries)? Aging *dependistas* (followers of 1970s dependency theory), if such mythical beasts exist, might wonder overall about abstracting the forms and impact of technology from larger patterns of export trades, economic liberalism, foreign investment, postcolonial social structures, and the global *division of labor*. In other words, are there more holistic approaches to the problems of technological lag? Beatty's valuable book on this crucial topic raises bigger questions than it resolves

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Anne Balay. *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xi + 172 pp. ISBN 978-1-4696-1400-7, $34.95 (cloth); ISBN 978-1-4696-1401-4, $16.19 (e-book).

Two of the questions that concern scholars dealing with queer studies are how to resolve the paradox of visibility and how to come up with an anchored definition of queer identity. Since Jacques Foucault redirected us to the creation of the homosexual as an agency, the complex interrelation between culture and society has exposed profound contradictions in terms of appearance versus essence and public versus private. As Elisa Glick convincingly argues, these tensions emerge and intensify with the capitalist modes of production and the mores of modernity.[1]

1. Elisa Glick, *Materializing Queer Desire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 5.

Because of that, queer subjects until now were represented as a homogeneous group: white, upper or middle class, educated, sophisticated, and urban. Anne Balay's *Steel Closets*, a welcome addition to the discussion, changes the focus and concentrates on working-class individuals living in small, closed communities. Her monograph brings to the foreground the voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender steelworkers, most of them from northern Indiana, and exposes as well as analyzes the intricacies of queer sexual identities in nonurban environments and the perils of (in)visibility. In times in which LGBTQ politics keep lifting nonheteronormative causes associated with the power of coming out in certain privileged environments, Balay's book reminds us that not all same-sex desires and queer identities fit the same mold. Large nonheterosexual populations, which until recently had remained underrepresented by queer studies, do not conform to the assumed idea of queerness; and for some, the closet, instead of a symbol of denial and cowardice, still stands as a locus of resistance.

Two quotes serve to delineate the parameters of Balay's study: one by John Howard and the other by Judith Halberstam. Howard argues that "[n]otions and experiences of male-male desire are in perpetual dialectical relationship with the spaces in which they occur, mutually shaping one another."[2] Halberstam, in turn, states, "[m]ost queer work on community, social identity, and gender roles has been based on and in urban populations, and exhibits an active disinterest in the productive potential of nonmetropolitan sexualities, genders, and identities."[3]

Balay expands Howard's paradigm to incorporate female–female desire and responds to Halberstam's assertion by giving voice to an underrepresented queer population with an uneven fight: coping with the dangers of their jobs while fully expressing or, in most cases, masking their nonnormative sexualities and identities. The result is an insightful exploration that cross-sections class, gender, and sexuality in nonurban America.

The first three chapters serve as a prelude to the core of the study: the testimonials. Chapter 1 sets the scene and provides cultural background on the region of northwest Indiana and its mills. Chapter 2 analyzes the dialectics of sexual identity and visibility in the context of changing economic patterns and how they affect those who fall outside the realm of perceived normativity. Chapter 3 explores the

2. John Howard, *Men Like That* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. xiv.

3. Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 34.

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logic of secrecy and its consequences in an environment such as the mill, where most queer steelworkers remain closeted and live in fear or experience harassment, violence, and even rape.

A strong component throughout the book, the testimonial accounts, gain relevance in Chapters 4 and 5 as they account for the experiences of female and male gay steelworkers shaped by the dominant macho culture at the mill. The author analyzes the genders separately because nonheterosexual males and females are not in parallel situations. These chapters serve as irrefutable affirmation of what queer theorists, such as Judith Butler and Tim Dean, have outlined regarding the body, desire, and the fallacy of binaries.[4] Lesbians, for example, fit in much more easily than gay men because they share the same object of desire as the heterosexual male coworkers. In the case of men, homosexual acts are perceived in terms of active or passive roles and, in most cases, remain disconnected from sexual identification or queer identity.

Chapter 6 connects queer sexuality to crucial variables, such as health, and Chapter 7, the union; both chapters explore deficiencies and inequalities suffered by nonheterosexual workers in both areas. Finally, in the appendix, Balay lists the forty narrators with aliases to protect their identities. This is an excellent strategy because it humanizes the voices of the workers and gives them a body, an appearance, and hints of a personality. Another useful editorial strategy that serves the reader well is the use of italics to highlight the verbatim reproduction of the workers' testimonies and differentiate them from the author's prose.

The book is intended for a broad audience. It provides enough theoretical apparatus to project the different stories into more general contexts and reach conclusions beyond the mere anecdote. The chapters provide thematic material that sheds light into working-class sexualities from multiple angles: cultural, sexual, medical, and professional. In that sense, it is a book recommended, though not exclusively, for introductory queer studies courses. Other disciplines, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, will benefit from Balay's work. Business historians in particular will be able to extract valuable data for further research regarding the development of sexual orientation in the workplace under specific economic conditions and social environments.

Moreover, the stories chronicled in the book not only provide ample material for analysis in academic courses, but also shape themselves as a source of essential information for general readers seeking

4. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1–34; Tim Dean, *Beyond Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 174–214.

to improve their knowledge on queer issues. Anyone interested in different manifestations of human sexuality will find this book fascinating and appealing.

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Nancy Shoemaker. *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. x + 303 pp. ISBN 9781469622576, $34.95 (cloth).

Nancy Shoemaker's *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* is an important addition to the growing literature on what Martha Hodes ("The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race," *American Historical Review* 108, 2003) has memorably termed "the mercurial nature" of race. Clearly written and persuasively argued, *American Whalemen and the World* examines how Native Americans who served on nineteenth-century New England whaleships experienced being Indian as they traveled around the world and then returned home. Race, as scholars have often observed, is contingent on time and place. What Shoemaker adds to this understanding is the degree to which racial classifications are also situational. Shoemaker illustrates how the situation in which a native New England whaleman found himself shaped how others thought about him as an Indian and thus his lived experience of being Indian. Native New England whalemen experienced race in a number of different ways, depending on whether they were aboard ship ("The Ship," Chapters 1, 2, and 3); on a beach in the Pacific Ocean, encountering another kind of native ("The Beach," Chapters 4, 5, and 6); a foreign resident on a Pacific island ("Islands," Chapters 7, 8, and 9); or back in New England ("The Reservation," Chapter 10).

New England whaleships were perhaps as close to a meritocracy as any Indian was likely to experience in the nineteenth century. Because of a pressing need for labor that created a racially diverse workforce and a desire to maximize profits, ship owners hired Indians they deemed to be capable whalemen to serve as officers. Native American officers enjoyed the privileges of rank in better accommodations, as well as the knowledge that owners, crews, and the law