

Book Reviews

***Folded Selves: Colonial New England Writing in the World System.* By Michelle Burnham. Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press. 2007. viii, 222 pp. Paper, \$30.00.**

***Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England.* By David D. Hall. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press. 2008. xi, 233 pp. \$49.95.**

Writers in New England were always aware, Michelle Burnham demonstrates, of their implication in an emerging world system of trade that directly impacted their social experiments, theological debates, and relations with indigenous populations. David Hall offers a sociology of publishing in seventeenth-century colonial America that tracks texts as they traveled from authors to scribes, coteries, and readerships on both sides of the Atlantic. Where Burnham's book encourages us to reread a selection of standard colonial American works, Hall's study calls for a thorough rethinking of the assumptions we bring to our notions of the composition, production, and circulation of colonial writing.

In *Folded Selves*, Burnham's close readings of canonical New England texts expose an economic substratum of mercantile language that refers to contracts, credit, and fluctuating value. In contrast to other critics who tend to focus on theological debates, the dissenting tradition, or the origins of U.S. exceptionalism, Burnham shows that colonial subjects were concerned that their everyday material world might well be governed by the mysteries of the market. In contrast to the murkiness attending material exchange, the spiritual economy governing one's relation to God was relatively clear and could be expressed and received in plain speech. While by no means alone in calling attention to the use of economic language in colonial American writing, Burnham is the first to argue that this language pervades New England letters precisely because commercial life was suspiciously lacking in trans-

parency. Thus her discussion of *Of Plymouth Plantation* attends to William Bradford's rendering of the business agreement between the planters and the merchants who underwrote the project. She reads Thomas Morton's use of the conventions of pastoralism in *New English Canaan* (1637) as a style practice more suitable for the economy of an English manor house than a New England farm. A chapter on the antinomian controversy argues similarly that Anne Hutchinson's "understanding of language remains . . . perfectly consistent with her theological position and with the economic ideology associated with merchants" (108). Burnham's chapter on Roger Williams teases out the relationship between his theology and his economics. In each case, her attention to the nuances of style and its interplay with economics produces new and engaging readings of familiar seventeenth-century texts.

I have three quibbles with Burnham's conceptual framework. First, I have never found that Marxist historiography works particularly well in an early American context that calls for a model capable of accounting for such contrasting economies as those of Bradford's Plymouth Plantation and Morton's Merrymount. This model suppresses the distinctive features of the country-house economy of seventeenth-century England, not to mention that of the New England colonies. My second concern is the tendency to identify an interpersonal "anxiety" as the motive for writing and reading. It never fails to bewilder me how a specific use of language can serve as a sign of such anxiety and then be given a source in actual people that tautologically confirms the meaning of the text. Third, by citing Emmanuel Wallerstein's world system theory in her title, Burnham led me to expect that her study would flesh out a so-called periphery by referencing various colonial sites, but it fails to do so. Although Burnham's individual case studies cannot support her larger claims, in my estimation this does not diminish the strength of her close readings.

In *Ways of Writing*, Hall distinguishes two technologies for publishing in seventeenth-century New England: scribal copy and printing. Where printing may have promised a wider and more anonymous audience, scribal copying guaranteed that sensitive matters remained within a coterie of like-minded individuals, most of whom may have known the author personally. What interests me about these two technologies is how they interact and thereby challenge much of what we assume about the authenticity of a text and the status of the author as the creator of a text.

This study of the publishing process argues that many of the colonial works were not in fact products of single authors. It took any number of different hands to publish a book, each stage of which could modify its style or even its substance. Indeed, colonial writers understood publishing as a collaborative effort, one which could easily occur at times without the knowledge of the author. In 1642 John Cotton was surprised by a printed edition of some of his sermons that he had not authorized for publication. A member of Cotton's congregation had taken notes on the sermons and passed these on to John Humfrey, who carried the notes to a London printer who published them as

a collection of sermons delivered by Cotton with Humfrey's preface. In other cases, an author anticipated such collaboration as the manuscript passed from his hand to the next stage of the process where other hands might add to and edit it until it was published as a printed book. Hall cites cases where such intermediaries were asked to "improve" the text. Nor could one say the book was complete when the author sent it off to be copied by a scribe or delivered to a printer in Cambridge, Boston, or London. Copyist, editor, printer, or bookseller might modify it. In addition to those works originally intended for print publication, a great body of writing ranging from Bradford's sermons to Anne Bradstreet's poetry was first made available in the form of handwritten copies.

Hall's historical research changes our understanding of what a text is as well as the historical reality we can infer from any example of colonial writing. John Winthrop's *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruine of the Antinomians*, for example, is without question one of the most important accounts of that event. Does it matter if, as Hall demonstrates, Winthrop was not the author of this book? Can we learn to rethink such texts as rising from a complex chain of material practices rather than the conflicted operations of an author's mind? Hall has given scholars of early American literature a great deal of new work to do.

Leonard Tennenhouse, Duke University

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Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature. By Laura L. Mielke. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press. 2008. xii, 255 pp. Paper, \$26.95.

The Transatlantic Indian, 1776–1930. By Kate Flint. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press. 2008. xv, 376 pp. \$39.50.

All That Remains: Varieties of Indigenous Expression. By Arnold Krupat. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press. 2009. xv, 229 pp. Paper, \$25.00.

Over the last decade, literary criticism in Native American studies has undergone a marked shift from the ethnographic to the political, taking up questions about the ways Native writing and representations engage dominant social contexts and insisting on the significance of indigenous expressions. Key debates center on the relative autonomy of Native culture, or the extent to which its meanings emerge from individual tribal, transnational, colonial, or global contexts. Regardless of their positions in these debates, scholars increasingly emphasize the vexed connections between representation and politics, the colonial contexts of historical and contemporary Native writing,

and the necessity of acknowledging indigenous peoples as agents in political and cultural interactions. Taken together, the three works under review point to the crucial but frequently overlooked significance of Native America in colonial national contexts as they also position writing, as well as cultural production more broadly, as a vital form of political engagement.

Laura Mielke's *Moving Encounters* examines the political possibilities of sentimentalism in debates about the Indian Question in the historical period surrounding the 1830 Removal Act, the federal policy that mandated relocation of southeastern Indian nations to the West. "Moving encounters," or emotionally charged scenes between Natives and whites that encouraged mutual sympathy, flourished in antebellum literature and reflected changes in Indian-white relations. Sentimental rhetoric, Mielke insists, served multiple and sometimes conflicting ideological purposes. Often sentimentalism implied the inevitability of expansionist policies such as removal, reinforced racial hierarchies that privileged whites, and positioned emotion as a sufficient response to political problems. Yet these encounters, including those in works by Native writers, also offered critiques of federal Indian policies and expansionism, and they carried possibilities for transforming Indian-white relations by countering the greed and prejudice that fueled removal. These contrary dimensions of sentimental rhetoric, argues Mielke, reveal a tension in the removal policy between benevolent paternalism and refusals to honor treaty agreements, and they mark a historical transition from negotiation with Indian nations to the consolidation of U.S. imperial rule.

Although this book focuses on Native issues, it also considers how moving encounters between Indians and whites contributed to the emergence of transcendentalism and engaged broad debates in antebellum U.S. culture such as those surrounding gender, slavery, and Southern nationalism. The study analyzes a wide range of literature, performance, and ethnography, including works by James Fenimore Cooper, Lydia Maria Child, William Apess, Henry David Thoreau, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and Jane Johnston Schoolcraft. It contributes to existing scholarship on the political work of sentimentalism by convincingly demonstrating the centrality of Native issues and writing in nineteenth-century U.S. culture and society.

In *The Transatlantic Indian*, Kate Flint shifts attention beyond the United States to the figure of the Indian in "transatlantic modernity," arguing for the significance of Natives in the British cultural imagination from the Revolutionary War to the early twentieth century. She analyzes the politics of Native representations in materials ranging from the literary works of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and D. H. Lawrence to travel literature, journalism, performances, and visual iconography. Because Native images played a less central role in British national history and identity than they did in the United States, they proved more malleable in the British context, where they spoke to issues such as democracy, domestic sexual politics, Christianity, and slavery as well as England's role in global imperialism and capitalism. Flint's book extends

Tim Fulford's analysis in *Romantic Indians: Native Americans, British Literature, and Transatlantic Culture, 1756–1830* (2006) to encompass connections among Britain, Canada, and the United States throughout the long nineteenth century. As *The Transatlantic Indian* establishes the crucial role of transnational exchanges centered on the Indian in the creation of British culture and identity, it also attends, though to a lesser degree, to Native writers' and performers' perceptions of Britain. Native peoples, as Flint's analyses attest, were vital agents in the development of transatlantic modernity. Indians who toured with George Catlin, entertainers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, and the Iroquois writer and performer E. Pauline Johnson presented critiques of Indian policies at home, Native representations that circulated transnationally, and the connections of these policies and images to global imperialism. But even as Flint insists on the vital importance of Native perspectives, she acknowledges the difficulty of recovering them in a context where culture worked to suppress Indian voices and political imperatives.

Arnold Krupat's *All That Remains* takes up similar questions about the political work of culture but shifts the emphasis to Native writing and film. In five interrelated essays, Krupat analyzes traditional functions of trickster stories as expressions of Native philosophies and contemporary Native authors' revisions of these stories; the nineteenth-century writer William Apess, a "public intellectual" committed to anticolonial resistance; representations of Cherokee removal, popularly known as the Trail of Tears, in the work of twentieth-century writers; and the reception of Iglulik Isuma's celebrated 2001 film *Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner* by its various Inuit and non-Inuit audiences. He considers the aesthetic as well as the ideological dimensions of cultural forms, contending that narrative modes and structures themselves carry political meanings. Apess's uses of irony, for example, advance his critique of colonialism by connecting Native conquest to European greed and violence, while the comic plot of Diane Glancy's novel *Pushing the Bear*, which narrates the regeneration of Cherokee society after the Trail of Tears, inverts conventional renderings of removal as part of a tragic but inevitable pattern of Indian demise. Krupat sees as a primary task of Native culture a critical engagement with dominant images, ideologies, and political practices, and in the last chapter he surveys representations of Native peoples in American literature from 1820 to 1870, concluding with an extensive bibliography. In his analyses, such conventional representations provide a necessary context for Native writing, which contests dominant discourses as it narrates indigenous histories, philosophies, and traditions.

Each in its own way, these three works urge us to consider the political work of representations by and of Native peoples in terms of interactions across cultural, social, and national boundaries. From the perspective of Native studies, this approach carries both benefits and risks: as it resists the marginalization of Native issues and acknowledges the various dimensions of indigenous culture, it also potentially deflects attention from indigenous cultural specificity

and political imperatives. The three works under review also usefully encourage critical attention to the political and aesthetic complexity of Native representations, which gain multiple and frequently contradictory meanings as they circulate globally.

Shari M. Huhndorf, University of Oregon

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***Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America.* By Elisa Tamarkin. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. 2008. xxxiii, 400 pp. \$35.00.**

***Reforming the World: Social Activism and the Problem of Fiction in Nineteenth-Century America.* By María Carla Sánchez. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press. 2008. xiii, 240 pp. \$39.95.**

In her informative study, Elisa Tamarkin asserts that antebellum Americans constructed a variety of forms of national identity through an attachment to English history and culture. Considering a broad range of cultural production (with particularly deft attention to the visual arts), *Anglophilia* is a very well-researched book. Tamarkin unearths a wealth of neglected material and aptly demonstrates how antebellum Americans deployed representations of England both to reimagine their own history and to contemplate the nation's future development. As such, Tamarkin makes a contribution to our understanding of the period as one rife with transatlantic currents. At times, however, the breadth of her scope detracts from her overall argument. The book comprises four chapters that read as distinct pieces, and Tamarkin's overreliance on the northeast as the primary geographical region under examination detracts from her assertions about a national fixation on "the symbolic value of England" (xxiii). Her close readings are pointed and elegant, but when she moves toward transhistorical abstractions, the focus of her argument becomes frayed and disjointed.

The first chapter, and perhaps the strongest in the volume, "Monarch-Love," offers a detailed analysis of Queen Victoria's coronation and her son Albert Edward's much celebrated visit to the United States on the eve of the Civil War. Tamarkin digs deeply into both magazine and newspaper archives to exhibit how coverage of both of these events trumpeted Anglo-American connections even as it engendered a sense of national identity framed by a reassessment of Anglo-American history. The second chapter, "Imperial Nostalgia," traces the ways in which antebellum Americans reinterpreted the Revolution in order to sentimentally suture broken bonds of commonality. Tamarkin impressively examines a wealth of Revolutionary-era documents to demarcate the tension many "Americans" felt between their hostility toward the British and their deep-seated admiration of them. The third chapter,

“Freedom and Deference,” charts how abolitionists in the United States, and in particular African American abolitionists, defined themselves via a fixation on England as a site of racial harmony. The book’s final chapter, “The Anglo-ophile Academy,” privileges the promotion of a stylized notion of college life modeled on several generations of Harvard students’ fantasies about British universities as somehow defining a national sense of the college experience. The assertions here are undercut by the narrow range of evidence that Tamarin employs, however.

María Carla Sánchez’s *Reforming the World* explores the relationship between social activism and literary production in the antebellum United States. In essence, Sánchez aims to prove that “antebellum social reform writings seized on fiction as ‘too important an engine’ to be ignored, and in so doing, helped to form connections amongst fiction, truth, and literariness that shaped U.S. literary history” (3). By seeking to expand the operant definition of reform, she stresses that Americans of all stripes and regions participated in social activism in an effort to remodel the nation and its culture. Indeed, a central claim of Sánchez’s work is that “in the nineteenth century, every aspect of social life needed to be fixed, and Americans set out to do the fixing” (8). In broadly defining reform writing to include “any work that diagnoses an institution, system, or social practice in need of change,” Sánchez fashions connections among a wide range of texts by suggesting that they all participate in advancing a reformist agenda whether they do so overtly or not (11). Her claims are a bit overblown when she contends that there was no “pedigreed literature” in the United States prior to 1837, and this tendency to overstate the case is a hallmark of her work (33). While she draws attention to neglected authors and to shifts in American writing in the wake of the panic of 1837, the overall thread of her argument—that reformist literature was the central tenet of U.S. literary production in the antebellum period—is less than fully convincing.

Across the length of her study, Sánchez investigates such familiar social activist movements as temperance, abolition, and moral reform, but also such less-studied movements as prison reform and vegetarianism. She argues that fiction became a tool of reformers, even as certain authors seized on the popularity of reform movements to locate an audience for their fiction. After sketching out her project in an introductory chapter, Sánchez analyzes neglected authors such as Frederick Jackson and Hannah Lee. She proposes that these reformist novelists critiqued fiction’s capacity to divorce readers from the demands of the “ordinary occupations of life” in order to refigure the place of fiction in contemporary culture (25). In chapter 3 the author examines moral reform writing about the conditions of “fallen women,” arguing that reformers blurred the generic lines between fiction and nonfiction to promote their agendas and faithfully represent the conditions of the women they hoped to redeem. Chapter 4 explores the antislavery fiction of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lydia Maria Child. Covering somewhat familiar territory, Sánchez main-

tains that Stowe and Child are emblematic of an antebellum tendency to view history “as a branch of literature, not a wholly separate vein of writing” (148). The final section considers the temperance writings of Timothy Shay Arthur, a popular reform writer whose career extended into the 1880s. In this coda, Sánchez claims that in the early postbellum period, “literariness” began to be defined by aesthetic as opposed to reformist concerns. With this shift in attitude toward the function of literature, Sánchez contends, the era of reformist fiction drew to a close.

Duncan Faherty, Queens College

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Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums and Nineteenth-Century American Culture. By Benjamin Reiss. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. 2008. xi, 237 pp. Cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$20.00.

Popular Print and Popular Medicine: Almanacs and Health Advice in Early America. By Thomas A. Horrocks. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press. 2008. xii, 221 pp. Cloth, \$80.00; paper, \$29.95.

Prior to the professionalizing of American medicine in the late nineteenth century, the field was largely dominated by lay practitioners and minimally trained physicians who deployed a widely varied, if not sometimes wildly eccentric, set of medicinal practices. These two recent titles go far to illuminate the variegated character and shape of American health in the formative period before the specialization of medical and psychological practice in the United States. In his analysis of U.S. insane asylums from 1830 until the Civil War, *Theaters of Madness*, Benjamin Reiss uncovers a surprisingly utopian phase in the history of psychiatric institutionalization. This period saw very few critics of the asylum; it was not, for example, until the decades following the war when asylum patients stripped of their rights began to draw comparisons to “white slavery” (16). Instead, the antebellum asylum was widely regarded as a space for “psychic and cultural renewal” (3). Heavily influenced by the humanitarian methods of Philippe Pinel, the physician of revolutionary France who famously unchained his patients in 1792, treatment in these facilities was based on a model of moral therapeutics that sought to reverse the mental strain and deterioration brought about by modern civilization. From poetry to theater productions, card playing and dance, the moral treatment movement sought to soothe the narrowed, overspecialized modern mind with various arts that promoted “mental variety.”

The nineteenth-century asylum emerges not only as a space of extreme disciplinary control, but also as one where culture was filtered, transposed, and produced from below. Various cultural activities were recoded and subverted

once they were transformed into what were commonly referred to as “asylum amusements” (75). An early chapter illuminates a surprising history of asylum minstrel performances while another uncovers a fascinating archive from the New York State Lunatic Asylum, a literary journal of patient writings called the *Opal*, which was edited for several years by an asylum inmate. Reiss establishes, following Erving Goffman, that the asylum was a total institution where doctors and staff members carefully monitored the expressions of patients. At the same time, writing could offer inmates a way out. Mastering the composition of a poem, for example, could demonstrate a “cure” and help make a case for release from the asylum. We might speculate on what other types of escape were enabled by patients through the act of writing, which Gilles Deleuze understood as itself an enterprise of health. While asylum superintendents saw art as a means to control and train the insane masses, the healthful role of literature for these patients clearly exceeded its intended institutional purpose, since writing is also a way to invent a form of life.

The second half of the book turns from cultural productions within the asylum walls to a view of how reformers, social critics, and writers represented and thought about the asylum from the outside. The study surveys the rise of the asylum exposé, a popular memoir genre penned by ex-asylum inmates, which was co-emergent with the asylum movement. Reiss argues that U.S. narratives of domesticity offered women a space from which to oppose their institutionalization while men were forced to remain silent. An especially good chapter on Ralph Waldo Emerson interrogates the transcendentalist non-response to the asylum movement. While the ability of the asylum to confine citizens and strip them of their rights seems to fly in the face of the transcendentalist principles of individual freedom and anti-institutional thinking, Emerson neither showed resistance to the committing of fellow transcendentalist Jones Very to the McLean Asylum in Belmont, Massachusetts, nor offered a critique of psychiatric institutionalization more generally. Reiss shows that the transcendentalists shared important common ground with the asylum superintendents: both movements were birthed out of a growing midcentury liberalism that aimed to fortify the individual against the threats of urbanization, mechanization, and the dissolution of social life under the conditions of modernity.

Thomas Horrocks’s meticulous survey of over 1,700 early American almanacs, *Popular Print and Popular Medicine*, leads him to the seemingly simple, yet quite significant conclusion that almanacs were an important source of information about health and disease for a wide readership prior to the Civil War. He additionally tracks the persistence of astrological medical advice in almanacs into the early nineteenth century, arguing that almanacs continued to be the leading source for astrological health information even after astrology had been largely delegitimized in professional scientific circles. In multiple contexts, Horrocks establishes how almanac makers eschewed novelty for the familiar content that readers came to expect. The almanac is thus revealed as a surprisingly static cultural object across time: almanac makers continued to

include time-tested, though sometimes anachronistic, information so as not to alienate their readership. The standard almanac did not decrease in popularity until the mid-nineteenth century, when proprietary medical firms began disseminating self-published almanacs free of charge in order to advertise various kinds of curative tonics, pills, and powders. The golden age of the almanac waned as other types of popular publications began to flood the antebellum print market, as an increasingly urbanized reading public began to perceive the almanac as a publication for the “country bumpkin,” and as readers associated the genre with medical quackery.

This volume makes an important point regarding how lay readers used the almanac alongside other popular print sources to reinforce traditional beliefs about health and the body, but it is perhaps even more useful in emphasizing the centrality of the almanac to early U.S. print culture. Both of these studies do much to enlarge our view of the popular print sphere: Reiss in his uncovering of a significant body of writing by men and women confined in mental asylums and Horrocks in his accounting for the incredible number of almanacs published in the period preceding the Civil War.

Britt Rusert, Duke University

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***Cannibal Old Me: Spoken Sources in Melville's Early Works.* By Mary K. Bercaw Edwards. Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press. 2009. xxii, 252 pp. \$49.00.**

***African Culture and Melville's Art: The Creative Process in "Benito Cereno" and "Moby-Dick."* By Sterling Stuckey. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2009. ix, 154 pp. \$27.95.**

These books consider important areas of Herman Melville's creative process in ways not previously explored by others—Mary Bercaw Edwards in a book that opens up a brand new field of study, and Sterling Stuckey in a book that builds upon an already published sequence of essays.

In 1987 Bercaw Edwards published *Melville's Sources*, an indispensable guide to written sources for Melville's art. *Cannibal Old Me* presents her own pioneering work concerning Melville's spoken sources, a more ephemeral subject that she makes tangible through an impressive combination of scholarly imagination and intellectual rigor. Her goal is to “excavate insofar as possible the oral context of Melville's creative process” (xii). To do this, she augments her skills in archival research and close reading with insights from folklore, ethnomusicology, and anthropology, and with her extensive experience as a sailor.

Acknowledging the extent to which Melville “filched” from multiple printed sources in his first six novels, Bercaw Edwards explores three strands

of oral information in which young Melville would have been immersed as a sailor in the South Seas: sailor talk, cannibal talk, and missionary talk. Successive chapters addressing each kind of talk are unfailingly fresh and inventive, taking the reader into dimensions of Melville's personal and imaginative experience whose direct influence on the style and content of his writing is seen on page after page. Noting that Melville was an oral storyteller before becoming a written one, Bercaw Edwards shows how the rich and easy "sailor talk" of the opening paragraph of *Typee* (1846) differs from that of previous nautical writers, leading eventually to Ishmael's narrative voice. Her "cannibal" chapter stresses the degree to which supposed cannibal practices were more a matter of talk than actual observation, the kind of talk that Melville used to drive his plot in *Typee* but was actively subverting by 1851, when he characterized Queequeg as "George Washington cannibalistically developed" in *Moby-Dick* (1851; reprint, [New York: Longman, 2007], 62). Her "missionary" chapter shows how Melville's exposure to the missionary effort as a sailor enriched his multilayered use of elements of missionary culture.

Bercaw Edwards offers some areas of overlap among sailor, cannibal, and missionary talk in the three successive chapters, but the ultimate tour de force in this book is its concluding chapter, "'Cannibal Old Me': The Development of Melville's Narrative Voice," in which she weaves her three previous strands into a brilliant analysis of the six narrative voices that culminate in the voice of Ishmael. In this sustained analysis, varieties of talk merge tellingly in novel after novel in ways that would not have been evident without her analysis. The entire book is beautifully structured and argued, all strands leading to her explication of Ahab's "Cannibal old me" in *Moby-Dick*'s "Symphony" chapter, a three-word phrase whose superfluity of meaning at the end of the novel brackets that of "Call me Ishmael" at the beginning (195).

Stuckey began his pioneering work on the influence of African culture on *Benito Cereno* in the 1980s, bringing an entirely new knowledge base to the study of Melville at a time when the novella had not yet reached the canonical status it enjoys today. This volume brings together Stuckey's subsequent work on African culture in relation to Melville, including "The Tambourine in Glory," from *The Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville* (1998), and a chapter on *Benito Cereno* and *Moby-Dick* adapted from an essay published in the *Massachusetts Review* in 2005. Chapter 3, "The Hatchet-Polishers, Benito Cereno, and Amasa Delano," is followed by "Cheer and Gloom: Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville on Slave Music and Dance," Stuckey's contribution to *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: Essays in Relation* (2008). *African Culture* concludes with a reprint of chapter 16 of Captain Delano's *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels*, whose chapter 18 was Melville's primary source for *Benito Cereno*.

The strength of Stuckey's book is not only in the four chapters themselves, but also in the cumulative sense they give of Melville's attentiveness to African and African American culture when writing both *Benito Cereno* and *Moby-*

Dick. No previous critic has given such sustained attention to Melville's possible exposure to African American culture as a youth in New York and Albany, or to Africa-related writing that might have provided telling details for specific characters or scenes. The success of a book like this in transcending the sum of its parts often depends on the strength of the introduction in setting out a secure framework for the range and nature of the arguments to be made. In this introduction, Stuckey alternates between attacking critics who had not addressed his concerns and asserting massive creative influences his book sets out to prove—without always providing evidence that would demonstrate such proof, a tendency often apparent in the individual chapters themselves.

Many students of source studies would expect to see a discussion of whether Melville actually had access to sources as central to the argument as Douglass's 1845 *Narrative*, for example. Stuckey offers brilliant insight into the degree to which Douglass's brief 1845 account of slave songs suggests the mutual roots of spirituals and the blues, but only by an unstated leap of faith does he assume that Melville (a) had access to this passage and (b) built all of his own literary contrasts between jollity and gloom from it. Stuckey's intuitively strong discussion of Douglass and Melville does not, unfortunately, draw upon any of the recent scholarship that could have strengthened a number of his own assertions—from Robert O'Meally's rich discussion of Melville, Douglass, and the blues in the 2006 introduction to the Barnes and Noble edition of *Billy Budd and the Piazza Tales* to the work of Stuckey's seventeen fellow contributors to the *Essays in Relation* volume.

Robert K. Wallace, Northern Kentucky University

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***Devils and Rebels: The Making of Hawthorne's Damned Politics.* By Larry J. Reynolds. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press. 2008. xix, 313 pp. \$55.00.**

***The Arbiters of Reality: Hawthorne, Melville, and the Rise of Mass Information Culture.* By Peter West. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press. 2008. xiv, 229 pp. \$44.95.**

***Literature and Moral Reform: Melville and the Discipline of Reading.* By Carol Colatrella. Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida. 2002. x, 337 pp. \$55.00.**

***Herman Melville and the American Calling: The Fiction after "Moby-Dick," 1851–1857.* By William V. Spanos. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press. 2008. xiv, 280 pp. Cloth, \$80.00; paper, \$26.95.**

These four books satisfy the current critical desire to make moral claims by evaluating literary works in terms of their authors' presumed political ori-

entations. This approach creates for these scholars four general problems. First, Nathaniel Hawthorne's and Herman Melville's texts are regarded not as works of art, but as databases: they are repositories from which to cull information that testifies for or against their writer's values. Second, what counts as evidence is determined by an interpretive framework, in all but William Spanos's case built from a historical context that is established *before* consulting the texts and unduly limits how they are read. That these critics establish very different contexts for examining Hawthorne and Melville is sufficient evidence that context—if not anchored in full textual reading—is subjective and variable rather than determinative. Third, to varying degrees the critics impose their own values on the nineteenth-century writers, such that one seems to learn more about the critics than the artists as such. Larry Reynolds asserts, "Let me hasten to say I have no quarrel with judging an author with respect to one's own present set of moral and political values (how can one do otherwise?)" to which he adds, "[H]owever, to be fair, scholars need to recognize and allow for the cultural relativity of such values" (xiv). These books need more of that evenhandedness. Finally, the arguments rely, intentionally or not, on dualist premises taking some form of good versus bad—with Hawthorne and Melville falling on the side of the good—that lead these scholars to ignore textual complexity and sometimes express themselves with off-putting righteousness. Reynolds and Spanos even call names, labeling thinkers with whom they do not fully agree "racists" (Reynolds, xiv, 139; Spanos, 5).

The latter is especially surprising in Reynolds, whose exhaustive historicist account of Hawthorne's politics in *Devils and Rebels* specifically advises against the "rashness and reductiveness of binary thinking" that led his compatriots—Salem ancestors, American revolutionaries, and New England abolitionists—to imagine public matters in terms of "good and evil" or "moral absolutes" (10, 6, 124). Because of their uncritical commitment to apparently just causes, these "emotional zealots" suffered from "faulty vision" that prevented them from foreseeing the painful consequences of their actions (144, xv). In contrast, Hawthorne sought to comprehend political issues by means of "sustained study from multiple perspectives," valuing "complexity" over "partisan" simplicity and "reasoning over emotion" (10, xv, xvii, 88). Reynolds offers a fitting phrase, "politics of quiet imagination," for Hawthorne's resistance to the "fanaticism" surrounding him (xvii). For that politics Hawthorne has been critically condemned as a "coldhearted" quietist who condoned slavery (104). Reynolds persuasively refutes this view as he constructs a lifelong story of Hawthorne's "circumspect" and "principle[d]" pacifism (10, xix), drawing from the full range of his journals, letters, and fiction. Importantly highlighted are Hawthorne's eyewitness accounts from the front lines of the Civil War, his reactions to abolitionist uses of slave narratives, and his nuanced portraits of demonized figures such as Franklin Pierce. Yet despite his clarity about Hawthorne, Reynolds's values themselves tend toward unconvincing extremes. For example, he misses opportunities to explore complexity as he reduces the

four major romances to simple political claims. *The Marble Faun*, remarkable for its intricate attention to developing four very different perspectives on a murder (as Reynolds himself notes), nonetheless becomes for him merely an instruction that actions (and not motivations) matter when at issue is the “killing of another human being” (210). And his insistence that complicated thinking necessarily leads to pacifism, and that pacifism is the only morally tenable politics, would dismay the many thinkers who have painstakingly tried to clarify the conditions of just warfare so that violence might be avoided.

In *The Arbiters of Reality*, Peter West means to avoid moralizing by arguing that Hawthorne and Melville are not free from but reliant upon—because in “dialogue” with—a “mass information culture,” whose false “reality” they “see through” (5, 125, 173). In this sense, they are “arbiters” of a “deeper” reality that resists representation and commodification (163). Romance is a “reactive form” that “protects reality from the fictionalizing forces of modernization by redefining the real as that which eludes specific technologies and modes of consumption” (8), such as the daguerreotype, the telegraph, and the penny press, whose histories West lengthily describes (but rather hastily traces across moments in Hawthorne’s and Melville’s texts). The loose use of the term “reality” is frustrating, for frequently it is not clear whether West means Platonic, popular, empirical, cultural, psychological, imaginative, or some other kind of “reality.” I wish he had explored further the interesting paradox he establishes in claiming that the American romantics are both part of and apart from mass-cultural rhetoric; instead, he reverts to a standard conception of the artist as working “outside” conventional culture (6, 11).

Carol Colatrella, in *Literature and Moral Reform*, argues passionately that Melville “challenges [nineteenth-century] reform principles”—which hold that literacy leads to “individual moral rehabilitation”—“by calling into question the [moral] authority of the politician and reformer in society and that of reader over text” (24, 88, 98). To demonstrate, she skims nearly all of Melville, making casual associative connections among themes and characters to claim that social-cultural underdogs (Bartleby, Billy Budd, Israel Potter, and South Seas islanders are seemingly interchangeable) do not benefit from the in fact “imperial[ist]” practices of “philanthropic” reform (89). This compelling idea is oft-repeated but not clearly shown to inhabit Melville’s content or narrative strategies, and never acknowledged is the reformers’ progressive conviction, to which Melville in part ascribed, that prisoners could indeed be reformed. Regrettably, the book is also poorly organized: paragraphs often seem arbitrarily placed, sentences are repeated almost verbatim, and valuable archival material documenting prison reform is interspersed haphazardly with discussion of narrative theory and nineteenth-century European writers.

In *Herman Melville and the American Calling*, William Spanos renders Melville morally upright via sustained attention to the “subversive” fiction after *Moby-Dick* (8), contending that its formally and thematically elusive quali-

ties “indirect[ly] resist” the American calling of “exceptionalist optimism” (17, 168), a necessarily imperialist call that seeks to reduce all life within and even without its “frontiers” to the “comprehensible” (220, 11), and that insists on America’s status, recuperated after 9/11, as the world’s “redeemer nation” (16). Melville’s late fiction constitutes a “sustained haunting” of this “exceptionalist problematic” (17), acting as its “spectral,” or absent, presence (5), one that refuses to be “silenced” by various “custodians of American culture,” including dismissive nineteenth-century reviewers and appropriating twentieth-century liberal humanist critics (8, 5). Spanos’s claims are best demonstrated in intertwined readings of “Bartleby, the Scrivener” and *Benito Cereno*, wherein Captain Delano is persuasively revealed as the archetypal American speaker whose “exceptionalist frame of reference determines what [he] sees and does not see” (110), while Bartleby is, in effect, Delano’s “*Other self*” who, refusing to answer his “boss’s call” (145, 153), “revers[es] the relation between caller and called” (154).

Unfortunately, idiosyncratic vocabulary (“e-mergent” [51]; “self-de-struction” [11]) and overuse of postmodern clichés (“speak truth to power” [17]; multiple “always already”s) distract, and the book’s underdeveloped and finally dispensable poststructuralist allusions obscure rather than clarify Spanos’s central premises. Famously difficult, original concepts, such as Gramscian hegemony and Michel Foucault’s repressive hypothesis, are invoked but not adequately described, such that citation is made to stand for rigorous theorizing and conceptual clarity. Heideggerian ontology especially requires elaboration, for it seems misused: Spanos regards Martin Heidegger’s notion of being as a cultural rather than ontological analytic, suggesting that how a culture and its inhabitants imagine what it means to be human shapes how they regard others they take to be human. Hence he can talk about an “American . . . way of seeing being” (157), whereas Heidegger could not. Perhaps I misread here, but I cannot know for certain unless I am permitted to grapple with a precise reading of Heidegger.

Early in his book, Spanos quotes a famous “exceptionalist” passage from *White Jacket* in which Melville claims that “[Americans] are the pioneers of the world” (13). Without clear reason, he then directs us not to read these words literally. Too often, these four critics similarly dismiss rather than confront moments that do not build their particular stories. But Melville and Hawthorne have lived on because their works inhabit and reproduce the tensions that constitute American culture and the artist’s pursuit within it, and not because they tell us on which side of an ideological line to sit.

Jennifer Gurley, Le Moyne College

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***The Word and Its Witness: The Spiritualization of American Realism.* By Gregory S. Jackson. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. 2009. xiv, 409 pp. Cloth, \$80.00; paper, \$29.00.**

***Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age.* By Roger Lundin. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans. 2009. x, 292 pp. Paper, \$26.00.**

“We are writing about religion more,” proposes Gregory Jackson in *The Word and Its Witness*, “while seeming to understand it less” (278). The “we” of this salutary caution refers not to the typical audience for an academic monograph (that is, specialists and subspecialists in the field) but to intellectuals who once decried religion as an opiate of the masses and now find themselves coughing from the secondhand smoke. This assumption of a broader audience is, in other words, warranted by the topic, because unlike many academic specialties, religion is one subject about which nonspecialists often have an opinion. While neither of the titles here under review wishes to shut down opinions, both nonetheless approach the topic with a sense of urgency, suggesting that “we” lack the tools to understand something fundamental about U.S. culture. Despite this shared urgency, each book proceeds very differently.

The Word and Its Witness approaches religion in a manner that can generally be called historical. The book presents a long view on a homiletic tradition or “inoculation theology” (16), by which ministers, reformers, and other evangelicals would employ elaborate and highly visual descriptions and tropes of a great range of things (from sin to poverty) that they hoped to eradicate. After a long chapter tracing the emergence of homiletics from medieval scholasticism to the Great Awakening, the book ends with extended and impressively contextualized readings of Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, Charles Shelton’s *In His Steps* (from which originates the maxim “What would Jesus do?”), and Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*. The focus on relatively few texts enables Jackson to consider not only the homiletic strategies in which these texts were engaged, but also the popular reception and modes of vernacular reading he contends were widely practiced by evangelical audiences but are now lost on critics who assume that “in the last two centuries readers have approached the written word with the same critical, aesthetic, or didactic orientation, regardless of their religious or secular commitments, professions, class, or cultural background” (282).

In contrast to such a historical approach, Roger Lundin’s *Believing Again* considers religion in a manner that can generally be called philosophical. Lundin argues that the romantic movement recast ancient concerns about personhood and perception as the province of the imagination. While historical in scope, the book does not historicize so much as chart a shift in ideas and orientations toward religion. With imaginative writing and literature as the prominent vehicles for this shift, *Believing Again* concludes by demonstrating that near the end of the nineteenth century, varieties of unbelief heralded by

the rise of literature were ceding to a “remembering” of Christian thought in new aesthetic forms (264–83). Written to appeal to a generalist audience, the book occasionally makes breathtakingly schematic claims (for example, “The nineteenth century opened with dreams of history’s perfection and closed with nightmares of its ruin” [16]) and considers an international mix of authors: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, and W. H. Auden, but also Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Isak Dinesen, and Czesław Miłosz. Authored by a leading Christian intellectual from a position of faith, the book’s ultimate aim is to discern that “Christian thought has much to gain from images of the kind these writers provide” (60).

Although even these brief summaries will make apparent major argumentative, methodological, and stylistic divergences between these books, we may be best instructed about the urgency of the topic by asking questions raised by the books’ overlap. I offer three quick suggestions. First, while differences between historical and philosophical approaches to literary texts are familiar and do not need to be rehearsed here, it is worth noting that in spite of methodological differences, both of these books are organized around readings of literary texts. These books emphasize, respectively, that homiletic reading and imaginative writing have long histories, thereby begging the question of why it is worth focusing so much attention on nineteenth-century literature when that literature matters most as part of a history that bears on the present. Second, both books follow a narrative that links Protestantism with pre-Reformation Christian thought, allowing medieval Christianity to count as Protestant history. Qualitatively speaking, however, Protestantism cannot be the only thing we mean when we use the word “religion,” and faith and election are far from the only modes of religious engagement, especially as practiced in the United States. Quantitatively speaking, Catholicism’s status as the single largest U.S. denomination since the 1850s means that these books’ ceding of conceptual and historical centrality to Protestantism requires more explication than it is given in either book. Third and most intellectually troubling, both of these rich accounts of Christian history in the United States take for granted a secularism that exists at the edges of that history. To choose just a few examples, *The Word and Its Witness* makes mention of “secular literary realism” (6), “secular educators” (19), “[s]ecular readers” (104), “an increasingly secular world” (132), “a secular tradition” (165), and “the social reform movement’s secular wing” (216), while *Believing Again* posits “a secular age” (13), “secular scholars” (135), “secular skepticism” (219), and “our increasingly secular society” (194).

Yet, to my mind, the power of both books is the extent to which they dissolve the idea that something as foundational to the study of nineteenth-century U.S. literature as *literature* might ever be secular (that is, evacuated of religion). While both works admirably tackle the large intellectual, political, and historical problems attendant upon religion, both also raise a number of

questions, demonstrating not only the urgency but also the challenges of the task ahead.

Jordan Alexander Stein, University of Colorado at Boulder

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***Working Women, Literary Ladies: The Industrial Revolution and Female Aspiration.* By Sylvia Jenkins Cook. Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press. 2008. 292 pp. Cloth, \$99.00; paper, \$24.95.**

***Grotesque Relations: Modernist Domestic Fiction and the U.S. Welfare State.* By Susan Edmunds. Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press. 2008. viii, 258 pp. \$55.00.**

How does literature speak the political or the economic? Precisely by being fiction. Concerned with charting social relations among intimates, the novel reveals economic relations and political affiliations through the scrutiny of domestic spaces, making legible the forces encoded within capital and the state and their various institutions that shape human desire. The practices of literature (including writing, editing, and generally sustaining the informal institutions that make reading a social practice) situate readers within a tight zone of feeling that initiates modern sensibilities and tastes but also produces modern subjects, citizens, and workers. As a training ground, literary practices, including reading itself, bring even resisters into the fold, forging “grotesque relations” out of “female aspiration.”

Sylvia Cook’s compendium of literary works by and about “factory girls,” *Working Women, Literary Ladies*, focuses primarily on the first generation of “Lowell mill girls,” the women who worked for the textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, but extends into the early-twentieth-century influx of eastern European Jewish women garment workers. The book traces in painstaking detail the efforts of these young women to find a place for themselves within the literary world. Neither recognized as workers because of their gender nor treated as female because of their labor, these working women sought to portray themselves as literary ladies—a few as writers and editors, many more as readers—whose deep investment in reading novels, stories, poems, and religious and political tracts connected New England farm daughters of limited means to their contemporary Concord, Massachusetts, transcendentalists. Both groups paradoxically found in American romanticism a vision of how to create the self despite wide misunderstandings about the stakes of self-culture and self-cultivation. For Cook, the story of white women’s factory labor reveals how women formed odd alliances with each other and with those seeking to “improve” them by reframing Emersonian ideals of self-reliance into modes of recognition found in recalling books read and shared, stories consumed and challenged, and debates entered into and deflected.

Central to this saga is the literary magazine *Lowell Offering*, published by the Lowell mill girls, castigated almost from the beginning as a “mouthpiece of the corporations” (160), as Sarah Bagley, editor of the rival *Voice of Industry*, complained. According to Cook, the magazine instead served as a parallel institution under the editorship of Harriet Farley to Margaret Fuller’s work with the *Dial*, anticipating Emma Goldman’s anarchist journal *Mother Earth*, as a zone where women deployed transcendentalism to gain visibility as workers—including writing (and even reading) as labors requiring women’s minds, making clear that factory girls were savvy analysts of their own conditions. Lowell became the site of a number of literary responses to industrialization, including the first true crime book by Catharine Williams about the murder of millworker Sarah Maria Cornell. Appearing in 1833, this sensational story encapsulated the romance of labor, religion, and the literary that characterized women workers as subject to sexual desires mobilized by the intense emotionalism found in camp religions and debased novels, both of which appealed to lonely factory girls and created new sexualized communities.

Cook’s method is to ferret out every reference to or writing by a “factory girl” and pair it with a more established author’s or movement’s texts. Each permutation inevitably returns to the dual obsessions of this gothic strain of American romance: working women’s “literariness and sexual conduct” (136). From Nathaniel Hawthorne through Goldman and Thomas Dixon Jr. (whose 1909 novel about radical labor unrest, *Comrades*, might be thought of as the immigrant working-class sequel to his 1905 work *The Clansman*), fantasies of work and leisure combine to contaminate women’s perceived nature (and nature itself, fast disappearing as the United States industrialized). Labor and reading ironically open up a world of great freedom for women, beyond their prescribed roles as nurturing, restorative vehicles for others’ redemption; instead, women are sexualized and seen as menaces reshaping the domestic terrain.

Susan Edmunds takes up the story of U.S. literary economics and its curious investment in female sexual regulation through elaborate readings of key modernist novels in *Grotesque Relations*. Moving through the first half of the twentieth century as the U.S. welfare state is being organized, Edmunds shows how the home, so crucial to the novel form, has been extended through interventions of maternalist social reform and capitalist expansion into what she terms the “domestic exterior,” a grotesque rendering of private space open to public scrutiny by the state and other regulators. Edmunds finds forms of “grotesque inversion” at the heart of the six novels she deftly dissects (105). Reading a seemingly unlikely archive—Djuna Barnes’s *Ryder*, Jean Toomer’s *Cane*, and Edna Ferber’s *American Beauty* form a counterintuitive trio; Tillie Olsen’s *Yonnondio*, Nathanael West’s *The Day of the Locust*, and Flannery O’Connor’s *Wise Blood* seem more akin—in conjunction with major texts of social reform, from legislation mandating mothers’ pensions to antilynching calls from the black press to advertising and home economics texts, she convincingly proves that modernist writers sought to undo the assumptions about family (and the

domestic novel) by caricaturing its premises and history. Her readings are brilliant, offering startling interpretations that demolish conventional ideas about modernism, proletarian literature, and feminism.

Ryder continues where Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* and Louisa May Alcott's story "Transcendental Wild Oats" leave off, Edmunds contends, eradicating the fantasy of escape from bourgeois family and capitalist labor by demonstrating how welfare maintains them within a new triangulated space of "the home, the market and the state" (50). Toomer refutes racial uplift narratives; Ferber rewrites eugenics. Edmunds's book is an intellectual whirlwind—ending in John Foster Dulles's Cold War and Martin Luther King Jr.'s Civil Rights Paulism, matched by O'Connor's—which merits reading past the slightly overwrought rhetoric of the introduction.

Paula Rabinowitz, University of Minnesota

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***Love and Marriage in Early African America.* Ed. Frances Smith Foster. Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press. 2008. xxvi, 329 pp. Cloth, \$65.00; paper, \$22.95.**

***Reading Marriage in the American Romance: Remembering Love as Destiny.* By James Frank Walter. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books. 2007. xviii, 279 pp. \$80.00.**

In very different ways, these two books celebrate marriage as an institution of enormous emotional, spiritual, and cultural power. Foster's anthology, *Love and Marriage in Early African America*, affords readers an unprecedented view of heterosexual courtship and marriage in the African American community, and it is especially important in its contribution to our knowledge of African American writing before the Civil War. This rewarding collection of about 160 pieces of writing, including short stories, lyrics, folk sayings, personal ads, letters, and sermons, will be intriguing to literary critics, historians, and general readers interested in the history of love in the United States. The culmination of twenty years of research, it brings together well-known tales such as Charles Chesnut's "The Wife of His Youth" with a variety of new material from African American periodicals and other archives. Foster's introduction, written as an open letter to her sister, urges readers to read "between the lines" so they can see the African American community's "unshakeable determination to define and to discipline love and marriage on their own terms" (xix). The rich variety of genres and tones—comic, angry, tragic, joyful—invites readers to experience a vibrant emotional history and, at the same time, challenges scholars to rethink some common assumptions about how slavery shaped the love lives of African Americans.

Organized into five sections, "In Love—With Love," "Whether to Marry—and Who?," "Proposals and Vows," "Married Life," and "Family Trees Rooted—In Love," the volume documents expressions of love and models for marriage

from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. It includes commentary by free African Americans but also reveals a wide range of imaginative responses to the inhuman conditions of slavery and racial oppression. While many items illustrate slavery's destructive effects on courtship, marriage, and family (an excerpt from J. D. Green's 1864 slave narrative describes how his wife and children were sold without warning while he was away on an errand), many other items—including ecstatic love poems, stern marital advice, and fiction designed to help young people choose good mates—document African Americans' ongoing attempts to create and preserve lasting relationships. Some selections embrace convention: a jilted groom takes a predictably grim view of women as a whole, and an 1828 item exhorts young single women to be "attentive to their graces" (113). Others challenge convention: an 1855 story in the *Provincial Freeman* details a marital struggle in which the wife wins a decisive victory over her autocratic mate, and an 1859 piece from the *Anglo-African Magazine* condemns the sexual violence that characterized the treatment of enslaved women. Thomas Detter's "Octoroon Slave of Cuba" (1871) celebrates the triumph of sisterhood over a villainous white patriarch, presenting an appealing alternative to the stereotype of the tragic mulatto. The lack of an index is unfortunate for scholars, however, and even general readers would have benefited from brief headnotes to provide context for at least some items. The description of marriage excerpted from Jarena Lee's 1836 spiritual autobiography, for instance, would probably be more meaningful if readers knew about Lee's career as the first woman preacher of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In *Reading Marriage*, Walter brings together leisurely close readings of five "modern novelistic romances": Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*; Henry James's story "The Beast in the Jungle," Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Walker Percy's *The Thanatos Syndrome*, and Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*. Taking a consistently reverent approach to what he calls "the heroic vocation of married love," Walter argues that the mystery and "entrancing otherness" of romance in these works counters modernity's turn toward rationalist abstraction and instrumentalism (4, xv). Reading romance, he contends, encourages readers to embrace an ideal of generous love and the blessedness of life. His interpretations draw on a rich tapestry of philosophy, theology, and contemporary commentaries on the cultural status of marriage; in the course of a few pages in the introduction, he cites Søren Kierkegaard, Mikhail Bakhtin, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a 2001 *New York Times Magazine* article on marriage, and a 2006 study of love by social scientists. Although the chapter-long readings of the novels rarely break substantial new ground, they are notable for their detail and nuance. Patient readers will find illuminating passages about each text, and teachers looking for ideas for classroom discussions will no doubt find Walter's work useful.

Walter uncovers in all five works an imaginative commitment to the past, which in turn shapes the intimacies that become possible in the various characters' lives. In most cases, characters achieve a transformed relationship

to the present moment and a renewed appreciation of eros. He suggests, for instance, that Hawthorne casts “reconstructed married love” as a positive link between past, present, and future (25), and that Morrison imagines a courtship between Sethe and Paul D that reconfigures the relation between their past and present. Always attentive to the allegorical dimensions of romance, he traces echoes of Dante’s *Inferno* in “The Beast in the Jungle” and Homer’s *Odyssey* in *Cold Mountain*.

Walter’s book rejects the cultural studies approach that characterizes many recent critical studies of marriage in the novel; rather, he aims to restore what he sees as the lost art of paying attention to literature as literature. I was not convinced, however, that literature requires such a rescue. Moreover, Walter concludes by lamenting that the traditional form of marriage (as a heterosexual union characterized by fidelity and centered on the family) is being superseded by a dangerously self-centered model focused on individual freedom and rights. This last point is distressing, since it appears to dismiss the contemporary gay marriage movement as a symptom of the decline of family-centered partnerships.

Jean M. Lutes, Villanova University

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***Imagining the African American West.* By Blake Allmendinger. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press. 2005. xxix, 161 pp. Cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$19.95.**

***Wrangling Women: Humor and Gender in the American West.* By Kristin M. McAndrews. Reno: Univ. of Nevada Press. 2006. xvi, 175 pp. Cloth, \$34.95; paper, \$21.95.**

Both of these books work from the topical margins—African American cultural production and gender in western-themed tourist economies—of U.S. western literary and cultural studies. Both of them, as is true in so much of Western studies, must critically engage popular iconographies of Old West cowboy life in order to locate and interpret the significance of their research. In *Imagining the African American West* Blake Allmendinger is interested in providing the first book-length scholarly treatment of West-oriented novels, autobiographies, science fiction, mysteries, formula westerns, noir, film, and rap. He wants to think through the distinctive suggestiveness of the “frontier” in African American historical and contemporary imaginations. Kristen McAndrews’s ethnographic study of horsewomen outfitters in the Washington mountain tourist town of Winthrop, *Wrangling Women*, provides a different point of approach for thinking about Western history. Winthrop’s draw for tourists is western “flair,” as Web sites advertising the town proclaim. As McAndrews demonstrates ably, local women wranglers who work as guides, trainers, and packers for touristic recreation represent themselves and their town accord-

ing to popular assumptions about Old West culture. One of these concerns the masculine wilderness authority to which the local horsewomen pay official lip service even as they simultaneously undercut local gender hierarchies and their service relations to tourists, McAndrews argues, through humor.

Allmendinger begins on the early frontier with the provocative autobiography *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth* (1856). This text and historical recovery work about Beckwourth shed light on the relative racial freedoms Western spaces historically offered to the few African Americans who ventured west. As a guide, scout, trapper, sometimes soldier (against the Seminole), entrepreneur, and honorary member of the Crow in Montana Territory, Beckwourth straddled economic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries between Native peoples and whites. He served as intermediary between them and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, claiming multiple and even competing racial and national alliances to further trade and personal gain on the evolving capitalist frontier. In his autobiography, however, Beckwourth passes for white. Allmendinger skillfully suggests the motivation and reward for this fact—the evasion of racism. The example of Beckwourth sets up the book's thesis, which argues enormous diversity of strategy for representing African American presence in the West. Not least important, as the discussion of filmmaker, writer, and failed South Dakota homesteader Oscar Micheaux demonstrates, are matters of marketplace viability and multiple racial audiences. The frontier figures opportunity, national belonging, and collective movement since the color line in the West between “savagery” and “civilization” is not black and white, but red and white.

Such spatial possibility underlies the adoption of frontier metaphors in descriptions of the Harlem Renaissance. Allmendinger looks at Paul Kellogg, Claude McKay, and James Weldon Johnson, among others, who compare “old pioneers” to “new Negroes” intent on transforming Harlem into a vital artistic and political enclave (46). “Frontier” eventually detaches from place-specific meanings, invoking instead historical memory, as in Langston Hughes's first novel, *Not without Laughter*, set on a fading Kansas frontier, or Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, set in post-Renaissance decaying Harlem. Western “race” film musicals, such as *Harlem on the Prairie* (1937) and its sequels, link westerns, cowboys, and urban crime drama, setting a precedent for rap music's eventual incorporation of frontier mythology into urban legends of posses, vigilante justice, and territoriality.

If Allmendinger's scholarship is invested in recovery and setting straight historical records, McAndrews's *Wrangling Women* shows how invested history itself can be. To make their livelihoods in the tourist industry, the horsewomen of Winthrop enact classic features of Old West legend: they stage gold panning (and salt the holes), tell tall tales and sing around the nightly campfire, and do the labor of breaking camp, or wrangling horses and pack mules with pioneer stoicism. The storefronts of their town buildings, by law, conform to Old West style. The clients are virtual-world city dwellers in need of relief from stressed out urban hyper-lives, and this simulated western getaway pro-

vides the curative balm that “western-ness” has provided for 150 years. What is really novel about *Wrangling Women* is the tale it tells of the women who do this kind of contemporary service labor. The pay isn’t good, the work is hard and sometimes dangerous, and the tourists and employers can be insulting, superior, and clueless about the dangers of wilderness “adventure.” The male heads of the town’s outfitting businesses are still getting used to the idea that, in addition to cooking for trail excursions, women can wrangle. But these are outdoor women who know horses and the surrounding mountains, and they like their jobs. The horsemwomen use humor, McAndrews discovers, to reckon with gender challenges. They tell stories in both public and private contexts to a range of audiences. Perhaps at the center of these is the “horse wreck” genre—stories that tellers believe are “funny” because they revisit scary incidences in ways that affirm female competence and even occasionally empathize with greenhorn tourists. Bringing to bear western women’s history and theories of gender, folklore, and humor, McAndrews finds in horse wreck stories what she calls a “Woman’s Code of the West.”

These books suggest important developments in Western studies scholarship. McAndrews’s study of gender and storytelling sustains feminist attention on not just western narrative, but female labor and the production of the gendered local in a context of globalization. The work on race in the West is deeply established, but African American studies is less so, and Allmendinger complements the work of Michael K. Johnson on black frontier masculinity. It seems a missed opportunity that he did not reflect more expansively on the complicated agency the frontier permitted both former slaves and contemporary embattled rappers. What complications follow for theories of race formation, nation, and postwestern culture when we see African Americans as agents of Manifest Destiny?

Krista Comer, Rice University

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***The Rise of Multicultural America: Economy and Print Culture, 1865–1915.* By Susan L. Mizruchi. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press. 2009. 355 pp. Cloth, \$65.00; paper, \$24.95.**

***A Genealogy of Literary Multiculturalism.* By Christopher Douglas. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press. 2009. vii, 372 pp. \$45.00.**

***Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U.S. Culture, 1935–1947.* By Chris Vials. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi. 2009. xlii, 232 pp. \$50.00.**

A precipitous post-Civil War industrialism swept up race- and ethnic-marked laborers native to the United States as well as those recently arrived at its

shores. On the backs of such “free” wage laborers, the country would whip its way thunderously into the future—its Manifest Destiny—to become that imperial power second to none in the world. With much hindsight, scholars such as Barbara Foley, Bill Mullen, Sue L. Kim, and Cheryl Higashida, among others, have begun to look back and interrogate various periods of gorging on and then spitting out the often racially and ethnically Othered proletariat. The significant scholarly additions of Susan Mizruchi, Christopher Douglas, and Chris Vials attend to the function of culture during this period of capitalist expansion. In each work, we find different approaches to a wide variety of cultural phenomena (novels, essays, memoirs, films, and advertisements) produced and consumed during this empire-making period that reveal the regressive economic, social, and political forces at work.

Mizruchi’s *The Rise of Multicultural America* considers how authors such as Edward Bellamy, L. Frank Baum, Frank Norris, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Stephen Crane, María Ampara Ruiz de Burton, and Louisa May Alcott create fictions that variously shine a light on the ways that capitalist expansion and modernization inform centrally the “drama of American diversity” (13). In Mizruchi’s lineup we have writers whose fictions reflect a conservative and nostalgic stance, a progressive and critical worldview, and a conservatism dressed up as progressivism. So while a supposedly forward-looking Sinclair Lewis creates a rich and compelling story that critiques a divide-and-conquer capitalism, his straightforward realism holds at bay possible ironic readings of black strikebreakers as “subhuman” (180). And while nineteenth-century Mexican émigré author Ruiz de Burton condemns U.S. racist and imperialist policy, her fiction upholds the mores of a Mexican *criollo* and a New England blue-blooded elite.

Sharing a like interest in those cracks created along race, ethnic, and class lines in the making and sustaining of a U.S. empire, Douglas investigates a series of twentieth-century multicultural authors who see the world through either an anthropological or a sociological lens. *A Genealogy of Literary Multiculturalism* considers how authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, D’Arcy McNickle, Richard Wright, Jade Snow Wong, John Okada, and Américo Paredes “articulate broader aesthetic and political principles about what minority cultures in a America meant” (6). The anthropology-informed “cultural pluralism” that shapes the fiction of Hurston, McNickle, and Paredes gives rise to an anti-assimilation type of culturalism. On the other hand, it is a social science-informed “integrationist” worldview that inflects the work of Wright, Wong, and Okada. In responses to different ideological and political tensions of their day, such authors plant seeds that give rise to the different textual harvests and worldviews in today’s multicultural authors.

In his aptly titled *Realism for the Masses*, Vials is specifically interested in popular realist fiction that conveys a progressive class and race worldview. For Vials, novelists such as Carlos Bulosan, Nelson Algren, Margaret Mitchell, and John Steinbeck, as well as screenwriters and playwrights Shirley Graham

and Lillian Hellman, place the interlacing of class with race and ethnicity in popular culture at center stage. Algren's popular boxing narrative, *Never Come Morning*, shows just how the capitalist myth of the racially marked, out-of-the-gutter success story is always "predicated on the misery of others" (30). In a nuanced reading of Bulosan's lesser-known *The Laughter of My Father*, Vials reveals the novel to be less an occasion for readers to laugh at the Filipino as a racialized buffoon and more an opportunity for Bulosan to laugh at and critique "U.S. imperialism" (132). Hellman's occupation as a successful screenplay dramatist not only embodies women's hard-won emancipation, Vials contends, but her use of realism also opens the eyes of the masses to how patriarchy prevents class solidarity across gender, race, and ethnic lines.

Mizruchi, Douglas, and Vials aim to find the hidden threads of race and ethnicity that have interwoven into those of class as the United States has become a superpower. When Douglas uses the term "multiculturalism," he does so with caution, explaining that if used not as a descriptor but as an identity politics, it "distracts us from the real" (9). And Mizruchi is careful to keep an even hand when appraising the work of her authors, revealing both the progressive and regressive aspects of the authors' works.

To my taste, however, the scholars tread too closely to interpretations that ascribe to fiction and cultural phenomena generally the properties of political activism. Vials seeks, for instance, to bring attention to the "power of enchantment" of "mass-culture artifacts" that in and of themselves do the work of "social awakening" (189). Yes, of course, the many authors studied here might choose and often do choose to reflect the social, economic, and political forces laying waste to human beings as the belly of capitalism swells, but does fiction, film, or drama (radio or otherwise)—even if consumed by the thousands—draw a road map for the deliberate and immediate transformation of consciousness and instigate a call to action? The long and hard struggle (even with lives lost) of the proletariat tells us a different story.

Frederick Luis Aldama, Ohio State University

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***Culture Makers: Urban Performance and Literature in the 1920s.* By Amy Koritz. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press. 2009. x, 200 pp. \$40.00.**

***The Immigrant Scene: Ethnic Amusements in New York, 1880–1920.* By Sabine Haenni. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2008. ix, 323 pp. Paper, \$25.00.**

From the Gilded Age to the Roaring Twenties, the United States experienced unprecedented industrialization, urbanization, and consumerism. Both Koritz's *Culture Makers* and Haenni's *The Immigrant Scene* trace these larger developments and corresponding transformations in social identities and communities through distinctive areas of cultural production.

Culture Makers centers on the rationalization and bureaucratization of society, with the rise of the expert professional defined in opposition to the less skilled blue-collar worker. Koritz marks these shifts through accomplished readings of Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* (1920), Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* (1923), and Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (1928). In particular, rhythm is fundamental to depictions of characters working in an era of mechanization and corporatization. Rhythm is figured not as a natural aspect of human expression, but as a particular historical construct that in this decade serves as a "rhetorical and aesthetic tool for representing and engaging crucial social concerns" (4). This preoccupation with rhythm carries through chapters analyzing contraction and release in the choreography of Martha Graham, the anxieties provoked by the popularity of the Charleston, and the figure of the flapper.

Koritz's interest in urban space comes into focus in later chapters, including an examination of Anzia Yeziarska, whose fiction came to represent the wave of Eastern European Jews who immigrated to the Lower East Side. Her final chapter looks at how Lewis Mumford's studies of urban architecture, with their emphasis on organic community, eventually lost out to economic expansion and the depersonalized congestion of the skyscraper; these tropes are also imaginatively engaged by the aesthetic fragmentation of John Dos Passos's novel *Manhattan Transfer*. With this eclectic ensemble of artists and writers, the picture that emerges of U.S. cultural production in the 1920s is far from complete. Koritz recognizes from the onset the limits of studying complex social processes within only a decade's time; however, she makes a compelling case for bringing such different case studies together to suggest how art and identity might function in a world of "rationalized industry, expert professionalism, and consumer choice" (159).

The Immigrant Scene places more historical flesh on the four decades that mark the transition between the Victorian period and modernism. Haenni pointedly scrutinizes immigrant urban cultures through the "scene," a spatial and imaginative construct that defines self and community through a mélange of visual and theatrical discourses and practices. The scene, "a chunk of urban life, underscoring its dramatic and ephemeral nature" (10), illuminates different aspects of immigrant culture in a period characterized by new urban formations and possibilities. Newly available forms of mass transit such as the subway created a sense of liberation and democracy; this mobility, however, was always curtailed by the boundaries of race and gender.

Haenni methodically registers the crucial roles theater and film played in shaping a nuanced and hybrid sense of ethnic identity, "suspended between the organic coherence of the "community" and the anonymity of the undifferentiated "masses" (22). German American theater is held as a model of "middlebrow" culture, somewhere between high art and mass culture, refinement and commercialism; its relative success underscored ethnic assimilation and social mobility. Yiddish and Italian theaters, on the other hand, fared

differently. Italian immigrant theaters struggled to gain more recognized venues, despite limited audiences. Those artists who succeeded, such as variety performer Eduardo Migliaccio (“Farfariello”), did so through tapping into flexible regional and national identifications. Yiddish theaters were shaped by multiple economic pressures as well, as illustrated by “Professor” Hurwitz, who freely adapted melodramas by other playwrights into bizarre forms of “Jewish history.” The improvisation, adaptation, and pilfering of the Yiddish theater showed a degree of theatrical agency, which extended to star actors and fans as well as playwrights, directors, and managers.

Haenni’s reading of Chinatown is less about how Chinese theater helped form an “immigrant public” than about Chinatown as a tourist destination for white viewers. “Slumming tours” as well as a series of films associated Chinatown with spectacular and exotic locales, multisensory experiences, and ultimately, a degree of fakery and deception. Unfortunately, there is little material available on Chinese immigrants’ understanding of Chinatown as a space for inhabitation and leisure. Their attendance at performances of Chinese theater, for instance, remains unexplicated, except for a mention by one white commentator for whom Chinese musical performance was predictably unintelligible. Although this chapter begins with an observation that Chinese immigrants visited many of the same places frequented by European immigrants, such the Hippodrome or the zoo, there is not much here on how Chinese immigrants might have experienced new forms of collective identity or mobility. The amount of social mobility allowed them was so circumscribed as to make direct comparisons with their German or Italian counterparts meaningless. Both legally and socially, Chinese immigrants were pointedly disallowed any assimilative aspirations. Racial exclusion and segregation thus limits the analysis of ethnic mobility and circulation.

Haenni’s book provides an important counter to the current scholarly emphasis on ethnic identification with whiteness, arguing that the prevailing trend in this historical period “was not so much to make European immigrants ‘white’ as to subtly differentiate between European ethnicity and non-European race, establishing a complex hierarchy that regulated the (imagined) circulation of different ethnic groups” (252). She appropriately suggests that her study might serve as a foundation for understanding the later fascination with 1920s Harlem, and ends with a discussion of the New York ethnic “scene” as translated to Hollywood, implying that the American film industry might have been invested from the start with issues of alterity and alienation. Like *Culture Makers, The Immigrant Scene* effectively illustrates how cultural production might be read, in Koritz’s words, “as a form of problem-solving and knowledge making” at a formative time (3).

Josephine Lee, University of Minnesota

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***Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos.* By Louis A. Pérez Jr. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press. 2008. xii, 333 pp. \$34.95.**

***Waves of Decolonization: Discourses of Race and Hemispheric Citizenship in Cuba, Mexico, and the United States.* By David Luis-Brown. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 2008. ix, 340 pp. Cloth, \$89.95; paper, \$24.95.**

***Cannibal Democracy: Race and Representation in the Literature of the Americas.* By Zita Nunes. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2008. xx, 218 pp. Cloth, \$67.50; paper, \$22.50.**

These three studies complement one another and contribute to our understanding of nineteenth- and twentieth-century political and cultural interactions between the United States and Cuba, Mexico, and Brazil, respectively. Each work demonstrates an impressive range and command of distinct canons and periods, meticulous bilingual research, and sensitivity to the nuances of its archive. Louis Pérez Jr.'s study examines the guiding metaphors of U.S. policy toward Cuba, while the works by David Luis-Brown and Zita Nunes trace counterhegemonic cultural movements in the Americas.

Pérez's *Cuba in the American Imagination* cautions that the nationalist hubris and grotesque racism of U.S. Gilded Age representations of Cuba cannot be comfortably conscribed to the past. Metaphors about Cuba have been central to the U.S. imagination, Pérez argues, from the age of empire to the contemporary war on terror. Pérez stresses the violence and power inherent in metaphors, their circulation in the mass media, and the ways in which metaphors become embedded in myriad institutional practices. In his study we see hegemony's "war of position" take shape through political cartoons and statements dating from Cuba's War of Independence to the Spanish-American-Cuban War and ensuing U.S. occupations, as the island morphs from a neighbor to a white damsel in distress, an unruly black child, and finally, a child being taught by Uncle Sam to ride a bicycle. To be sure, this image repertoire reveals much more about the United States than it does about Cubans and their struggle for sovereignty. Midway through his study, Pérez introduces Cuban perspectives that diverge sharply from those of U.S. policymakers. Fidel Castro, for one, took offense at U.S. demands for gratitude in exchange for having "won" Cuba's independence. Pérez argues that Castro refused to be treated like an "unruly child," or to honor Cuba's "debt" to the United States (242, 248), an attitude that produced "cognitive dissonance" among his U.S. interpreters, who could only comprehend him as an irrational enigma (244, 249).

It is exciting to see a historian undertake a rigorous study of such a blatantly anti-empirical archive. Pérez's project suggests ways in which a contrapuntal historiography of cultural forms can challenge manufactured consent. As Pérez cites one pundit after another describing occupied Iraq as "learning to ride a bicycle" (270), it is clear that contemporary U.S. foreign policy con-

tinually draws from the Cuban metaphorical archive. Meanwhile, that archive is burgeoning amid recent developments in U.S.-Cuba relations as well as the allocation of government funding for American academic institutions to undertake Cuban “transition studies” (274).

The Cuban War of Independence also serves as a key conceptual horizon for Luis-Brown’s *Waves of Decolonization*; the second wave of his title alludes to the 1920s, when intellectuals responded to the aftershocks of the Mexican Revolution and World War I. Luis-Brown argues that U.S. empire produced an unanticipated windfall in “hemispheric citizenship,” that is, a critical pan-Americanism through which intellectuals launched transnational protests on behalf of those populations disenfranchised through imperialism and racism. Careful not to conflate the demands of specific social movements, Luis-Brown lucidly delineates their connections, as, for example, in his discussion of how key figures of the Harlem Renaissance engaged Mexican Revolutionary cultural politics.

Each of this book’s four chapters could become a monograph in its own right. A substantial second chapter establishes the central coordinates of Cuba, the United States, and Mexico as it examines the presentist messianism of José Martí and W. E. B. DuBois in relation to the Sonoran popular leader Teresa Urrea. Alongside its investigation into hemispheric translations of race, nation, and cultural politics, the work also plots resistant and accommodationist positions within historical discursive formations on race. The first two chapters revisit the reformist impulses of late-nineteenth-century sentimentalism, contrasting familiar works by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Helen Hunt Jackson, and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton to idiosyncratic appropriations by Martí and DuBois, who push the genre’s affective register from pity to agency (74). The last two chapters on primitivism and ethnography, respectively, chart the early-twentieth-century cultural turn that rejected essentialist theories of race while retaining a charged concept of the “primitive.” Luis-Brown underscores the protean ideological valence of each of these discourses; his discussion of the complex positions on race and foreign policy in the ethnographic work of Zora Neale Hurston and Manuel Gamio is a tour de force.

Nunes’s *Cannibal Democracy* addresses Brazilian-U.S. cultural movements, vastly underattended in contemporary transamerican research, which has tended to stress Spanish-language texts. Her work introduces U.S. Americanists to important Brazilian literary texts on race, revisits debates about amalgamation that appeared in the black press, and develops a comparative model for future studies of diaspora cultures in the Americas. In contrast to Luis-Brown’s expanded field of citizenship, Nunes emphasizes that which is sacrificed in claiming juridico-political citizenship under liberal democracy. Her innovative theorization argues that the metaphor of cannibalism is central to democracy’s “incorporation” of citizens. Famously celebrated by Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade in his 1928 *Manifesto Antropófago*, cannibalism, Nunes cautions, almost always implies the consumption of blacks by whites.

For blacks, citizenship demands a remainder, that residue of blackness (often figured narratively as bones or excrement) that must be renounced or denied in order to join the nation. Unlike foreignness, which can be naturalized, Nunes argues that the remainder cannot be reabsorbed into the demos (95–96). She proposes replacing democracy’s dominant dyad of incorporation and introjection with the alternative practices of necrophilia and necrophagia, the latter referring to a liberating cannibalism that fosters group and historical consciousness. Nunes’s readings of U.S. and Brazilian literary texts applaud characters and intellectuals who stand out as “resistant remainders,” those who claim blackness even when invited to whiteness (48). Her final chapter and epilogue offer examples of necrophagic cannibalism in contemporary literature and visual art that posit an ethical acknowledgment of the remainder.

A surprising twist of Nunes’s argument is that she finds a great deal of similarity in the respective racial schema of the United States and Brazil; in fact, she cites numerous U.S. precedents for the concept of “racial democracy,” frequently associated with Brazilian intellectual Gilberto Freyre. Nunes submits this concept to skeptical examination, especially those versions promoted by the corporatist Brazilian state and idealized by African American intellectuals. She reminds readers that whitening is the dominant paradigm of racial mixture in Brazil; it anticipates the progressive “consumption” of blackness through European immigration and interracial procreation. Nunes’s readings of works by U.S. writers demonstrate that the logic of whitening is likewise operative in the United States. Her fourth chapter, on “The New Negro and the Turn to South America,” poignantly underscores the mutual misrecognition on the part of U.S. and Brazilian intellectuals regarding each country’s dominant racial paradigms.

Claire F. Fox, University of Iowa

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***Down in the Dumps: Place, Modernity, American Depression.* By Jani Scandura. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 2008. xix, 321 pp. Cloth, \$89.95; paper, \$24.95.**

***Black Fascisms: African American Literature and Culture between the Wars.* By Mark Christian Thompson. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press. 2007. x, 232 pp. Cloth, \$57.50; paper, \$19.50.**

Characteristic of recent work on modernism, these two studies reveal that there were many American modernisms, not simply one unified phenomenon. Jani Scandura and Mark Thompson extend this insight into their investigations of Depression-era modernism. In previous scholarship, the Depression has appeared as a relatively cohesive literary culture distinguished by a rejection of the allegedly bourgeois principles of 1920s high modernism and a wide-

spread embrace of radical Marxist ideologies and proletarian aesthetics. Both *Down in the Dumps* and *Black Fascisms* highlight the diversity of Depression-era culture, and both offer useful new terms to describe modernism's variety: Scandura proposes a "depressive modernism," and Thompson describes a "fascist modernism."

Scandura intervenes in discussions of 1930s literary culture by largely avoiding the principle topic of scholarship—class and economics. Instead she explores the role of place and history. Her book is organized into four chapters (on Reno, Key West, Harlem, and Hollywood), which explore the competing ways these places were represented during the Depression. The chapter on Key West, for example, addresses the federal government's efforts to turn the island into a tourist destination and thus a laboratory for New Deal economic revitalization plans. The proposed cure involved a fundamentally different conception of the island from the model proposed by modernist writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Elizabeth Bishop, and Wallace Stevens. For these authors, Key West stood for two things: fluidity, with implications for ideas about individual identity and civic heterogeneity; and death, decay, and decomposition, with implications for ways of thinking about the past. The New Deal downplayed the island's history of cultural pluralism and tried to clean up a figuratively messy past along with a literally disheveled place. Among other things, the story of Key West is a model for how dominant conceptions of modernity insist on uniformity, sterilize the past, and conceal the waste that accompanies "progress," while countercultural practices contest these values.

A primary theme in the book is the distinction between depressive and progressive modernity. Progressive modernity in this construction stands for progress and all its alleged virtues. The Depression supposedly defied this script and replaced "the forward thrust of mania, speed, and progress" with a narrative of "depression, idling, and refuse" (4). While this argument is not entirely satisfying—World War I also shattered myths of progress—the main strength of *Down in the Dumps* is not its intervention in debates over modernism. The key virtues of the book are its diverse materials and its methodological innovations. Scandura offers a remarkably rich assortment of unearthed archival research, engaging visual material, and thoughtful analysis of loosely connected subjects ranging from the conventional (Bishop's poetry and Hemingway's fiction) to the exotic (the Key West Tropical Aquarium and the salacious story of Carl Von Cosel's necrophilia with the mummified corpse of Elena Hoyos).

The most interesting feature of the book is unquestionably its methodology. The argumentation is associative rather than deductive, and the prose happily wanders off on tangents and creates surprising juxtapositions. Scandura incorporates archival materials with abandon, writes Hemingwayesque vignettes of her personal experiences while researching the book, and even includes a research proposal prepared for one of the many grant agencies that

funded the project. She refuses to discard the refuse of her own research. Readers should anticipate a book that demands attention to its form as much as its content. For many readers it will be well worth the effort.

The stylistic contrast between Thompson's book and Scandura's is dramatic. *Black Fascisms* is written in conventional argumentative form. The book does, however, challenge conventional literary history, which suggests that "the Harlem Renaissance as an artistic movement of diverse political ideologies . . . gave way to Depression-era radicalism . . . defined by Marxist political engagement" (44). Thompson explores the dark side of black writing in the 1930s: the appeal of fascism to African Americans, including Marcus Garvey, George Schuyler, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright. Offering a complex view of African American literary history, his book is a refreshing alternative to predictable, celebratory accounts of the period.

Thompson demonstrates convincingly that some black writers rejected Marxism and embraced an alternative program of black nationalism that borrowed from fascist ideology. Garvey's movement in particular embraced all of the central features of fascism: strong nationalism; racial exclusion; an emphasis on the aesthetics of politics; attempted mass political mobilization; militarism and a positive view of violence; fierce chauvinism; and authoritarian, charismatic leadership.

Garvey proved pivotal to the black fascist imagination. Each of the texts Thompson studies "is a meditation on the fascism implicit in Garveyism" (3), though most are ambivalent about it. Schuyler's *Black Empire* critiques Garvey while also glorifying fascism. McKay combines elements of Communism with fascism to reinvent Garveyism, while Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain* espouses most features of Garveyite fascism but rejects the biological essentialism that Hurston associates with Nazism. As with all of the writers Thompson discusses, Hurston did not regard fascism as inherently linked to Nazism. Part of the value of Thompson's book is that it exposes the anachronism of this way of thinking. For writers in the Depression, Nazism was merely one manifestation of fascism and cannot be viewed as synonymous with it—a fact that helps explain why fascism may have been appealing to black writers.

Neither *Down in the Dumps* nor *Black Fascisms* offers a dramatically new understanding of modernism as a whole, but they illustrate effectively the diversity of modernism in the 1930s. This is an important, timely contribution considering the uniformity of previous approaches to Depression-era writing. It will also give additional headaches to scholars of postmodernism, whose theories often depend on a unified conception of modernism.

Michael Tavel Clarke, University of Calgary

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***Clear-Cutting Eden: Ecology and the Pastoral in Southern Literature.* By Christopher Rieger. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press. 2009. x, 202 pp. \$39.75.**

***Cotton's Queer Relations: Same-Sex Intimacy and the Literature of the Southern Plantation, 1936–1968.* By Michael P. Bibler. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press. 2009. x, 298 pp. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$22.50.**

As their titles suggest, these two books adopt widely different approaches to understanding the literature of the U.S. South, but they also share key commonalities. Both works are well-researched and theoretically sophisticated; both focus predominantly on the literature of the Southern Renaissance; and both limit their analyses to a carefully chosen handful of representative texts from that era. Most important, each of these books serves as a provocative contribution to the ongoing push to expand and magnify the study of the literature of the South.

Christopher Rieger's *Clear-Cutting Eden* provides a convincing reevaluation of the portrayal of the nonhuman environment in Southern literature of the 1930s and 1940s. On the surface this focus may appear simplistic, but as Rieger demonstrates, a host of racial, historical, environmental, and economic factors led Southern writers of the period to "reinvent and reinterpret the pastoral literary mode as a way of reconceiving Southerners' relationship with the natural world" (2). He chooses as exemplars of this trend four writers: Erskine Caldwell, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Zora Neale Hurston, and, predictably, William Faulkner. Rieger argues that in the 1930s and 1940s a growing environmental awareness led to a new form of Southern pastoral, which he terms "ecopastoral" (4), through which writers of the South strove to create a middle ground between the idealistic plantation romances of the past and the industrialized reality of the New South. He defines ecopastorals in part by their self-critical tendencies, their concern with people working the land, and their urge to demythologize the South by eschewing the romanticized portrait of earlier plantation pastoral and by recognizing widespread environmental degradation, as well as the ways in which the land itself affects the human population (5). By localizing this trend within a unique form of the pastoral, Rieger provides a useful way to conceptualize the growing environmental consciousness of Southern writers and to contrast it with the earlier romances, as well as later throwbacks, such as Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936).

The chapters devoted to Hurston and Faulkner present compelling ecocritical readings, but of particular note are Rieger's analyses of Caldwell and Rawlings. He makes a superb case for how those two writers illustrate the complicated interdependence of human and environmental destinies. He demonstrates how Caldwell's "antipastorals" reveal the dissolution of conventional agrarian land use, which led to a debilitated people and a system in which "balance is replaced by a nightmarish cycle . . . in which socioeconomic forces hasten the depletion of the land" (22–23). In the chapter on Rawlings, Rieger

presents her novels as works of “wilderness pastoral,” in which her characters retreat into the wilds of Florida to flee socially determined gender roles for “more relative and flexible identities” (56).

Michael Bibler foregrounds the sociopolitical nature of such gender identities in *Cotton's Queer Relations*. Focusing on plantation narratives of the mid-twentieth century, Bibler organizes his study into “three figurative models” of homosocial and homosexual relations: those between white men of the planter class, those between black and white women, and those between black men (18). He constructs these investigative categories from the texts of eight writers: Ernest Gaines, Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Lillian Hellman, Katherine Anne Porter, Margaret Walker, William Stryon, and Arna Bon-temps. At the heart of Bibler’s argument is his attempt to “heighten the visibility of the plantation myth’s queer side by examining a collection of literary texts . . . that effectively refashion the plantation into an intrinsically queer cultural space—a space where queer southerners appear to live, sometimes freely and openly, as central players in the story of the South” (2). Through his readings of core texts of what he calls the southern “meta-plantation,”—Bibler’s shorthand term for the “vertical system of paternalistic and patriarchal hierarchies that constitute the core social structure of every individual plantation”—he argues for a complex network of racial, economic, and sexual subjugation, in which homosocial and homosexual relationships are allowed only as long as they do not threaten the dominance of wealthy white males (6).

Cotton's Queer Relations is commendable for both its ambition and its originality, but it is challenged by the obscurity of same-sex relations in some of these texts. In attempting to isolate and interpret a sometimes frustratingly elusive queer element, Bibler writes that “queerness may even seem absent . . . where the representations of sameness appear to define a merely homosocial relationship” but that “invisibility of recognizable sexual identities does not mean the absence of alternative sexualities” because “the flickering (in)visibility of these queer relations” is due to the plantation system itself, which veils such relationships in favor of the patriarchy. He contends that under these circumstances, delineating queer relationships calls for “close attention to the layers of ambiguity, innuendo, and other textual subtleties that sometimes only intimate . . . same-sex intimacy” (22–23). He vies with this lack of overt evidence throughout the book, such as when he makes a case for the “spectral quality that conjures the possibility of lesbianism” between Sophia Jane and Nannie in Porter’s *The Old Order* (158). Still, as with Rieger’s book, Bibler’s volume contributes to a productive conversation about new directions in Southern literary scholarship. Both authors succeed in complicating the mythologies of the mid-twentieth-century South and in explaining how those various mythologies reveal understudied cultural trends that ultimately point the way for future critical studies.

Matthew Wynn Sivils, Iowa State University

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***Race and the Avant-Garde: Experimental and Asian American Poetry since 1965.* By Timothy Yu. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press. 2009. xi, 192 pp. \$45.00.**

***Poetic Obligation: Ethics in Experimental American Poetry after 1945.* By G. Matthew Jenkins. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press. 2008. xv, 263 pp. \$42.50.**

Two new books enhance the texture of scholarly literature on contemporary American poetry, approaching the central question of poetry and politics, albeit with different investments, arguments, and styles. Both works attend to “experimental” or “avant-garde” lineages in recent U.S. American poetry; address the communities that generate, receive, and are constituted and constructed by the poetry invoked; query the concepts of community/identity and aesthetics/poetics; and offer illuminating readings of both semicanonical figures whose work is just beginning to accrue a body of scholarly commentary and poets who have not before been given serious critical attention.

Timothy Yu’s *Race and the Avant-Garde* provides a genealogy of Asian American poetry in relation to the American avant-garde. Pressuring the terms *ethnic* and *experimental*, he proposes that because an aesthetic movement is always already a community, avant-garde traditions in U.S. American poetry can be defined at least as much by community (a concept resonating with “ethnicity”) as by shared aesthetic. Conversely, new ethnic cultural expressions (such as the movement-oriented cultural nationalist poetics of the 1960s and 1970s) can be said to, a priori, have an *experimental* aesthetic identity because the community is inventing new forms to fit its heretofore unexpressed experience. This deconstruction of the tired opposition between identity politics and experimental poetics is most welcome.

Yu lays a foundation with a discussion of Allen Ginsberg’s evocation of aesthetic, and comradely and national community; compelling close readings of “Howl” and “Wichita Vortex Sutra” establish his work as exemplary of a poetry that melds formal and social dissent and links them inseparably to *communitas*, although, curiously, there is little to no discussion of Ginsberg’s powerful ethnic affiliations. The book then moves from an account of the fracturing of the “unified” (or white male-dominated) Left in the face of rising liberation movements from minoritized U.S. ethno-racial and sexual groups in the 1970s, with a critical but generous reading of the poetry and position statements of Ron Silliman in the context of the formation of Language poetry as a reaction to these alternative cultural community formations, meditating usefully on Silliman’s problematic separation of experimentalist poetics and the expressive needs of those engaged in political struggle for recognition as subjects. Yu points out that in claiming Language poetry as a realm of the white male, Silliman in effect “ethnicizes” the avant-garde in ways that, while not always productive, enable Yu to make an interesting case study of how aesthetic identity is constructed and politicized. The chapter titled “Inventing a Culture” is a wonderful, eye-opening, archaeology-of-knowledge exploration of the emer-

gence of an identifiable body of Asian American poetry through a politicized process of community formation and debate about identity: little magazines, political periodicals, broadsides, and other populist organs gave space to poetry that was experimental *and* political, if not always neatly “avant-garde” in the conventional sense. This explosion of energetic language, Yu demonstrates, has been occluded in subsequent anthologies in favor of sanitized, MFA-style lyric poetry by Asian Americans (I am glad that Yu mentions the groundbreaking anthology *Premonitions* [1995], an exception to this rule.) His readings of Francis Oka’s poetry are exceptionally dynamic and exciting. Final chapters on the works of Theresa Hak-Kyung Cha and John Yau, which Yu claims first won readership among white avant-garde poetic circles and then were “rediscovered” as Asian American texts, are sensitive rereadings of poets who have commanded their share of critical accolades.

In contrast to Yu’s historicopolitical orientation, G. Matthew Jenkins’s *Poetic Obligation* is primarily a philosophical investigation. Although it proceeds chronologically from the objectivist poetry of Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen, and Charles Reznikoff from the 1930s forward, through the Black Mountain and San Francisco Renaissance poets Ed Dorn and Robert Duncan, and ends with two women generally associated with Language poetry (assignation of these categories, is, of course, problematic), Susan Howe and Lyn Hejinian, its touchstone is Emmanuel Levinas’s now iconic meditations on our obligations to the Other (for we were strangers once in Egypt)—an imaginative proposition applied to a powerful range of poets. The relationship between ethics and alterity, and the ways that relationship is constituted in or mediated through language—poetic language, no less, with attendant formal considerations—unifies these intense investigations into a kind of politics that transcends politics. Eschewing what he characterizes as crudely identitarian or partisan elements of the political, Jenkins favors instead, and argues that the poets he writes about favor, a subtle, complex, and intimate “poethics” based on acknowledgment of alterity, the body, and the inadequacy of moral or personal judgment in responsible reckoning with human social life, even at its most extreme. Reznikoff’s *Holocaust* provides the occasion for the latter consideration; Jenkins raises the possibility, only to reject it, that Reznikoff’s documentarian voice is an evasion of righteous judgment and is thus complicit with Nazism. This, Jenkins realizes, is a preposterous charge that no one has actually made against the poet, but the objective tone can be read—mistakenly, he grants—as quietism or accommodation.

This overstatement of a binary in order to complicate it recurs in the discussion of gender in the final chapters, on Howe’s and Hejinian’s poetics of “sexual alterity” (151), a slightly confusing coinage one could misunderstand to mean non-normative sexual orientation, but which seems to mean, in the context of the book’s structure, “women.” These readings are at pains to distinguish themselves from what we are used to as the “politics of poetry,” that is, either a strict “politics of form” or an identitarian reading. I found most

rewarding the yoking of Dorn and Duncan under the rubric of “the body” as a site for ethical-linguistic unfolding; Jenkins’s reading of the ethics of Dorn’s *Gunslinger* is especially engaging.

Maria Damon, University of Minnesota

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***New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850–1950.* By William Chapman Sharpe. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press. 2008. xix, 402 pp. \$35.00.**

***New York and the Literary Imagination: The City in Twentieth-Century Fiction and Drama.* By Edward Margolies. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland. 2008. viii, 198 pp. Paper, \$35.00.**

In very different ways, these two books suggest a kinship between New York City and the frontier. Edward Margolies proposes that New York is not the antithesis of the West but the frontier itself, a new beginning. William Sharpe’s study of the urban nocturne, a genre of literature and painting, proposes that we understand the urban night as a frontier, a heart of darkness populated by racially or morally “darker” peoples that is being colonized by an empire of light whose power is both material (gas and electric utilities) and figurative (the normative values of the dominant white society).

With its multimedia focus and generous illustration, *New York Nocturne* recalls Peter Conrad’s splendid 1984 survey, *The Art of the City: Views and Versions of New York*; both volumes mix familiar and forgotten works to offer a sense of how broad the attraction of the city was for American artists and European visitors. But where *Views and Versions* emphasizes the urban spectacle and the life of the city, *Nocturne* is a more somber book both because of the nature of the genre and the approach to the lighted night as a cultural embodiment of U.S. imperialism. The nocturne’s principal antecedents appear to be neoclassical London poems and James McNeill Whistler’s canvases; it expresses “romantic and lyric emotions” in a “mood [that] is more intimate and personal, more reflective” than the art of the daytime world it seeks to “repress” (26). One might assume that a consideration of the New York night must inevitably include the flaneur, yet in Sharpe’s book we rarely encounter Baudelaire’s passionate spectator; more often, we find the moral crusaders and the detectives and physiognomists who make their appearance in the first chapter, “Gaslit Babylon,” and leave their imprint on subsequent chapters. Even as the terms of critique shift from the nineteenth century’s moral register to the language of contemporary cultural critique (via Andreas Huyssen and David Harvey), the figural topography remains constant. As a result, we never get a sense of what the excitement was, what utopian possibilities the

transformation of the nocturnal cityscape and rise of urban nightlife were hoped to portend.

A more complex story of New York at night would have emerged had the author made more room for desire and indeterminacy—for instance, for the way that Ashcan school painters fascinated by the urban spectacle resisted the urge to narrate and to clarify the meanings of their paintings, as detailed by Rebecca Zurier in her authoritative study *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (2006). Certainly a study that extends past midcentury ought to have room for Frank O'Hara, who offers the following nocturnal tableau in his poem "Present": "in Union Square I see you for a moment / red green yellow searchlights cutting through / falling flakes, head bent to the wind / wet and frowning, melancholy, trying / I know perfectly well where you walk to / and that we'll meet in even greater darkness / later and will be warm" (*The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, ed. Donald Allen, [Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1995], 353). Without such moments (whose absence seems to align the author with the forces he would critique), the exposition of the New York nocturne is less compelling than it might have been.

Margolies's *New York and the Literary Imagination* is about the alluring and sometimes fatal possibilities of city life. Its nine chapters are broken into three sections. The first grouping is ethnic: the WASP old guard, immigrants of various ethnicities, African Americans, and first-generation New York Jews. Next are four chapters devoted to broad themes of urban space and city life; the final chapter surveys a century of New York on stage. In its basic outline, Margolies's thesis about New York and the West is indisputable. Most migrants, whether foreign or internal, whites or racial minorities, come to New York to start anew. But what of it? The West of Frederick Jackson Turner, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, and Louis L'Amour is more than a new beginning; it is a relation to land and to nature, "indigenous ways," and self-reliance. The mythic West that Margolies has in mind is also a realm of stark moral choices. Early on, Margolies tries to finesse the equation by suggesting that "lone rangers with John Wayne-like integrity, no longer able to find respite or repurify themselves in open country, revert to cities as Philip Marlowe-like private eyes fighting crime and corruption" (8). What matters is how different the two societies and their protagonists are, one black and white, the other all shades of gray. They call to mind Friedrich Nietzsche's psychological insight that only acute self-consciousness (of which the Duke's characters are bereft) makes human beings interesting objects of study.

In the end, the distinctions matter little, because Margolies does not develop his argument in any systematic way. *New York and the Literary Imagination* has the feel of a set of introductory lectures, a literary historical overview that devotes much more space to authorial biography and plot summary than to development of the chapters' organizing ideas, and that makes no reference to scholarship. This limitation by itself might not be fatal—David Fine's *Imagin-*

ing *Los Angeles: A City in Fiction* (2000) is likewise written for a general audience, but it solidly establishes the literary history of the L.A. myth. Unfortunately, the present volume offers nothing so coherent. A three-paragraph epilogue on 9/11 assures us that the day changed nothing: “[M]yths of the city live on as immortal . . . impervious to the destruction below” (185). If that’s true, everything to be said was said long ago, if not through Margolies’s particular constellation of authors.

Kevin R. McNamara, University of Houston at Clear Lake

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***New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination of Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott.* By George B. Handley. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2007. xi, 441 pp. \$39.95.**

***Prehistoric Digital Poetry: An Archaeology of Forms, 1959–1995.* By C. T. Funkhouser. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press. 2007. xxiv, 349 pp. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$39.95.**

***Singing in a Strange Land: A Jewish American Poetics.* By Maeera Y. Shreiber. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press. 2007. xi, 287 pp. \$55.00.**

Persistent self-evaluation has been constitutive of “American literature” and “American studies” as fields in recent decades, and each book under review here revisits central categories and terms: “New World,” “adamic,” “American,” and “poetry.” George Handley’s *New World Poetics* argues for ecocriticism’s centrality to the ongoing expansion of U.S. American studies into a transnationally and transculturally understood hemispheric studies. Crucial to Handley’s argument is the idea of an adamic imagination in a New World not limited to the United States—the lowercase “adamic” a key to a poetics that can celebrate the natural world while acknowledging its otherness and its status as the site of an often lost, violent history. His “comparative New World readings” of Walt Whitman, Pablo Neruda, and Derek Walcott allow him to rearticulate these poets’ epic ambitions as “hemispheric ambition” (65, 7). Through attention to a wide range of their texts, Handley both offers new perspectives on the poets (each is read afresh as an environmental and hemispheric poet, though of different kinds) and links them on the basis of their considerations of the New World and of “each poet’s relationship to land” (11).

In anti-Hegelian fashion, these poets “found New World culture on nature, not history” (14), on a sense of the local and singular, at the same time as they persistently place the nature-culture divide at the center of their poetics. A New World poetics imagines a shared, though not monolithic, hemispheric

history in the face of a colonial violence that has rendered much of that history untraceable; it involves “imagining a history that only nature has witnessed,” in what Handley also calls a poetics of oblivion (61). The adamic imagination names and celebrates place while preserving historical memory *from* oblivion. If that imagination “render[s] the world as if seen for the first time” (353), the “as if” is crucial: there’s no notion of purity, innocence, or historical break here. Although Handley takes rather too long (sixty pages) to get to a discussion of any actual poems, and though parts of the argument operate on a level of humanist abstraction that to some readers will seem dated, the book makes a substantial contribution to the burgeoning field of ecocriticism in its interdisciplinary intellectual range, its hemispheric scope, and its ethical probing.

More devoted to historical exposition and description than to theorizing or argument, but also international in its scope, C. T. Funkhouser’s *Prehistoric Digital Poetry* lays out in usefully illustrated detail the early history of computer poems and their connections to “precomputerized poetry” (5), using the arrival of the World Wide Web as its cutoff point. In this first book of its kind (though it shares a genealogical emphasis with Loss Pequeño Glazier’s 2001 *Digital Poetics: The Making of E-Poetries*), Funkhouser introduces us to landmark works that make up an unacknowledged history, works likely to be unknown to most readers of page-based poetry. A helpful taxonomy of digital poetry—and “poetry” here is not so much the language art as a placeholder for a privileged site of textual exploration—organizes most of the book, in lengthy chapters on text generation, visual works, and hypermedia and hypertext (with appendices on codework and holography). Of Funkhouser’s three central categories, “text generation” is essentially a digital form of proceduralism, referring to works “generated by computer algorithm, arranged as a sequence of words or sign and symbols according to a programming code” (31). The chapter on visual and kinetic digital poems introduces texts that range along a continuum from static to kinetic or dynamic, while the chapter on early hypertext and hypermedia brings deserved attention to such pioneers as Jim Rosenberg and John Cayley. Funkhouser then extends the discussion into a treatment of the publishing or circulation contexts for digital poetry (listservs, MOOs, electronic journals) and into an overview of the contemporary state of the art.

Funkhouser makes only modest critical claims for especially the earliest work under discussion, and indeed the ideas behind the first digital poems are a good deal more interesting than the verbal and visual results. As the medium grows more sophisticated, of course, so does the work produced within it. Far from a utopian apologist for the digital, Funkhouser makes his case for the fascination, historical significance, and forward-looking possibilities of early digital work, but also acknowledges its limitations: ephemerality, soundlessness, static presentation, and repetition. Unlike obscure print texts that may at least survive in libraries and archives, some of Funkhouser’s key texts are “no

longer viewable because of changes . . . in technology”—so the history, one created by technological change, is virtually lost due to technological change, but at least partially preserved by Funkhouser’s diligence (197).

That it is hard to locate Maeera Shreiber’s *Singing in a Strange Land* in relation to other scholarship on Jewish American writing is part of her central point, and part of her work’s originality: with some notable exceptions, Jewish American literary scholarship has tended to privilege fiction or narrative forms. Shaped around concepts rather than careers, the book still features a sequence of exemplary close readings of selected texts by Charles Reznikoff, Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen (while Shreiber does not treat them together as objectivists, these sections combine to make for one of the strongest treatments available of these poets’ Jewishness), Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, Irena Klepfisz, Allen Grossman, and Louise Glück. It’s a rich blend of feminist theory, philosophy, learning in Judaica and Jewish culture, and broad and deep literary historical knowledge marked by a generous eclecticism of taste.

At stake in Shreiber’s work is the very category and nature of “Jewish American poetry.” While never doctrinal, Shreiber does take seriously the relevance of theology for poetry, and she invites reconsideration of the relations and boundaries between the divine and the human, religion and culture, prayer and poetry, and the sacred and the secular, hoping to provide a new critical language for discussing Jewish American poetics by stressing its indebtedness to liturgical forms. “Diaspora” and “exile” are key terms in the argument, central to which is the figure of the Shekinah as the muse of a Jewish American poetics born out of and responding to the sense of displacement captured in Shreiber’s title. A diasporic poetics will foreground questions of belonging, identity, home (including one’s linguistic home), individuation, and collectivity, and these are indeed further central themes in the discussion. Shreiber proposes valuable terms for investigating a significant set of conceptual, aesthetic, and human problems; *Singing in a Strange Land* is likely to become an important inaugural book in a developing critical conversation, one that will be fascinating to set in dialogue with, for example, Daniel Morris and Stephen Paul Miller’s forthcoming *Radical Poetics and Secular Jewish Culture* as we continue to rethink the terms “American” and “poetry”—and “we.”

Alan Golding, University of Louisville

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***Future West: Utopia and Apocalypse in Frontier Science Fiction.* By William H. Katerberg. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas. 2008. ix, 281 pp. \$45.00.**

***Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women.* By Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. New York: Fordham Univ. Press. 2008. vii, 228 pp. \$50.00.**

The primary contribution of *Future West* is its selective and provocative examination of mostly late-twentieth-century utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic fictions that critique, subvert, or reinvent popular myths of the American West. William Katerberg begins by defining familiar elements of the myths—the march of Western civilization, the rise of U.S. exceptionalism, and the celebration of the “chosen nation” and a “fresh start” that promise innovation, independence, freedom, and ultimately a “New Man.” The obvious strength of the chapters is their variety: the selections include Douglas Coupland’s fictions set in the dystopic present of retirees and tourists, malls and chain stores; William Pierce’s rightist-racist apocalypse of *The Turner Diaries* (1978), which envisions a Nazi-style fresh start, a cleansing of all that is not “normal”; Ernest Calenbach’s ecotopias of the Northwest; Walter Miller’s classic postnuclear apocalyptic *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959); and various cyberpunk fictions.

In his best chapters, Katerberg addresses future Wests that cross cultural and generic boundaries. His most thorough chapter examines the different genres of Kim Stanley Robinson’s California trilogy (dystopia, postnuclear apocalypse, critical utopia) within the contexts of Robinson’s ambitious Mars trilogy and his nonfiction writings. In contrast to the white supremacist utopia of the *The Turner Diaries*, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), discussed in chapter 5, offers a vision of the near future (centered in Tucson, Arizona, but ranging broadly, even to Africa) that invites readers to imagine the American West, indeed the history of the United States, as a temporary and deviant episode in an indigenous historical cycle. This chapter is particularly welcome for an emphasis on genre crossing that should help readers avoid pigeonholing *Almanac* as only Native American, ethnic, protest, apocalyptic, dystopian, or utopian fiction.

Katerberg certainly offers a rich array of future Wests, and he makes no pretense of writing a “historical” survey (5). But some grounding in nineteenth-century authors (for instance, Ignatius Donnelly, Joaquin Miller, and Sutton Griggs, who imagined the possibility of an African American utopia in Texas) would have given a deeper sense of the evolving traditions of imagining a “future West.” Even within this chosen time period, I was surprised that in the discussion of the California “present” of malls and meaningless quests, there was no mention of Thomas Pynchon’s *Crying of Lot 49* (1966); in the near future Wests, no mention of John Galt’s Colorado colony of renegade entrepreneurs in Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged* (1957); and in the distant future Wests, no mention of Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Always Coming Home* (1985), which

is set in California and examines the complex theme of homing that Katerberg addresses in discussions of Pierce, Callenbach, Silko, and Robinson.

Like *Future West*, Jeffrey Weinstock's *Scare Tactics* focuses on a genre that critiques a powerful ideology during a specific period. The genre is the female gothic; the period is 1849 to 1930; and the cultural work is the expression of female anxieties and desires in the context of powerful patriarchal ideologies. *Scare Tactics* is a model recovery study. Weinstock makes a convincing case against neglect (by contrast, nineteenth-century British gothic fiction by men and women and American gothic fiction by men, especially before 1850, have been studied extensively); he expands the bibliography for his period (108 titles, mostly short fiction); he persuasively presents a coherent body of literature (the authors were aware of gothic conventions, they often knew each others' work, and in some cases knew each other personally); and he shows that this literature did important cultural work. Weinstock defines this work of expressing female anxieties and desires by highlighting five significant themes: control and abuse of women, gendered (primarily domestic) spaces that haunt—and limit—both women and men, anxieties caused by capitalistic exploitation and abuse, anxieties relating to marriage and motherhood, and “apparitional lesbianism” (Terry Castle's term) that can reflect a futile wish for same-sex love. He also demonstrates how the authors reconfigured conventions to suggest the inadequacies of the male-authored gothic to express women's anxieties and desires. This discussion in chapter 6, titled “Ghostly Returns,” is particularly insightful. Here Weinstock presents Charlotte Perkins Gilman's “Giant Wisteria” as a rewriting of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. In Gilman's story, two young couples visiting an ancient house discover the remains of an abused young Puritan mother (who wears a small red cross) and her illegitimate child. The mother's spirit haunts the house, figuring “an entire history of ghosted women” (176).

Scare Tactics is well grounded in genre and feminist scholarship and criticism; it is also well balanced. Weinstock discusses stories by well-known authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edith Wharton, and Gilman, as well as lesser-known works by Mary Austin, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, and Josephine Daskam Bacon. This mix reflects the widespread use of the genre. Weinstock offers conceptual discussions (in the introduction, the openings of each chapter, and a coda that explores and questions the notion of the decline of the female gothic in the twentieth century), as well as close readings of two to seven authors per chapter. He also indicates which themes or issues represent “major” concerns reflected in the overwhelming majority of the works (marriage and motherhood) and those expressed infrequently but significantly (such as lesbian desires).

Since almost all of the texts were short stories, I would have liked to know more about the magazines and their readership—in other words, the mechanisms and nature of distribution and reception. But this is a minor reservation. *Scare Tactics* revises our portraits of individual authors by highlighting their

“ghostly” narratives. Now we must acknowledge that many realists and local colorists also painted with ghostly shades. More important, the U.S. literary canon now must make room for the significant female gothic genre of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Kenneth M. Roemer, University of Texas at Arlington

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***The Scary Mason-Dixon Line: African American Writers and the South.* By Trudier Harris. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press. 2009. xi, 247 pp. \$37.50.**

***James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile.* By Magdalena J. Zaborowska. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 2009. xxix, 379 pp. Cloth, \$89.95; paper, \$24.95.**

“If you know whence you came,” writes James Baldwin in *The Fire Next Time*, “there is really no limit to where you can go.” This dictum, which ties self-knowledge to place and a bounded past to an unbounded future, underscores both Trudier Harris’s and Magdalena Zaborowska’s recent studies of African American literature. As the starting point of the first book and the subject of the second, Baldwin stands as a figure of unsettledness whose own deferred arrival to the U.S. South provides the occasion for a larger consideration of geography and place in shaping both a literary tradition and a writer’s oeuvre.

In *The Scary Mason-Dixon Line*, Harris examines how a wide range of post-*Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) African American literature imagined, confronted, engaged with, criticized, historicized, and remembered the South and its histories of slavery, segregation, and lynching. In her introduction, she offers the concept of “tunneling” as the guiding metaphor and method of her study (16). Evoking fugitive movements and underground railroads, tunneling describes not only the project of the authors who return, again and again, to the South, overturning rocks and dirt in a literary rite of passage that Harris traces from Paul Laurence Dunbar to Natasha Trethewey. It is also the method of the study itself: Harris tunnels through these works—plays, poetry, short stories, and novels—delving deeply at the level of style, structure, and representation.

After a general overview of the role of the South in the history of African American literature, Harris maps more specific themes through ten chapters that closely analyze the ways that particular works tunnel through that history. This contextualization and analysis of contemporary black writing is one of the many impressive contributions this study makes. Putting newer works such as Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World* (2003), Tayari Jones’s *Leaving Atlanta* (2002), and Phyllis Alesia Perry’s *Stigmata* (1998) in a regional dia-

logue with earlier works such as Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), Ernest Gaines's "Three Men" (1968), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), and Yusef Komunyakaa's *Dien Cai Dau* (1988) not only alters our understanding of each individual work but also pieces together, quilt-like, larger patterns of how black American writers have addressed and redressed the history of the U.S. South. These chapters do not advance chronologically but rather in clusters of themes—of masculinity and Jim Crow, of women's experiences and the reach of slavery, of intraracial conflict and sexual anxiety, of folklore and the evidence of things not seen—which importantly refuses a developmental narrative of post-*Brown v. Board* African American literature and insists instead on the overlap, metalepsis, anaphora, and circularity of literary tradition itself. Of special note is the final discussion of the "autoerotic creativity" that infuses Raymond Andrews's novel *Baby Sweet's* (1983), which brings welcome relief from the relentless pain discussed in the previous nine chapters. In describing Andrews's "unmasked love of the South" and of black people (197), Harris identifies modes of joy and an erotics of reading that provide a different experience of the South than the ones earlier elaborated. As its position as her study's final chapter attests, such joy is often deferred under the weight of more dire and terrible feelings. But it persists nonetheless.

In ways that complement and expand Harris's study, Zaborowska's *Erotics of Exile* argues that Baldwin was most fully able to explore the rituals and practices of American identity from the distant vantage point of Turkey, where he spent much of the decade between 1961 and 1971. Zaborowska's determined research and sharp interpretations recast Baldwin's entire life project and show how his Turkish sojourn rendered American conceptions of sexuality, race, and citizenship more clearly. Her beautifully imagined book begins with a first chapter that outlines the improvised kinship networks that Baldwin developed in Istanbul, relying on Zaborowska's personal interviews with Baldwin's Turkish friends and collaborators and her experience of visiting the various places Baldwin lived there. The following chapters take up crucial works of Baldwin's that were begun or completed while in Turkey. Through arguments that provide first biographical and cultural context then close textual readings, Zaborowska demonstrates again and again, to subtle and often moving effect, the indelible mark that Baldwin's experience of Turkey left on his work, on his philosophy, and on his self. This is elaborated in her bravura rereading of *Another Country* (1962) in chapter 2, her detailed reconstruction of Baldwin's turn as director of the Turkish translation of John Herbert's 1967 play *Düşenin Dostu* (*Fortune and Men's Eyes*) in chapter 3, and her insistence in chapter 4 on the centrality of the later essay collection *No Name in the Street* (1972) to Baldwin's evolving understanding of race, gender, and sex. An afterword considers Baldwin's own "transgender figuration" in his final work (251), the unpublished play *The Welcome Table* (1987), begun in Istanbul in 1967 but not finished until two decades later.

In detailing his use of Turkey "as a location and a lens—a place to write *from*

and one *through which* to see and reassess American culture” (93), Zaborowska elaborates Baldwin’s prophetic vision of the interarticulation of race, sex, and gender, and provides new insight into his development of a critical project we now call black queer studies. From this vantage point, Baldwin came to recognize “sexual and racial symmetries in the social spaces of the south, in the nation at large, and in the wider Western world” (241). If for Harris all African American writers come, in one way or another, from the U.S. South, Zaborowska shows the discontinuous routes of one particular writer to that destination and beyond it. In doing so, she reminds us that often the destination is as displaced as the traveler.

Shane Vogel, Indiana University

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