

and after the war and the city's affiliation with Radical Republicanism, Harrison provides a tedious but worthwhile reassessment of the much-maligned Freedmen's Bureau. He argues that historians writing in the 1970s and 1980s unfairly saddled the bureau with their own anachronistic and thereby unrealistic expectations – expectations that failed to reflect the dire social and economic circumstances faced by the bureau in the late 1860s and 1870s. In the process of reassessing the bureau's story, Harrison highlights how black Washingtonians took an active role in bureau affairs and how the bureau did manage to relatively improve sanitation, housing, and health care in the city. Most importantly, Harrison reveals how “aspects of the bureau's character and purpose are only revealed by considering its work in the cities” (107–8).

The main thrust of *Washington during the Civil War and Reconstruction* revolves around the idea that Radical Republicans consistently tested their policy reforms – which ranged from emancipation to black suffrage to railway desegregation to black public schools – in the District of Columbia before enacting them at the national level. Under these arrangements and prior to Congressional usurpation of political authority in Washington, African Americans mobilized, flourished as activists and politicians at the grassroots level, and harnessed political participation to shape their own lives like never before. In these chapters, arguably the best in the book, Harrison underscores how Senators Charles Sumner and Henry Wilson were, albeit very briefly, able to offer African Americans in a *southern city* the core elements of American citizenship. And while Republican success in Washington was clearly short-lived, it stands to remind readers of what potential had actually existed and to reinforce how much progress was actually squandered.

In the end, the book is not without issue. Just how precisely the wartime and Reconstruction experiences of Washingtonians and their city could have realistically mirrored those of southerners in defeated and then heavily occupied locales may bother some readers. Even still, Harrison's use of Washington as a forerunning case study for the early successes and much broader failures of Reconstruction in the South is both innovative and generally very convincing. With this in mind, *Washington during the Civil War and Reconstruction*, sporting its intended emphasis on black agency and a “grassroots” perspective of the immediate postwar years, is an excellent – though quite pricey at ninety dollars – addition to Reconstruction scholarship.

The University of Georgia

MATTHEW C. HULBERT

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Deanna Fernie, *Hawthorne, Sculpture, and the Question of American Art* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, £55.00). Pp. xii + 281. ISBN 978 0 7546 5479 7.

Deanna Fernie's book is aptly named: while its immediate subject is Nathaniel Hawthorne's use of sculpture as an analog for his own writing, it also explores a number of provocative questions about the role of American art in nineteenth-century literature and culture. Her analysis of Hawthorne's use of sculpture is itself multi-faceted, looking at a variety of his works to show how he presents this art as both more limited and at times more capacious than the more inchoate art of storytelling. At the same time, she extends her analysis to raise questions about other aesthetic forms, such as the fragment, the outline, the sketch, and the ruin, as well as about painting and portraiture. While at times the sheer number of issues that Fernie raises obscures her central arguments, her book gives a magisterial account “of what sculpture is doing in

Hawthorne's work as a whole," as she puts it (19), as well as an illuminating discussion of the philosophical, theoretical, and historical underpinnings that inform our understanding of this relation.

Hawthorne's most extended account of sculpture occurs in *The Marble Faun*, and for this reason it is no surprise that the study's final chapter presents a nuanced reading of this work, with a particular focus on the incomplete bust of Donatello and its implications for the unfinished nature of Hawthorne's romance. Fernie also devotes a chapter-long case study to "Drowne's Wooden Image," a tale that is likewise most obviously concerned with sculpture. At the same time, she finds sculptural allusions and metaphors in a number of other works, including not only *The Scarlet Letter* but also lesser-studied sketches such as "A Select Party," "Chippings of a Chisel," "The Great Stone Face," and "Footprints on the Seashore." Her readings of these sketches remind us why they should be studied more often; she shows that they frame important questions about Hawthorne's conceptions of artistic agency and reception as well as about the relative merits of the miniature and fleeting as opposed to the monumental and prophetic. Similarly, Fernie's readings of better-known works reveal some intriguing tensions. Her analysis of *The Scarlet Letter's* "Another View of Hester," for example, shows how Hawthorne uses sculptural imagery to slow down the narrative through an ekphrastic moment that explores interior as well as exterior points of view. *The Marble Faun*, in contrast, emphasizes the relative weakness of the written word in capturing the reality of representation. In it, Hawthorne employs what Fernie calls a "risky strategy" to show that the "pasts" and "inner thoughts" of characters can never be fully known, and in this sense are like sculptures – which at the same time have the advantage of having an "objectifying power" (214, 216).

The historical context that Fernie brings to bear on such moments of artistic self-reflexivity includes theories of art and imagination by Schlegel, Lessing, Coleridge, and Emerson, as well as a number of actual sculptures and paintings, reproductions of many of which she includes in the book. For example, she interestingly compares Thomas Eakins's *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* to Hawthorne's vision of the artisan Drowne in his carving studio, and, by extension, to Hawthorne in his study. She is not particularly concerned with the biographical or publishing context that informs Hawthorne's self-reflexivity, as many other scholars have been, preferring to focus on what she calls, borrowing another sculptural metaphor, the "chisel marks" that Hawthorne leaves behind in his published works (242).

Her emphasis on aesthetics and representation also informs her understanding of what she terms "the larger question of America's status as a new nation still in the process of being formed" (13) and the role of art in articulating that political process. Although she examines a number of European and British contexts, her primary argument is an exceptionalist one, looking at the problem of originality and distinctiveness for Hawthorne and his contemporaries and how "the double trajectory of fragment and project, as two sides of the same coin, symbolizes the problem" they faced (111). She examines this context by looking at how some mid-century American writers and artists viewed themselves in relation to their European predecessors, particularly the iconic figure of Michelangelo. This part of her argument is most successful when it helps illuminate the philosophical framework that Hawthorne's work both advances and reflects: a framework that looks at central tensions between, for example, process and product, material medium and immaterial interpretation, exterior surface and interior mind, and ideal form and real imperfection. She is particularly perceptive

when describing how ruins functioned as both vestiges of a fading culture and opportunities for building a new one. Her approach is less successful, however, when she turns to the politics of race and slavery. At various points in the book, she touches on this subject only then to sidestep it. “The racial implications of color notwithstanding, ‘Drowne’s Wooden Image’ focuses on the artist in America, including the literary artist,” she writes, for example, turning then to a compelling argument about the masthead’s status between American folk art and the higher art associated with European marble (156). At the same time, her identification of some of these racialized images points to some productive future directions in Hawthorne studies.

Overall, this engrossing book provides richly detailed readings of many of Hawthorne’s works while opening up important questions about his goals as an author and artist. At a time when some literary critics are turning to cognitive science for an understanding of “the mind’s self-experience in the act of thinking,” as Coleridge puts it (quoted at 171), Fernie shows how an author’s self-reflexive attention to the interaction between art and writing can speak to this same topic while also inviting readers to understand “the necessity of perplexity as a full response to the tangled density of human moral life” (252).

Ohio State University

SUSAN S. WILLIAMS

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John Holmes, *Darwin’s Bards: British and American Poetry in the Age of Evolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, £65.00/\$95.00). Pp. xiv + 288. ISBN 978 0 7486 3940 3.

Darwin’s Bards offers a comprehensive assessment of how a range of American and British poets over the last 150 years have addressed the question of Darwinism. Considering a diverse assortment of poets, from Alfred Tennyson and Charles Algernon Swinburne to Thomas Hardy, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Thom Gunn, and Edwin Morgan, John Holmes demonstrates in considerable detail how poets have contended with the intellectual, philosophical, spiritual, and moral implications of Darwin’s theories of evolution. Holmes makes a compelling case for recognizing how poetry informs contemporary perceptions and understandings of Darwinism and illuminates, by means of some deft close readings of pertinent poems, what it means “to live in a Darwinian world” (5). Holmes begins his book with some attentive close readings of two poems by the contemporary Scottish poet Edwin Morgan (1920–2010) which serve to illustrate “the different things a poet can do with Darwinism” (28). It is to Holmes’s credit that he sustains this quality of close reading throughout his book. Indeed, one of the principal pleasures when reading *Darwin’s Bards* is the way in which Holmes scrupulously reads and explicates his broad range of poems. Indeed, by his own diligent example Holmes partly answers one of his most salient questions, “how can a poem alter our perspective on a scientific world view such as Darwinism?” (27).

In addition to these insightful analyses of what Holmes persuasively argues are “Darwinian” poems, Holmes also takes great effort in explaining how Darwinism itself, or rather interpretations of it, have dynamically and contentiously evolved over a 150-year period. Indeed, Holmes’s book is particularly useful for comprehending Darwin’s ideas in the context of the scientific milieu of his own time, as well as for