

Reviews

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802216801

Jan Nordby Gretlund, *Frames of Southern Mind: Reflections on the Stoic, Bi-Racial and Existential South* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1998). Pp. 200. ISBN 87 7838 397 8.

Jan Nordby Gretlund and Karl-Heinz Westarp (eds.), *The Late Novels of Eudora Welty* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998). Pp. 200. ISBN 1 57003 231 9.

Frames of Southern Mind is an idiosyncratic and eclectic collection that represents Gretlund's long history as a critic of Southern literary studies. It draws together essays derived from lectures and keynote speeches on a range of topics, structuring them according to three perspectival frames specified in the subtitle. It includes a short interview with Martin Luther King, Sr. and a reappraisal of Madison Jones as a "New Agrarian," along with essays on contemporary writers Josephine Humphreys and Larry Brown. It contains some insightful observations. But, for this reader, a problem arises when Gretlund follows too closely Fred Hobson's assessment in *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* that contemporary Southern writers have cast off "the old themes" of race and community, typically Faulknerian themes. Gretlund agrees unquestioningly, asserting that writers "of both races" have "little to say on race. The subject is not significant in their fiction" and that they likewise reject the city as a topic for fiction. Gretlund then contradictorily reads Josephine Humphreys as indubitably influenced by established writers Eudora Welty and Walker Percy in whose work such traditionally Southern themes are evidenced.

There is also a tendency to judge new writing in ways that delimit its appreciation, of Larry Brown, for example: "I am not sure he is as talented as Barry Hannah or Mary Hood, but at his best he is very good." Such comparisons are reductive and undermine Gretlund's willingness to engage with new writing in useful critical ways. Despite acknowledging the critical insights of those like Michael Kreyling and Jefferson Humphries, who have opened up more carefully theorized approaches to Southern fiction, Gretlund eschews the work of writers who do not fit his particular grid of understanding. Consequently, when asking whether "some old Southern concerns [have] survived economic growth and massive immigration," Gretlund fails to engage with a "postsouthern" South or to note how the changing demographics of the South have opened up a biracial literary tradition. We are almost as likely to encounter new Southern fictions by Vietnamese Americans on the Gulf Coast or Hispanics in Florida as we are to find the myth of Southern place still tied to the biracial small town.

The Late Novels of Eudora Welty is a much more satisfying read. In its reappraisal of *Losing Battles* (1970) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972), this author study provides much biographical information interwoven with readings that range from Ruth D. Weston's study of the short-story form as it relates to Welty's *œuvre* to Peggy Whitman Prenshaw's study of the "female South" and authorial anxiety. What is most significant about this collection is its attention to detail: close readings and carefully argued thematic essays are sensibly organized into sections by the editors. The contributors consider Welty's canonical status, the generic conventions she deploys, the importance of Southern storytelling to her work, and what Prenshaw calls the "confluent regional alliances" deriving from her parents that shape Welty's life and influence her writing. The strongest essays include those in which Michael Kreyling locates Welty not in terms of Katherine Anne Porter's influence (Darlene Unrue's essay explores that specific connection) but in relation to Augusta Evans Wilson's 1866 blockbuster *St Elmo*. Kreyling reads *Delta Wedding* through its lens and, like Richard Gray who compares her to Faulkner, situates Welty within what Gray terms a "continuum of storytelling." Reynolds Price provides a short foreword reminding us of Texan writer William Goyen's assertion that Welty is "the matrix of us all."

University of Nottingham

SHARON MONTEITH

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Richard Poirier, *Trying it Out in America: Literary and Other Performances* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1999, \$25). Pp. 310. ISBN 0 374 27941 1.

I do not know if or when Richard Poirier came out. The point is possibly unimportant; but that this book (a collection of 17 reviews first published in the *London Review of Books* and the *New Republic*) is a fine example of out criticism there can be no doubt. Poirier performs critical outness in a variety of ways. Mischievous innuendo for one, as when he notes dryly that Hawthorne's uncle – guardian Robert Manning was the author of *The Book of Fruits* – "for those who might want to make something of it." Pungent judgment for another: I particularly liked the leaden finality of his remark that "Amis is an OK writer." Baudrillard's "terminological heavy breathing" excites his amused contempt. He is incredulous when Jean of the deserts claims that nobody looks at each other in California, "the cruisiest of all the states." His prose is throughout breezy but precise, refreshingly uninterrupted by footnotes (thank God *somebody* can still get away with this). Poirier is an extraordinarily alert and responsive reader – responsive particularly to the way in which human desires and needs condition the work of art. Interestingly, he is especially preoccupied by those artists – Marianne Moore, Whitman, O'Hara, Eliot, Stein, Mailer – who lived variously uneasy, troubled, or shattered erotic lives.

It is odd that Poirier's expansive critical sensibility sits alongside a determined defence of literary value, of the literary canon, and of artistic genius which might

in another writer look pretty stuffy. But thankfully his objections to “culturalism” do not, so to speak, straighten his critical writing. Poirier celebrates “*Song of Myself*” as “one of the inexplicable wonders of human literary creation” without bringing in all the “Western civilization” nonsense of his close critical relative and fellow Emersonian Harold Bloom. Poirier speaks to us from some point of intersection between criticism-as-*belles-lettres* and critical theory. To read him is to glimpse what the profession has gained and, more often, what it has lost. What it has lost most frequently, at least on the evidence of this book, is joyful reading, and it is better to end here, perhaps, than with the litany of carps and quibbles that usually terminates the laudatory review. Poirier’s sense of “performed sincerity” yields marvellous insights into those American authors who are always ahead of us, whose “irreducible integrity of difficulty” will never be arrested by our critical designs.

University of Keele

T. J. LUSTIG

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802236804

Guy Reynolds, *Twentieth-Century American Women's Fiction: A Critical Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1999, £14.99). Pp. 253. ISBN 0 333 65773 x.

Guy Reynolds sets out to provide a comprehensive account of a selection of women writers, wide-ranging enough to function as a survey, but with some pretensions to the argumentative status of monograph. As a survey it works reasonably well, rounding up most of the usual suspects and covering the major literary topoi. It only takes two pages for the metaphor of women’s writing as quilt-making to surface. My own heart sank at the contents page, with chapters on sick beds and therapy, the home, women and the land, social welfare, and “fictions for the village.” Am I the only person who is tired of this Marguerite Patten and WI vision of female creativity, with women making something tasty out of leftovers, arguing about their ailments with their foremothers, and swapping folktales behind the jam stall? Why can’t critics see women as intellectuals, preoccupied with philosophical and social issues? Even in the case of Flannery O’Connor Reynolds manages to highlight her “almost medieval Catholic mysticism” rather than her unambiguous engagement with Catholic theology or, indeed, her even more medieval politics. (How many other women writers have had a fellow struggling artist investigated by the FBI?) Zora Neale Hurston becomes a “folkloric modernist” (rather than a radical anthropologist who based her most popular work on features of Native American culture, courtesy of Franz Boas). Kate Chopin is represented by *The Awakening*, as a typically declensionist narrative of failure and death, rather than “The Storm,” with its cheerful adultery keeping everyone happy. The selection of writers is similarly curriculum-friendly, with few authors covered who would not feature widely on undergraduate courses, and the particular works tending to be frequently taught and manageable in terms of length (no Ellen Glasgow), political accessibility (no Grace Paley) and supporting criticism. Indeed few of the choices would frighten the horses on any courses – children’s literature, no

popular fiction, no horror stories, no Vietnam or blank fictions, not much sex or violence, and the contemporary somewhat scanted. Not a mention of Louise Erdrich, Octavia Butler, Anne Rice or even Margaret Mitchell, and not much sense of what women actually read as opposed to which books by women are taught.

Good points? Wharton and economics, the inclusion of Pauline Hopkins, Cather as postcolonial literary nationalist (everything Reynolds writes about Cather is worth reading, here especially on *The Professor's House*), Joyce Carol Oates and boxing, Sontag and the social construction of masculinity (good on Nelson, Napoleon and *The Volcano Lover*) and the emphasis on intertextuality throughout. Somewhere in the book there lurks the ghost of an interesting monograph on women as novelists of masculine crisis, a ghost which one rather wishes this survey had not laid.

University of Nottingham

JUDIE NEWMAN

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802246800

David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999, £16.95). Pp. 216. ISBN 1 85331 227 4.

In *American Science Fiction and the Cold War* David Seed, as Star Trek would put it, boldly goes into a territory of criticism rarely ventured into. Given its American context, there is indeed something appropriate in this pioneer status, though of course Seed is careful to draw upon a wide range of related critical efforts, particularly in Nuclear Criticism.

What is astonishing, on reading this book, is to wonder why so little attention has been focused on the issues Seed discusses. Seed would be the first to admit that the connection he draws between the history of American science fiction and the psychological and cultural implications of the cold war is not a revolutionary one. Indeed, the degree to which the domination of American popular culture by science fiction emerged from the same historical processes as the domination of American ideology by cold war fears is one which a post cold war world must surely find impossible to dispute. The unusual situation in which this book is placed, though, is one in which previous critical negligence allows Seed to construct an argument with which we may nearly all concur, and yet at the same time retain the freshness and vigour of a pioneering work. Such are the advantages Seed gains from an interest in and awareness of, not just the critically acclaimed writers of a genre, but those equally (perhaps more) representative figures of limited ability. The further advantage of Seed's general approach is the overview it provides of what are very diverse psychological and literary reactions to the cold war. The greatest achievement of this book, therefore, is to sketch in a territory previously unmapped, with a significant recognition that the relationship between the cold war and popular culture was a two-way street. Not only did science-fiction writers reflect the fears of the Administration, but the Administration often, and worryingly, incorporated the attitudes of science fiction into official policies and socially disseminated ideology.

The problem with all this is, though, the scale of the discussion. Taking the broad view (i.e. the entirety of science fiction literature and film in the cold war era) means that, on the scale of individual authors or individual works, Seed simply does not have the time to go into too much detail. As a consequence, a frustrating disparity emerges in the book between the broad strokes (all of which are valuable) and the finishing touches of his argument. Hopefully Seed will in future produce the detailed individual analysis of the unexplored critical space opened to exploration by this work.

University of Essex

DANIEL JUPP

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802256807

John Warfield Simpson, *Visions of Paradise: Glimpses of our Landscape's Legacy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999, \$35). Pp. 387. ISBN 0 520 21364 5.

Visions of Paradise seeks to raise American awareness of the historical and cultural remnants investing their physical surroundings: "Reading them makes the landscape more meaningful to us. It becomes a home in which we reside rather than merely occupy: a real *home* alive with history." In pursuit of this aim, Simpson delivers a conventional narrative traversing familiar terrain such as the attitude to wilderness of Euro-American pioneers, the illusory nature of so-called pristine wilderness, mechanisms for disposal of the public domain, the conflicting societal visions of Jefferson and Hamilton, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, technological innovations facilitating the agrarian conquest of the Great Plains, the great men of conservation and the emerging ecological consciousness, the clash between preservationists and "utilitarian" conservationists over Hetch Hetchy dam and seminal events like the first national forests and parks. The most stimulating material (apart from short chapters of personal musings on the spirit of various places) comes in the final third of the book. Having taken the reader on a lightning tour of four centuries, Simpson stops abruptly in the 1970s and heads home to the familiarity of the suburbs and the rest of the domestic landscape shaped by the automobile, where we remain for the final hundred pages. If reading the American landscape furnishes profound insights into history and culture and what Simpson refers to as the "American psyche," then the immaculate lawns of indistinguishable residential subdivisions that constitute the physical embodiment of the ideal middle landscape reveal as much as the extraordinary glories of Yosemite.

Dust jacket accolades placing this book in the august company of hallowed intellectual histories such as Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* and Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* are far-fetched, to put it mildly. Simpson's essential theme and insight – "our traditional concept of land as property and a commodity primarily for functional use ... our historical sense of separation from and superiority over a land of endless abundance and resilience, a sense that has blinded us to the environmental consequences of our actions" – is hardly groundbreaking. Nor is his conclusion that those values have changed little over

time and his emphasis on the American need to re-establish a meaningful connection with the land. The uninitiated undergraduate and interested lay person will certainly find *Visions of Paradise* an accessible and informative introduction – in fact, the book will probably find its largest audience beyond academia. But works by the likes of Alfred Crosby, William Cronon, Stephen Fox, Samuel P. Hays, Hans Huth, John B. Jackson, Donald Meinig, Roderick Nash, John Opie, Simon Schama, Alfred Runte, Richard White and Donald Worster will remain the staples of the more seasoned.

University of Bristol

PETER A. COATES

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Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999). Pp. 387. ISBN 0 7006 0973 3.

Books about Richard Nixon are frequently distinguished more by their size than quality, but this is without doubt the best single-volume study yet written on the Nixon administration. Small evidently dislikes Nixon as “an unpleasant human being” and gets as close as anyone has yet done to explaining Nixon the man, but he still treats his achievements and failures as president in an even-handed and judicious fashion. Contradictory to Nixon’s predictions that his foreign policy would vindicate his reputation in history, Small lends support to the new orthodoxy promoted by Joan Hoff’s recent study that his domestic achievements were underrated and his diplomatic legacy was overvalued.

Three chapters deal with foreign policy. Small credits Nixon for getting the United States out of Vietnam but criticizes his prolongation of the war and refutes his claim that an early withdrawal would have made it impossible for him to promote détente with the Soviets and Chinese. Both communist powers were anxious to court the Americans for fear of being isolated in the new diplomatic triangle. Moreover, Nixon’s successful dealings with the great powers were counterbalanced by his and Kissinger’s shortcomings in dealing with issues and nations outside their principal sphere of interest: allies were alienated by being taken for granted and the aspirations of the Third World were almost wholly misunderstood or ignored.

By contrast, Small draws a more sympathetic portrayal of Nixon’s domestic achievements, especially in the areas of civil rights, environmentalism and welfare reform. Though his policies were often forced upon him by Congress or were dictated by electoral calculation, Nixon forged an impressive record and did not engage in knee-jerk reaction against the Great Society. Of course, his handling of the economy stands as his main domestic failure, but the record of his two successors indicates that no one really had the answers to cure stagflation.

Whereas Joan Hoff’s study of Nixon contended that Watergate should not be allowed to overshadow assessment of the Nixon record, Small more realistically accepts that the scandal necessarily shapes any historical verdict. His analysis of Nixon’s wrongdoings is illuminating and makes use of newly available evidence. In essence he largely proves his contention that “no president before or after ordered or participated in so many serious illegal and extralegal acts that violated

constitutional principles.” A hardball politician to the end, the post-presidential Nixon was apt to employ pressure tactics (Small uses the term “blackmail”) to enlist the aid of George Bush and Bill Clinton for his post-cold-war rehabilitation. This is a first rate study that merits a wide readership.

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IWAN W. MORGAN

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Werner Sollors (ed.), *Multilingual America. Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998, \$65.00 cloth, \$25 paper). Pp. 409. ISBN 0 8147 8092 x, 0 8147 8093 8.

In 1996, in a statement republished here, the Linguistic Society of America reminded the world that “the vast majority of the world’s nations are at least bilingual, and most are multilingual.” To judge by most contemporary histories of American literature, the United States is the great monolingual exception. Required language education has been steadily scaled down, sometimes assisted by multiculturalists who see multilingualism as part of a nostalgia for an earlier America when a few classical or European languages were seen as a sign of cultivation. With the exception generally of Spanish, multiculturalism tends to pay little attention to linguistic diversity, perhaps nervous about substituting language as a counterweight to race, as a model for the understanding of culture. Language blindness similarly affects conservatives, with the result that we probably know less now than turn-of-the-century scholars about, say, Cotton Mather’s Latin writings, the letters of Swedish maids, Dutch colonial texts or Arabic slave narratives. The list of only those non-English American newspapers which were under the surveillance of the US postmaster in 1917 runs to more than 3000 titles, in Ruthenian, Syrian, Ladino, Bohemian, Tagalog-Visayan, not to mention such bilingual forms as German–Hungarian, or Polish–Latin. The field, in short, is enormous and Sollors’ volume of twenty-eight new essays may well be one of the first works in a major re-examination of American literature and history in the light of multiculturalism. In the space of a short review, it is impossible to do more than sketch something of the range of the volume. Topics include literary history, code-switching (e.g. Yinglish, Portinglês, Spanglish), “melting glots” (e.g. “iu giachess” for “you jackass”), the influence of other languages on writers in English (Twain, Chopin, Cooper, Ozick), political issues (the suppression of American sign language and Tigua Pueblo), Spanish and German drama, and a handy section on aids to research. (This must be fertile ground for grant applications.) Two examples will have to suffice to suggest the ways in which this type of knowledge can change our understanding of American culture. When Toni Morrison lamented the erasure of race in American literature, she referred only to English-language works. Jeannette Lander’s *Ein Sommer in der Woche der Itke K.*, set in the summer of 1942, in the black community of Atlanta, brings together Jewish and African American history, lynchings, the escape from Poland, Joe Louis’s triumph and the first news of the Holocaust, steerage and the Middle passage, the Yiddish play *The Dybbuk* and blackface

minstrelsy, in what sounds like a thought-provoking – if perhaps indigestibly rich – mixture. Friederich Armand Strubberg's trilogy *Die Quadrona, Die Mulattin, Die Negerin* (1862) takes similar heroines of different colour through the conflicts of love and slavery. In 1863, he followed it up with *Carl Scharnhorst* using a plot centred on two boys, one white, one a slave. Carl faces a dilemma between morality and the law and resolves to sacrifice himself to save his friend from slavery. Unlike Twain's Huck Finn, however, he succeeds in gaining both their freedoms by a clever ploy. German speakers – now read on.

University of Nottingham

JUDIE NEWMAN

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Peter N. Stearns, *Battleground of Desire: The Struggle for Self-Control in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1999, \$28.95). Pp. 488. ISBN 0 8147 8128 4.

To his studies of jealousy, anger and “cool” in modern American culture, Peter Stearns has now added a subtle and original survey of the issue of “self-control.” Stearns rejects conservative claims that there has been a dramatic decline in manners and self-discipline since the late nineteenth century. Instead he claims that, while some behaviours did loosen in the twentieth century, many Victorian standards remained and were supplemented by new rules of self-control. Greater sexual indulgence has to be offset against both continued puritanism and the emergence of new codes of control relating to homosexuality, child abuse and sexual harassment. While campaigns to promote the preservation of Victorian posture failed, new body standards were required in personal hygiene, weight and the consumption of tobacco and alcohol. While there was increased informality in etiquette from the 1920s, new working environments actually reduced scope for spontaneity: telephone operators were required to be pleasant even when they had been angered by clients. Stearns’ also suggests that notions of a shift in the last century from “character” to “personality” are simplistic, since mass consumption made self-discipline more, rather than less, necessary. This is an impressively researched study, drawing on a range of prescriptive literature, including advice manuals for parents, etiquette books and the writings of agony aunts and health experts.

While Stearns’ non-linear model of restraint and indulgence is highly convincing, it is not entirely unproblematic. First, his arguments are exclusively based on the experience of the white middle classes, and the codes of self-control in ethnic and black American cultures are deliberately excluded. At the very least Stearns might have deconstructed white myths about African American culture being more spontaneous and expressive (revealed in white jazz criticism or in Warren Beatty’s 1998 film *Bulworth*). Secondly, despite the book’s sub-title, much of Stearns’ focus is on *external* regulation of behaviour rather than on how self-control functioned in terms of interiority and selfhood. Stearns shares Foucault’s insistence on the power of cultural constraints, but views these narrowly cultural rather than as also psychological. Thirdly, while the Lewinsky affair is mentioned, the world of politics is not treated; a pity, since sites such as Harry Truman’s

“plain speaking” and Ed Muskie’s public tears suggest politicians have had particular problems negotiating the shifting coda of self-control, needing to appear both self-disciplined and authentic. However this is still a subtle and erudite piece of cultural history, confirming Stearns’s status as both pioneer and unrivalled authority in the history of modern American emotionality.

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MARTIN FRANCIS

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Timothy N. Thurber, *The Politics of Equality: Hubert H. Humphrey and the African American Freedom Struggle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, n.p.). Pp. 352. ISBN 0 231 11046 4, 0 231 11047 2.

Carl Solberg’s biography apart, this book is the first significant attempt to assess Hubert Humphrey’s contribution to the cause of American liberalism during the mid-twentieth century. The relative lack of attention hitherto paid to such a key figure is puzzling, but Timothy Thurber’s book does much to redress this neglect. It is very well researched – the hugely detailed footnotes based on wide-ranging archival sources testify to its origins as a doctoral thesis – and well written. Thurber examines Humphrey’s role in the promotion of civil rights first as mayor of Minneapolis and more significantly on the national stage from the 1948 Democratic presidential convention at Philadelphia to the struggle for the Humphrey–Hawkins full-employment bill in the mid 1970s. In doing so he traces the effect of the politics of equality in shaping a new liberalism that lacked the broad appeal of its New Deal precursor.

At the heart of the book is an exploration of the paradox of modern liberalism, which Humphrey’s career perfectly exemplified. The Democratic Party’s shift away from the New Deal agenda of economic rights to a concern for the long-overdue extension of social and political rights to groups and individuals in the 1960s and beyond undermined its mass appeal and thereby weakened its ability to fight for economic equality in the 1970s and 1980s. In general, Thurber portrays Humphrey sympathetically as a political realist who tried to balance the need for racial change with the need for power to bring it about. While critical of his handling of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, which is attributed to Humphrey’s fundamental vision of politics as incremental change resulting from deals brokered by party elites, the author’s own judgements about the real threat of racial backlash in what eventually became a landslide Democratic election victory later that year appear to mitigate the tactics employed by the party leadership at the presidential convention. Humphrey’s labours and frustrations as Vice-President to promote and enforce administration civil rights policy are also rescued from relative obscurity. His return to the agenda of racial justice through economic reform in the 1970s receives illuminating analysis in the final chapter, but one would have liked more coverage given to this crucial issue and the consequences for liberalism of the Democratic Party’s refusal to follow his lead on this.

This excellent study enhances understanding of American liberalism’s inability to integrate economic and racial justice within a cogent and popular agenda of

reform. It also offers an insightful and balanced assessment of one of the major figures of twentieth-century American politics.

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IWAN W. MORGAN

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Albert J. Von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, £18.50 cloth). Pp. 409. ISBN 0 674 03954 8.

Albert J. Von Frank's book is about an important and little-known episode in American History. In 1854, a Virginian slave named Anthony Burns managed to escape to Boston, where he was captured and brought to trial. The authorities' attempt to enforce the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, under which fugitive slaves had to be returned to their owners, provoked massive protests among the citizens of Boston. Prominent Abolitionists – such as Richard Henry Dana Jr. – intervened in favor of Burns, organizing his defense, while more extremist figures – such as William Lloyd Garrison – saw the case as yet another proof that “slave power” ruled over the United States. When Burns was sentenced to be returned to his master, the deep anti-slavery feelings shared by Boston's citizens led the mob to assault the Courthouse and then to act against the officers escorting Burns. Coming at the same time as the Kansas–Nebraska Act, the case of Anthony Burns did much to make Northerners aware of the consequences of “slave power” in Congress and at the same time it helped to exacerbate the animosity between North and South.

Von Frank uses the case of Anthony Burns to shed light on the cultural and political life of mid-nineteenth-century Boston. He places the events occurring before and during the trial and the figures involved in them in the context of the rising fortunes of the Republican Party and of the spread of Transcendentalism among New England intellectuals. Von Frank declares in the preface that Ralph Waldo Emerson is the subject of his book, while Anthony Burns is the object, explaining that it was the case of the Virginian slave that made Emerson realize that he could not hold any longer to abstract ideas of freedom, and that he had to fight slavery, which had become the central issue of American social and political life. Until 1854, Emerson and the Transcendentalists had aimed at renovating the conscience of Americans through the promotion of the discovery of the individual's inner freedom. After the “revolution of 1854,” they joined the Anti-Slavery movement and actively supported Anti-Slavery politics, because – as Emerson explained in an 1855 lecture – they saw slavery as an unsustainable violation of nature, which stood in opposition to God's plans for human progress. Von Frank's book focuses on this momentous shift and accounts for its occurrence with the acknowledgement of the implicit revolutionary message of Emerson's Transcendentalist philosophy; by 1855, Transcendentalism was moving toward positions which were close to the Abolitionist movement, whose origins were in Emerson's native New England.

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ENRICO DAL LAGO

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Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives 1950–1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, £21.50). Pp. 183. ISBN 0 8018 5876 3.

Any study of the development of the birth-control pill will be centrally concerned with the expansion of women's reproductive choices. But, as this book so clearly demonstrates, it involves other questions too. In part, it is about the risks that come with the ingestion of oral contraception. It is about the relationship between women and doctors, between women and their partners and between science, medicine and the media. Not least, it is about how women have responded differently to this intervention into their bodies.

Underpinned by some excellent archival material, interviews with key individuals and an extensive use of the newspapers, magazines and medical journals of the time, this study is particularly strong in its discussion of concerns over the safety of the Pill. The appearance in the late sixties of a book on the dangers of oral contraception by veteran women's health journalist Barbara Seaman came in the wake of Rachel Carson's critique of pesticides and Ralph Nader's indictment of the automobile industry. In her case, her work was to influence Senate hearings on the pharmaceutical industry, on the last day of which the Food and Drug Administration was to announce its decision to require manufacturers to include material on health risks in every package of birth-control pills. The Senate hearings found the nascent Women's Liberation Movement, which not only believed that the Pill was dangerous but also demanded that women should be asked to give testimony, on the opposite side of the argument not only from the as yet little known Senator for Kansas, Bob Dole, but also from many of those who would later be prominent in the campaign for the legalisation of abortion. In important ways, organisations such as Planned Parenthood and what became the National Women's Health Network had much in common. But around the claim that the Pill represented a vital step forward for women or a threat to their lives, the two groups were fundamentally in dispute.

This is not the only area of interest within this valuable book. Anyone concerned with the debate over scientific "advance" and medical authority will find this a highly stimulating study, and, while we may doubt Watkins' contention that eugenics had little to do with the birth-control movement, she has constructed a carefully thought out alternative perspective to those that have seen the development of oral contraception as male experimentation upon women's bodies. For her, the Pill brought the possibility of voluntary pregnancy, and feminist (and other) critics of its medical effects and social repercussions will need to engage carefully with her arguments if this important debate is to be taken to a new level.

University of Wolverhampton

MARTIN DURHAM

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Gary Westfahl, *The Mechanics of Wonder: The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998, £32 cloth, £14.95 paper). Pp. 344. ISBN 0 85323 5635, 0 85323 573 2.

In *The Mechanics of Wonder* Gary Westfahl presents a sustained argument for a definition of science fiction based on his own interpretation of the work and influence of Hugo Gernsback. He argues that science-fiction criticism has mistaken its true origins by refusing to recognise Gernsback's status as the founder of the genre. Westfahl believes that all of the contemporary controversies and differences of opinion regarding what constitutes science fiction may be resolved by a renewed attention to the critical theories of Hugo Gernsback. He argues that commentators on the field have ignored Gernsback's significance because of the appropriation of many of his views by later and more sophisticated commentators such as John W. Campbell Jr. Westfahl's ingenious explanation of Gernsback's diminished status is that his views are so pervasive that they become invisible, detached from their originator because they are so embedded in the basic aspirations of the genre. Further, Westfahl admits that the qualitative flaws of Gernsback's own writing have, for those working as science-fiction writers and commentators, created an embarrassment in acknowledging a kinship between themselves and the first editor of *Amazing Stories*.

The Mechanics of Wonder, by and large, succeeds in what is a passionate didactic effort, since Westfahl's basic points, arguing for a greater scholarly interest and respect for Gernsback and the pulp tradition he initiated, is timely. Westfahl is correct in differentiating between qualitative assessments and the separate issue of the influence and significance of a literary figure. What is less convincing, however, is Westfahl's complete dismissal of a tradition of proto-science fiction. It is possible to be aware of Gernsback, to trace how the problems which beset Gernsback still haunt science-fiction writers today, without claiming, as Westfahl does, that only one interpretation of the genre, only one origin, is critically valid. *The Mechanics of Wonder* should be welcomed as a reminder of Gernsback's importance, but Westfahl will need to recognise that genres evolve very quickly beyond the limits of their first critic, before others will be as ready as he is to dismiss the alternative views presented by important critics like Darko Suvin and Brian Aldiss.

University of Essex

DANIEL JUPP

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802336806

Charles Hersch, *Democratic Artworks: Politics and the Arts from Trilling to Dylan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, \$19.95). Pp. 232. ISBN 0 7914 3802 3.

Combining political theory with the arts, particularly music, Charles Hersch argues that "artworks can politically educate citizens and thus contribute to democracy." Drawing upon literature and music from the 1950s and the 1960s,

he aims “to clarify the variety of ways works of art can act as vehicles for political education.” Hersch posits the centrality of the political role of the arts during the 50s and 60s and hopes to “make explicit the connections between those works and the politics of their times.” This type of cultural production he calls “democratic artworks” or “works that support democracy.”

To this end, Hersch provides a range of “artworks.” His most obvious choice is to begin with the New York Intellectuals of the 1950s, in particular Lionel Trilling. He then moves on to look at the 1960s, black activists and “free jazz,” and finally the folk music of Bob Dylan. In choosing these case studies, Hersch maintains that “my aim is not to present a representative sample, but to look at performances that illustrate a number of different ways artworks can act as vehicles for political education.” As such, he attempts to connect these performances with contemporaneous political issues, thus demonstrating how they may have contributed to the struggle for democracy in ways that theory could not have. He argues that what gives artworks a unique capacity for democratic political engagement is their engagement of the senses.

However, this is where problems begin to arise. Hersch’s definition of artists is simultaneously broad and restrictive. It encompasses critics and musicians while it excludes writers, painters, and dramatists. His criteria for selection seem to be simply what was most prominent in the decades concerned. But in what senses can the primarily critical New York Intellectuals be described as ‘artists’? Trilling, for example, is remembered more for his criticism and teaching than for his “artworks.” Would not a Jackson Pollock have been a better subject for the 1950s?

Further, other questions still arise. What unites these disparate case studies? What is the common thread between them? The material seems to be loosely organised around a notion of political education, but perhaps other ideas would have been more productive. The concept of freedom, for example, appears frequently throughout the text and could have provided a tighter focus for his material. In addition, Hersch could have made more comparisons between the various individuals thus drawing them together into a stronger analytical framework.

None the less, this is an interesting piece of interdisciplinary scholarship that can help us to rethink our conceptions of the intellectual to include a wider range of practitioners, such as musicians, rather than the traditional emphasis on “men of letters.”

London, England

NATHAN ABRAMS

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802346802

Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998, £18.50). Pp. 306. ISBN 0 674 01635 1.

The Peace Corps has already attracted a minor host of historians, not least Gerard Rice in his admirable 1985 study, and the need for another is not immediately self-evident. The first impressions afforded by this book are not altogether reassuring.

The first paragraph uses “America” three times where the “United States” is meant, a common enough misnomer though surprising in a study that addresses the issue of American cultural imperialism, and in the first chapter “phenomena” appears instead of “phenomenon” and “Wendell Wilkie” instead of “Wendell Willkie.” Later on, in a visit to Britain, the city of “Edinborough” makes its beguiling appearance.

But first impressions can be misleading, and the initial suspicion of sloppiness soon gives way to admiration for the imagination displayed in this study. The author is good on some of the larger processes, as on the thick cluster of geopolitical, cultural and intellectual impulses that made the Peace Corps possible. She also expertly disentangles the disparate motivations operating on the several levels of American society and politics, and recaptures something of the essence of the activist, existentialist 1960s, at once idealist and hard-nosed, sensitively exploring the Peace Corps’ capacity to stand for what Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature.” The Beatles’ song from which the book takes its title said something about the Peace Corps spirit. One of the strengths of the book is the attention given to similar ventures in several other industrial societies, something encouraged by the dominant American example. Effectively and succinctly delineated, too, is the later history of the Peace Corps, the declining public and governmental interest in it in the cynical days following the Vietnam War, and the Corps’ partial rehabilitation in the 1980s under the astute leadership of moderate Republican Loret Miller Ruppe. There is the occasional jarring lapse, as when we are told that John F. Kennedy “built his Cabinet with professors from the Ivy League.” (Kennedy may have hired professors but, unlike Nixon, he knew better than to put them in his Cabinet.) If not constructed with the most meticulous care, the book is vindicated by the author’s far-ranging research and intellectual vision.

Lancaster University

M. J. HEALE

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802356809

Zora Neale Hurston, *Go Gator and Muddy the Water: Writings by Zora Neale Hurston from the Federal Writers’ Project*, edited and with a biographical essay by Pamela Bordelon (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999, £16.95 cloth, £9.95 paper). Pp. 199. ISBN 0 393 04895 8, 0 393 31813 3.

This collection of previously unpublished material written by Hurston during her time at the Federal Writers’ Project, a relief programme designed to provide artists with paid employment during the Depression, is greatly enhanced by Pamela Bordelon’s introductory biographical essay and commentaries on the individual pieces of writing. Bordelon’s contributions both contextualise these pieces and relate them to Hurston’s better-known writing. Perhaps most valuable to understanding Hurston’s work is the essay “Art and Such,” where she defends her artistic aims from contemporaries who condemned her for not focusing exclusively on the racial discrimination prevalent throughout the American South, where Hurston set the bulk of her work. In claiming the freedom to write

also of the personal and the celebratory, Hurston asserts a right which, as Bordelon points out, white writers took for granted.

While racism may not be the central focus of Hurston's writing, however, the effects of racial discrimination on the lives of the African Americans of Florida permeate the collection, pointed out by Bordelon but still more effectively insinuated by Hurston. Attacked for her apparent concessions to her white patrons' sensibilities, Hurston's strategies of subversion in fact mirror the subtle derision of authority recurring through the folk-tales she records. One of her most important techniques of resistance to the dominant culture which subordinated the African American was her adoption in her writing of the idiom of African-American folk culture. Hurston's pride in the African-American culture of Florida defied the institutionalised racism which Bordelon identifies as responsible for the relegation of Hurston's FWP writings to largely unused files scattered amongst various libraries. This context of racism emerges with increasing insistence as the book progresses, most starkly in "The Ocoee Riot," Hurston's chilling report of a lynching, but resounding also through Hurston's understated observations of her interviewees' lives, and concluding with the unmistakably patronising tone of Hurston's interviewer, Herbert Halpert, in the final section, a transcript of recordings of Hurston singing for Halpert songs learned during her research.

Hurston's condemnation in "Art and Such" of those of her fellow African Americans who did write exclusively of the racist injustices of their day may be no more balanced than her contemporary critics' denunciation of her own work; but, unlike their arguments, Hurston's particular strategies of defiance have not always been recognised or considered by her more recent critics. This book goes some way towards correcting the imbalance.

University of Essex

RUTH FRENDON

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802366805

Steven G. Kellman and Irving Malin (eds.), *Into The Tunnel: Readings of Gass's Novel* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998, £30.00). Pp. 172. ISBN 0 87413 642 3.

At only 172 pages, this comparatively anorexic volume might appear too slight to tackle a novel described by one reviewer as consisting of "adipose verbosity" and "intellectual flatulence." Yet, containing as it does an introduction, an anti-introduction, a useful interview with the author (but no anti-interview) and twelve essays, *Into The Tunnel* is a dense and worthwhile critical endeavour: an attempt, as co-editor Steven Kellman notes, to guide the reader through this massive text.

Introduced (or, more accurately, anti-introduced) as "the most significant novel published since World War Two," Gass's novel is no easy read: its formal complexity, moral contortions and, of course, its length make burrowing one's way through *The Tunnel* a daunting prospect. Yet if this reviewer might be so bold as to identify a common thread linking a group of essays so disdainful of

such a reductive tactic, it is that throughout the volume we are exhorted to *re-read* the novel. Judging by the intelligent responses under review, this is advice worth heeding. *The Tunnel* is shown to be a novel about history and its fabrication, about the instability of narrative, about the limits to which we push language as a representative tool.

It is, however, Gass's use of the Holocaust as a backdrop which often dominates discussion of his novel. Does Kohler's position as sole narrative consciousness reduce the horrors of genocide to banality? Is the Holocaust Gass's subject anyway? Is Kohler too close to Gass for everyone's comfort? Such questions and more are discussed throughout the volume, but three essays stand out: Heide Ziegler views the novel as the creation of a world in which, although evil exists, we are only guilty if, like Kohler, we allow it to develop; Arthur Saltzman shows how Gass's intricate use of metaphor enacts the moral complexities inherent in the novel; finally, Donald J. Greiner discusses Kohler's right to expression in the light of the Rushdie affair, implying that Kohler's true crime is failing to realise the power inherent in our residence within the world of words.

Quibbles? There are a number of distracting typographical errors. More seriously, analysis of Gass's intertextual references, the intellectual appropriation of the Holocaust, and the effects on the narrative of the time lag between Gass starting the novel and its being published might have warranted more attention. This reviewer, however, will shortly embark on a re-reading of *The Tunnel* and suspects that the essays in this volume have therefore achieved their aim.

The University of Hull

DAVID J. EVANS

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802376801

Arnold Krupat, *The Turn to the Native: Studies in Criticism & Culture* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, £11.50). Pp. 165. ISBN 0 8032 7786 5.

As a non-Native critic, Krupat's pragmatic approach to the discussion of identitarian emphasis on literature, criticism and cultural politics seems appropriate and necessary. Two years after the first (hardback) edition, the significance of his arguments remain central.

Initially, Krupat takes a theoretical approach to the problem of situating Native American literature in the American canon and considers the validity of the non-Natives' critical response. He walks a metaphoric tightrope between two ideological positions; what he terms the "rhetorical" (an essentialist "them" and "us" approach), and the "logical" (which insists on the impossibility of a separatist existence). Krupat mediates rather than resolves these tensions. This leads naturally on to Chapter 2 and a discussion on the difficulties of negotiating a "postcolonial" identity with respect to Native American literature, including reference to texts from Silko, Momaday, Welch and Owens.

Chapters 3 and 4 engage with the work of Gerald Vizenor, specifically *Heirs of Columbus* and his autobiographical writings. Krupat considers the ideological

implications of Vizenor's fiction in terms of a *natio*- (to be born) and a *ratio*- (to reason) approach. That is, Krupat's approach encapsulates the necessary tension between the "signature" of the "blood" (*natio*), and a more theoretical response (*ratio*) where he considers what the terms postmodern and post-tribal can mean to contemporary Native American literature. Cultural positionality in terms of creativity and critical response is, for Krupat, important, but not defining. With reference to Vizenor's autobiographical work, Krupat explains with great clarity the important differences between Western and tribal methods of interpreting self. Highlighting the plurality of identity, that is the individual and collective self, as well as indicating the importance of story and myth to the recollection of memory, Krupat establishes important epistemological and generic variants between contemporary Western and tribal traditions.

A rather unusual inclusion to this book, in the final chapter, is Krupat's short autobiography where he considers his own critical identity. By revealing his present academic position and personal history as a young, working-class, Jewish boy in New York, Krupat makes his final analysis. He feels that, as well as cultural positioning, class structures are equally important in establishing any personal or critical identity – this is something Krupat feels is lacking in current postcolonial theory.

This book offers a lucid and interrogative overview of the present situation concerning the tensions of cross cultural criticism. Rather than use this book as a form of self defence, Krupat's ultimate conclusion is a defence of critical objectivity which necessitates a secure appreciation for cultural positionality.

University of Glasgow

KATHRYN NAPIER

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802386808

Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878–1921* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998, £39.95). Pp. 289. ISBN 0 8078 4678 3.

The fusion of New Labour and African-American history has in recent years widened and enriched our understanding of the dynamics of race relations in the New South. Nevertheless, as can be seen from the heated debate between supporters of the late Herbert Gutman and Herbert Hill, historians have reached no agreement on the relative importance of the concepts of race and class. Although Letwin argues that this polarisation hinders our understanding of race relations, his findings will be read as support for Gutman's position. Focusing attention on the coal-mining district of Birmingham, Alabama, Letwin successively examines the impact of the Greenback Labor Party, the Knights of Labor and the United Mine Workers of America as each fought against the power of the coal operators and in the process helped defined race relations in the workplace. Intertwined with the broad rhythm of industrial battles won and lost, Letwin finds a surprising degree of racial tolerance between white and black miners. Even as Jim Crow tightened its grip in the early years of the twentieth century, and as operators tried to prise black workers from the union and use strident race baiting, relations did not markedly deteriorate. Indeed, the

interracial unionism of the Birmingham miners was less fragile than among southern farmers, where the collapse of populism in the nineties led to a bitter racist reaction.

Three factors, suggests Letwin, encouraged racial inclusion rather than exclusion in the mines of Birmingham. Firstly, the development of the region in the late 1870s attracted both black and white and, as a consequence, whites never felt that jobs were theirs alone. In addition, skill demarcation did not completely follow racial lines. Secondly, the “Harsh and unsafe working conditions, coercive commissaries, low and infrequent pay, dubious weighing procedures, arbitrary supervision, long hours, and, above all, the employment of convicts” reinforced the principles of labour mutuality articulated by the Knights and the UMWA while at the same time muting white supremacism. Difficult relations with coal operators alerted labour to the danger of divide-and-rule tactics. Finally, and more questionably, Letwin suggests that the absence of women in the mines allowed organised labour greater leeway in a South obsessed with race mingling. Only in the 1908 strike, where black and white women’s auxiliaries aided their men, did operators use the gender issue – which some might argue says more about the tightening of racial codes of behaviour than it does the place of women in the industrial and mining communities.

While Letwin emphasises racial tolerance, he is equally emphatic in drawing out the limitations under which it operated. Labour was unable to challenge segregation head-on, and when questioned denied the charge of fomenting “social equality.” The district’s labour movement organised along separate racial lines, even though the KOL, in particular, principally opposed such division; and race baiting could just as easily be answered by more race baiting. Interracialism was, at best, uneven and always qualified, and, while miners could probe racial orthodoxies, they alone could not overthrow Jim Crow. This is a clear and well-written book which deserves to be on undergraduate reading lists as an example of how the new labour history handles the complex interrelationship between race and class.

University of Greenwich

ANDREW DAWSON

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802396804

Elizabeth W. Joyce, *Cultural Critique and Abstraction: Marianne Moore and the Avant-garde* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1998, £26). Pp. 146. ISBN 0 838 75371 X.

Cultural Critique and Abstraction: Marianne Moore and the Avant-garde reads Moore’s work for how it frames its political concerns through avant-garde visual conventions. Moore’s poetry, much like Dadaist art, Joyce argues, sets about dismantling convention through the back door instead of being overtly critical of the bourgeoisie.

Joyce spends the first chapter explaining the customary distinction between insular, formalist modernist and socially invested avant-garde art. Though this division is now taken for granted, her comparison of Moore and modernists such as Pound makes it seem fresh and apt. The remaining chapters of the book

combine intelligent close readings of Moore's individual poems with analyses of works like Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase" and Picasso's "Still Life with Chair Caning." Joyce shows how Moore's work partakes of the avant-garde devices of collage, cubism, and abstraction in its disjunctive logic and "elusive syntax" in order to "cover her subversive tracks." Joyce argues that Moore adopted these methods because they allowed her to be intensely critical of societal norms while protecting her from the public hostility such critique could engender.

While Joyce's arguments are thought-provoking and original, she begs some significant questions about the role of gender construction, not only in Moore's approach to poetry and critique, but also in her own critical approach to Moore. Why, for instance, is timidity such an efficacious analytical starting-point for a sustained study of the work of a female poet? What, in turn, was Moore so afraid of, and why? What makes Moore's politics "quietly dismissive" when Picasso, Duchamp, et al. are lauded (at least today) for their inordinate brashness?

Joyce does not turn her sharp critical eye on such questions, preferring instead, the few times she raises such points, to respond with little depth. It is this brevity, however, within the argument at large (where all of the artists save one are men) that leaves me a little discomfited. And though she is careful to point out that one could turn to other writers, like Sandra Gilbert, for such an analysis, I was still frustrated with Joyce's tendency, despite her acuity elsewhere, to elide her own assumptions about gender.

Joyce's work proves that analyzing modern poetry alongside other contemporaneous cultural productions can cast new light upon the work. And, while I am still suspicious of Joyce's account of Moore as a veritable "Belle of Brooklyn," nevertheless, *Cultural Critique and Abstraction* is a useful study for anyone interested in Moore's poetry and its connection to avant-garde art in particular, as well as modern poetry's relation to the visual arts in general.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

JENNIFER MAHER

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802406809

Jinqi Ling, *Narrating Nationalisms: Ideology and Form in Asian American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, £40). Pp. 212. ISBN 0 19 5111168.

Narrating Nationalisms makes significant departures from the book-length studies of Asian American literature that are already in print. Jinqi Ling does not attempt the kind of expansive survey of Asian-American literary production from the early twentieth century up to the present day, which has been the aim of many existing texts, including Elaine Kim's seminal *Asian American Literature*, Sau-ling Wong's *Reading Asian American Literature*, or Amy Ling's *Between Worlds*. Nor does he focus upon a particular feature of a smaller group of writers, as King-kok Cheung does in *Articulate Silences* (upon silence), or Lisa Lowe attempts in *Immigrant Acts* (upon immigration and citizenship). Rather, Ling offers a fresh evaluation of five formative texts: John Okada's *No-No Boy* (1957), Louis Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (1961), Frank Chin's *The Chickencoop Chinaman* and *The Year of*

the Dragon (1981) and Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* (1980), covering the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. Ling's approach is to demonstrate how these texts participate in the social and cultural discourses of their eras, and how they "prefiguratively contributed to reshaping social and cultural attitudes about race, gender and class." Ling's project is attempted through a dual focus upon the ideological and the formal, a re-entanglement that Ling argues both enables a productive reading of the formal properties of these texts' ideological production, and offers a corrective to the more usual content-based analyses of Asian-American texts. In so doing, Ling hopes to intervene in the interrelated tendencies in current Asian-American cultural criticism, as he sees them, to privilege content over form and to prioritize contemporary over "traditional" Asian-American texts.

The readings of the five texts offered here certainly fulfil these aims, and take interesting approaches to much-debated issues in Asian-American cultural studies. Of these, Ling's thoughtful re-evaluation of the much-criticized cultural nationalism of Frank Chin and his *Aiiieeeee!* cohorts brings fresh perspectives to a troubling debate. Ling articulates a recuperative reading of Chin's cultural nationalist proclamations, whilst retaining a reservation regarding the latent sexism of much of Chin's writing. Alongside this critique, Ling reads the second work (*China Men*) of Chin's literary enemy, Maxine Hong Kingston, both through Chin's criticism of her first book, *The Woman Warrior*, and through what Ling regards as Kingston's unfinished feminist project to represent and validate the perspectives of both Chinese-American men and women in her work. In bringing the works of these writers closer together, both by reading their work as dialogically engaged in wider debates about cultural, ethnic and gender identity, and by illustrating the contingencies of each writers' literary projects, Ling manages to straddle the critical faultline which has widened in recent years, between Asian-American feminist criticism and a more pro-cultural nationalist critical stance. These analyses, alongside striking close readings of Okada's *No-No Boy* and Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, together make a useful and fresh intervention into, and addition to, existing Asian-American literary criticism.

University of Wales, Aberystwyth

HELENA GRICE

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802416805

Manning Marable, *Black Leadership* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, £21.95). Pp. 224. ISBN 0 231 10746 3.

Black Leadership comprises ten previously published essays and two new pieces that range from the Constitution to the present. Manning Marable's focus is primarily on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with chapters on Booker T. Washington, Harold Washington and Louis Farrakhan, and four on W. E. B. Du Bois. These and remaining chapters, which consider the limited results that black leadership and the civil rights movement have achieved in improving African-American life, are firmly rooted in the author's Marxist perspective.

An advocate of change, who often uses the terms "we" and "our," Marable argues that black liberation has been inhibited by the community's reliance upon

charismatic, authoritarian leaders and by a limited theoretical vision that has failed to recognize that black progress is contingent on addressing class, as well as race, issues. Author of *W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Political Radical* (1986), Marable returns repeatedly to Du Bois, particularly to his later Marxian work, in his advocacy of extending democratic principles to economic institutions and a guarantee of jobs and income for all.

Marable implies that racism is intrinsic to capitalism, although the profit motive does not necessitate racial subordination. He rightly claims that black culture has influenced white culture, but seems unwilling to concede the reciprocal nature of the relationship. There are inaccuracies. Marable contends that Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Exposition speech in 1895 spelled "the end of the brief experiment in biracial democracy throughout the South," although Reconstruction had ended long before.

Intellectually stimulating in places, the book is nevertheless an unwieldy collection of disparate pieces that lack thematic unity. Some essays, such as those on the Constitution and race, and Marable's family history in Alabama, presented as a paradigm of the southern black experience, do not address black leadership at all. The contributions vary considerably in originality of sources and viewpoint; for example, Marable's critical assessment of Booker T. Washington's support for industrial education is well drawn but familiar. The book omits key male leaders, such as Marcus Garvey, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, and female leaders do not appear anywhere. While this collection, like all anthologies, brings together in an accessible source material published in various outlets, it is questionable whether the three essays published in 1996 and 1997 need to be repackaged so soon, especially as one appeared in two different publications in 1996.

University of Derby

MARK NEWMAN

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802426801

Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire. Trading in Colonial New York* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Pp. 458. ISBN 0 8018 5602 7.

Cathy Matson's book considers the lesser merchants in New York and their role in the development of colonial trade and the values of economic liberalism during the eighteenth century. Studies of colonial merchants have tended to focus on elite minorities rather than on the majority of ambitious lesser merchants who traded in colonial towns such as New York. Matson traces the fortunes of hundreds of these wholesalers ranging from those who took shares in a handful of voyages to the West Indies each year to the brokers who scoured the Hudson Valley first for furs and later for grain, flour, and timber. Matson's impressive use of letter books, accounts, and disparate sources from English and American archives recreates colonial New York's lively urban commerce and connects it to the regional, coastal, West Indian, and transatlantic trade.

Matson argues, convincingly, that beginning in the late-seventeenth century New York merchants divided into two broad groups with different perspectives

on colonial trade. An elite possessing more capital, better credit facilities, and influential English contacts took advantage of the transatlantic trade importing manufactured goods and benefiting from mercantile regulations. Lessor merchants who lacked these advantages concentrated on regional and coastal markets and on the West Indian trade. Inspired by the promise of prosperity, lessor merchants worked within and against the imperial system, invoking mercantile principles to defend their interests in the regional economy and evading trade regulations to enhance their opportunities in the West Indies. Matson argues that it was the lessor merchants rather than their elite counterparts whose lively trade nudged the colonists towards new products and promising markets and in so doing encouraged both buyers and sellers to reassess their understanding of commerce. Lessor merchants' coastal and West Indian ventures encouraged colonial demand for coffee, sugar, and spices and inspired the merchants' defence of freer trade. Regional trade united the city to its rural environs, increasing demand for domestic manufacturers and paper money, and enlivening colonial discussions of the potential for commercial autonomy and self-regulation. Although the lessor merchants never became unalloyed free-market capitalists, their challenge to mercantilist principles and the practice of their trade revealed to others the benefits of open commerce, economic independence, and the possibility that self-interested pursuits represented the surest route to general good.

This reviewer is least comfortable with Matson's interpretation of the lessor merchants as the unintentional advocates of an emerging, consensual liberal order. The new social history view of the transition to capitalism as an imposition accompanied by struggle rather than voluntaristic jamboree of equal opportunity is absent. It is noteworthy that one of the new products which supported colonial consumption and inspired the lessor merchants' enthusiasm for free trade in the West Indian market was the human cargo imported to New York; an illiberal commerce from which Matson obliquely attempts to rescue her subjects by suggesting that slaves were accepted reluctantly when specie and bills of exchange were unavailable. More importantly, the book's analysis of the political implications of the lessor merchants' economic interests yields a somewhat self-confirming thesis: if economic liberalism implies a commitment to freer trade and new kinds of production and consumption, and lessor merchants' interests connect to these themes, then lessor merchants appear as unwitting proponents of the new order. However, *Merchants and Empire* shows, the lessor merchants persist in claiming illiberal restrictions when it suits their purposes. This leaves Matson judiciously retreating from and then ambiguously restating the implications of her thesis at various points.

A precise account of the political and cultural dimensions of the transition from an economy Matson, and others, identify as "traditional" and "customary" to a recognizably modern market economy continues to elude the eighteenth-century commercialization thesis with which *Merchants and Empire* appears to be in sympathy. The quality of Matson's research has highlighted a problem with the existing view, but falls short of resolving it. Because she has demonstrated so effectively the lessor merchants' relentless pursuit of gain from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, it is difficult to see how this interest in profit can

factor in changes in political and cultural attitudes towards economic relations. We are left with the sense that New York's lesser merchants, and at different times and places the farmers and artisans with whom they traded, experienced some kind of liberal epiphany, perhaps while boarding a ship bound for Barbados or guiding a cart homewards after a hard day gathering agricultural surpluses in the rural hinterland.

University of East Anglia

SIMON MIDDLETON

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J. D. McClatchy, *Twenty Questions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, £12.00). Pp. 224. ISBN 0 231 11173 8.

The beguiling essays which make up this collection of twenty meditations on contemporary poetry and some of its significant precursors offer further evidence of the value of the commentaries produced by fine poets on the practice of their art. J. M. McClatchy skilfully blends his roles of poet and critic as he works his way elegantly, intelligently, and with great good nature through his judgments on contemporary poetic practice. His opening proposition is that the asking of questions is more important than the giving of answers both in poetry and in criticism, and that, further, the questions that will be of importance to readers, whether individually or collectively, are those that link them to the overlapping strands of personal and communal history. Satisfactory questions can only be found between the poles of truth and the wish, and of nature and fantasy. This is equally the case for the poet and the reader, and it is the function of poetry to help us to remember the moments in which the questions which matter to us have come into focus. This framework, which allows him to remain poised between classic and romantic views of poetry, generally works well for McClatchy in providing unity to this series of essays which first appeared as occasional pieces for a variety of publications. And, though a handful of the essays show too obviously their origins as reviews, all of them are characterised by an engaging clarity and a great deal of knowledge.

Much of this knowledge is personal, and the collection is as notable for its gossip and reminiscences as it is for its more formal analysis. McClatchy's funny and warmly human anecdotes about James Merrill, Anne Sexton, and Elizabeth Bishop (whom he regards as the most significant American poet of her generation) complements the real rigour of his judgment. His comments about his own background as a gay, ex-Catholic young man, taught by Harold Bloom and Cleanth Brooks, and the ways in which his life intersects with his poetry are equally illuminating. Best of all is the range of his enthusiasms, which takes in not only such obvious topics as the poetry of Bishop, Seamus Heaney, Philip Larkin, James Wilbur, and W. S. Merwin, but also shines in essays on Dickinson, Degas, Pope, and Stephen Sondheim. This range allows him to close out the collection with an accomplished and eminently readable translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Given the fact that looping the present back to the past is one of McClatchy's chief goals, the insertion of Horace in such a telling position is a fine

stroke and one totally in keeping with this charming, genial, but altogether accomplished collection.

University of the West of England

KATE FULLBROOK

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802446804

Susan L. Mitzruchi, *The Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998, £47.50 cloth, £15.95 paper). Pp. 496. ISBN 0 691 06892 5, 0 691 01506 6.

The title announces an enormous task, and this book inevitably seems unwieldy for all its lucid and stylish prose. Its imaginatively broad compass, however, makes for a challenging, sometimes disturbing read. Mitzruchi's wide-angle interdisciplinary approach to her subject, via nineteenth-century theology, contemporaneous developments in social science and the narrative literature which is suffused by elements of both, is laudable. Despite a daunting array of sources, her control never slackens, both sharpened and underpinned by an exacting sensitivity to text.

There is something compelling about the universality of sacrifice, although Mitzruchi carefully avoids salaciousness. Professionally even-handed, she probes the widespread significance of an explicit not necessarily ritual activity, enshrined in and expressive of historical, cultural and socio-economic as well as religious patterns of nineteenth-century behaviour. Moreover, sacrifice is revealed as the peculiarly resonant motif of an implicit – similarly widespread – tradition of thought reflecting (and reflected in) the rhetoric of philosophical, religious and social-scientific tracts, as well as narrative literature. An essentially chronological but not exclusively historical framework secures the inquiry amid the theoretical discourse supplied by a chorus of social scientists, philosophers and theologians, the social context of whose ideas, and the substance of whose texts, receive equally rigorous scrutiny.

Mitzruchi engages easily with the different disciplines, but her precise and thoughtful exegesis comes into its own in the linked treatments of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, Henry James's *An Awkward Age* and W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, which form the book's core. The triad affirms her threefold purpose. The theological import of Melville's symbolic vision is juxtaposed with and tested against Strauss, Emerson and Herbert Spencer, among others. The same technique dramatizes James's compassionate depiction of the brutal strategies and delicate manoeuvring of a society which barter emotional fulfilment for economic survival, and the genteel victimization in which it conspires. More personal and more harrowing is Du Bois's testimony of the way in which the sacrificial motif has come to imbue – even, poignantly, enrich – the complex socio-political, historic and aesthetic consciousness of his beleaguered community.

Ironically, *The Science of Sacrifice* is profoundly weakened by the absence of the oldest victim. It seems odd that a woman writing about sacrifice *of all things* can silence her nineteenth-century predecessors. Why permit the – kindly but, let's face it, disinterested – voice of James to displace, say, Edith Wharton? Do Kate

Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman or Willa Cather know nothing about sacrifice? In this reader's view, they belong in Mitzruchi's courageous but not altogether satisfying enterprise.

University of Bristol

ALICE ENTWISTLE

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802456800

Ira B. Nadel (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, £37.50 cloth, £13.95 paper). Pp. 318. ISBN 0 521 43117 4, 0 521 64920 X.

The work and life of Ezra Pound is presented in this selection of critical essays by the adoption of a format attempting to emulate the clarity of Pound's own ABC approach to knowledge. An informative chronology precedes essays entitled "Pound as critic," "Pound as translator," "Pound and music," "Pound and antisemitism." What this tidy compartmentalisation of the categories of Pound's work, concerns and character obscures is the destructiveness of the final essay listed above, which, as the last essay in the collection, delivers a sting in the tail that, depressingly, necessitates a response.

Wendy Flory's essay places Pound's anti-Semitic radio broadcasts between 1941 and 1943 in the context of his mental ill-health. They are shown reflecting the crisis of self-delusion Pound fell into when failing to confront the ending of the poet's hopes that Mussolini would listen to his economic solutions for ending all war through Pound's argument for adopting Major Douglas's theory of social credit.

The author then extends her thesis to account for "the nature of the responses to Pound's anti-Semitism and the reasons for them" by claiming that the vilification of "Pound as anti-Semite served as a convenient place-holder for all those whose anti-Semitism was not being confronted." Flory concludes by relinquishing argument for dogma, stating that the self-delusion of all those who continue to perceive Pound's anti-Semitism as fascistic and not psychotic, shows them to be guilty of not confronting their own anti-Semitism and complicity in the deaths of the Jews in the Holocaust. Post-structuralist abusers of Pound in particular (and here the tawdry sub-text of the author's argument becomes clear) uphold the positions of "the silent majority in Germany, in occupied France and Belgium, in Britain and the United States who, by quietly aiding or standing quietly by, made the Holocaust possible."

Flory's legitimate attempt to place Pound's broadcasts in the context of mental ill-health comes at the expense of considering the efficacy of the reasons for Pound's condemnation. The author takes no account of the degree to which the reaction to Pound was, given its historical context, completely understandable. Instead, the act of misunderstanding the basis for Pound's anti-Semitism is seen as a self-delusory position, affirming generations of critics' continuing refusal to confront their own and America's anti-Semitism.

The essay is an attempt at revisionism. Such a tradition is a small but necessary part of the contribution critics can make in protecting against the hardening of opinion and interpretation into dogma and harmful rhetoric. Flory's ultimate

preference for the latter over the support of pertinent questioning with scholarly research sees the essay shamefully contradict the spirit of that tradition.

University of Leeds

IAN D. COPESTAKE

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802466807

Margaret Ellen Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998, \$45). Pp. 336. ISBN 0 8014 3405 X.

It has long been debated by historians just how economically minded Puritan emigrants to New England actually were. For many generations of scholars and students, the interest of Puritan settlements lay in settlers' adherence to a set of religious principles, and the unique society that consequently emerged. Margaret Ellen Newell's new book suggests, conversely, that Puritans were as interested in material welfare as much as their counterparts in the Chesapeake. What makes this argument especially interesting is that Newell shows how Puritans came to see a thriving and viable economy as central to achieving their religious goals, rather than as a threat to spiritual purity. Indeed the Puritan work-ethic, and the stress on honesty, industry and sobriety, ensured that economic development would be integral to the history of these colonies.

The economy of seventeenth-century New England was generally unsophisticated, but merchants and politicians in the colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut did make a conscious effort, from the early eighteenth century onwards, to manage economic growth in a utilitarian way. Newell uses contemporary pamphlets and newspapers to document the chronic discussions in the colonies over the desertion of the silver standard and the growth of paper currency, designed to provide credit and fuel investment and growth. Increasingly, these decisions were made only with the interest of New Englanders in mind, with the concerns of English merchants and politicians of only peripheral importance. The change, from being a provincial economy to having the trappings of a mature individual economy, was clearly one of the prerequisites for independence from Britain, though Newell is careful not to suggest that economic concerns were solely responsible for New England's commitment to the Revolution.

Newell's book, it has to be said, is definitely for the purist economic historian. Many pages are spent analysing in great depth the debates over currency and bank reforms, as well as the finer points of macro-economics. While the lack of a bibliography jars, the book is beautifully produced by Cornell University Press, with several interesting maps and illustrations. In sum, this is a serious book for those interested in the economic development of colonial New England.

University of Warwick

TIM LOCKLEY

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802476803

Jay Parini, *Robert Frost: A Life* (London: William Heinemann, 1998, £20). Pp. 500. ISBN 0 434 00166 X.

With *Robert Frost: A Life*, Jay Parini, already a biographer of Steinbeck and, according to the promotional information I have before me, a noted author and poet in his own right, we witness a sincere effort to defend Frost as both poet and man. Such an ambition might have led to a valuable addition to the works on Frost currently available, particularly since the monstrous image of Frost prevalent since Lawrence Thompson's biography has had a tendency to entertain rather than enlighten us when we consider the life of one of America's greatest twentieth-century poets.

Unfortunately Parini's work is marred by a surplus of appreciation and information at the expense of more rigorous and exacting forms of criticism. He ends the book by repeating Frost's maxim that a biographer should not "render ungraceful" the work and life of his subject, and the overbearing shadow of Frost's warning remark seems to be constantly hovering over Parini's shoulder throughout what is a scholarly, fastidious but ultimately timid account.

Parini's research and knowledge both seem impeccable, but he also seems incapable of offering any new insight or understanding which would not be available to the average Frost enthusiast. The trouble is that this biography is too timid to really interrogate its subject on a moral level, which would be perfectly acceptable were it not for the fact that this is a biography purporting to portray a life, rather than simply the most defensible moments of a life. Despite calling the work a "labor of love," Parini does not defend Frost with all guns blazing, but, rather, skirts around Frost's darker tendencies with an embarrassed cough and an unconvincing excuse. Again, such a defensive bias might have been compensated for if his vision of Frost had not been so consistently anaemic, or his critical discussions of the poems so fleeting and shallow. This is a biography of noble intentions and feeble deeds, which seems particularly ironic when one considers how this compares to the character of Frost himself, surely never so noble nor so feeble as Parini's depiction.

University of Essex

DANIEL JUPP

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S002187580248680X

Thomas Peyser, *Utopia and Cosmopolis: Globalization in the Era of American Literary Realism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998, £34.00 cloth, £11.95 paper). Pp. 195. ISBN 0 8223 2230 7, 0 8223 2247 1.

There was a fashion a few years ago for critical studies purporting to trace the ancestry of postmodernism in the self-reflexive, ludic aspects of authors like Chaucer or Fielding. Thomas Peyser's book updates this kind of project by discovering within the work of late-nineteenth-century American novelists "a discourse of globalization ... that often startlingly anticipates debates many assume began only recently." Although the explicit focus of this study is on Edward Bellamy, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William Dean Howells and Henry

James, Peyser's wider agenda involves considering how the work of these writers can be made relevant to contemporary debates about American cultural identity and "postnational space." Arguing that the logic of realism and naturalism is too often assumed to have emerged "autochthonously from the American soil," Peyser suggests instead that extended dialogues between the local and the global were crucial to the constitution of this American literary genre.

There is much in this book which is sharp and provocative, although the overall development of the argument feels at times a bit strained. Peyser is very good on the globalizing aspects of Bellamy's utopian writings, even if his reiteration of Bellamy's insistence on a "dismantling of the ego" becomes a touch wearisome and repetitive. The chapter on Gilman is also agreeably challenging, because he is prepared boldly to argue the case for Gilman being attached atavistically to various essentialist forms of identity that led her inexorably towards xenophobia. The sanctuaries projected by Gilman's imagination can thus be understood as a means of repressing her fears of social fragmentation and difference, as these might threaten the autonomy of "white female subjectivity." In the next section, Peyser shows how Howells's concern with immigration was linked to globalization issues, and he also demonstrates adeptly the continuities between Howells's utopian romances and his better-known modes of realism. The book then concludes with an analysis of *The Golden Bowl* in relation to James's encounter with emerging issues of ethnicity. Though there are some perceptive remarks here about the latent imperialism and anti-Semitism of James's later work, I found this final chapter the least persuasive, perhaps because the self-contradictory quality of James's style does not fit comfortably with the kind of ideological architecture Peyser inscribes here.

This book began life as a dissertation at the University of Virginia, and it still bears some of the scars of its origin. There is a compulsion to push one particular line of argument to its limit, rather than ranging more widely among competing theories of realism and naturalism. In this sense, Peyser's book is like the utopian narratives it describes in being rather too abstract, too intent upon promoting its own particular hypothesis, with the result that wider cultural crosscurrents come to appear shadowy or vitiated. He also has a tendency to kowtow to the more recent exponents of globalization theory, citing with uncritical approbation, for example, Francis Fukuyama's absurdly hyperbolic notion that "'the victory of the VCR' has paved the way for the universalization of Western-style economic and political arrangements." Nevertheless, on its own terms this is an engaging and interesting piece of work, which offers us an alternative framework for reading American naturalism at the same time as making a timely intervention within current debates about national and transnational cultures.

University of Nottingham

PAUL GILES

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802496806

Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of the Postcolonial Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998, £34.00 cloth, £11.95 paper). Pp. 264. ISBN 0 8223 2102 5, 0 8223 21181 1.

According to Geoffrey Sanborn, Melville considered himself “a student of cannibalism.” He argues that Melville “addressed the tensions within the discourse on cannibalism with more passion and subtlety than anyone else of his age.” Sanborn makes it clear that the “Melville” of *The Sign of the Cannibal* is a theoretical construct of the critic: he proffers a “Lacanian/postcolonial Melville” in place of the more familiar “humanist/culturalist Melville,” established by generations of scholars.

A “postcolonial Melville,” to be sure, had been hinted at in the works of Charles Anderson, Carolyn Karcher and Walter T. Herbert. However, Sanborn is the first critic to explicitly situate Melville in the postcolonial problematic, outlined by Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and others. The crux of this problematic is the master/slave dialectic, as seen through the lens of psychoanalysis, and poststructuralist discourse theory. Thus, Sanborn’s Melville is sensitive to the question of how the Other is represented, and he manifests “a profound distrust of universal organizing principles.” The argument for a postcolonial Melville is made on the basis of reading off Melville’s writings from the colonial discourse in which they are imbricated. According to Sanborn, the key point of contact between the text and the discourse is the cannibal sign.

The sign of the cannibal (e.g. dark skin, a bloody bone, or a preserved head) is the ground for dividing the savage from the civil, the human from the inhuman, the superior “race” from the inferior. However, Sanborn adeptly shows that Melville subjects this sign to an unsettling irony. In the post-Enlightenment period, cannibalism had been interpreted through a number of paradigms: lust, famine, vengeance, superstition and terror. Sanborn argues that Melville explored the paradigm of terror in order “to get his readers to see the spectacle of savagery as a spectacle,” and that behind the cannibal sign lay a complex human reality of resistance to racial oppression and colonialism. Sanborn’s readings of *Typee*, *Moby Dick* and *Benito Cereno* are cogent explications of this thesis. Sanborn rightly notes that the archaeology of a discourse is not the same as an interpretation of a literary text. Generally, his shifts from discursive context to literary text are judiciously made, and genuinely enlightening. *The Sign of the Cannibal* is a major contribution to Melville studies, “cannibal studies,” and postcolonial theory.

University of Connecticut

JERRY PHILLIPS

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802506800

William J. Scheick, *Authority and Female Authorship in Colonial America* (Lexington, Ky.: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998, \$29.95). Pp. 150. ISBN 0 8131 2054 3.

This is a deceptively modest book: 150 small pages, which look in detail at a mere half-dozen women colonial writers and a single man. Its style is understated and

its claims quietly made. Scheick is, however, a veteran of colonial literary studies, and his insights are compressed nuggets of wisdom. *Authority and Female Authorship* is presented as a companion to the author's influential *Design in Puritan American Literature* (1992), which developed a puritan aesthetics founded in textual "logologic cruces" where author and reader are invited to contemplate the confluence of secular and divine meanings – the moments where words miraculously come into conjunction with the Incarnate Word. In this new work, Scheick ponders the implications of these powerful puritan authority structures for women writers. Arguing that colonial women perforce relied on the same antecedent male authorities and traditions as their male counterparts, he contends that the framework of this authority presented women writers with the problem of legitimizing their own voices, notably in their use of scripture.

To address the literary effects of this tension of personal experience and the Word, Scheick identifies and analyses what he describes as moments of "logonomic conflict" in works by Mary English, Anne Bradstreet, Esther Edwards Burr, Elizabeth Hanson, Elizabeth Ashbridge, and Phyllis Wheatley, using Cotton Mather's *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion* as a control text for comparison. These textual "moments" are identified as peculiar or subversive narrative effects that signal either resistance to or authorial uneasiness about overtly upheld ideological positions derived from scriptural authority. Frequently suppressed, or even subliminal, their presence is registered fleetingly as a trace in the text – a verbal hesitation, a metrical stumbling, an awkward circumlocution or double negative – and it is here that Schieck's long inwardness with the tonalities of colonial prose and poetry, his awesomely precise ear for scriptural allusion, and his glancing touch as a close reader, come into play. Some extraordinarily powerful implications emerge from his minute dissection of individual lyrics: the huge impact not only on women writers but on the development of Puritan culture at large (and, proximately, on broader American cultural patterns of a later date) of the fact that Eve rather than Mary is the traditional Calvinistic model for defining female identity, for example, or a whole new metaphorical reach for the captivity narrative. Vistas open on to American writing at large from his analysis of Hanson's bivocality as indicating a lost story that cannot be told but which casts its shadow over the articulated narrative.

Schieck's careful building of his case is such that, through all this, the reader never feels that too much is being made upon too little. Every one of his readings persuaded me to turn again to the author in question, and to find new reason to admire or to wonder. It is hard to see that criticism can do more: this is a book which should be read by anyone with an interest in colonial writing; I hope it will be turned to by others well beyond this field.

University of Edinburgh

SUSAN MANNING

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802516807

Mark Scroggins, *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998, \$49.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper). Pp. 312. ISBN 0 8173 0907 1, 0 8173 0957 8.

Pound dedicated his *Guide to Kulchur* to those “strugglers in the desert” Basil Bunting and Louis Zukofsky, and the marginalized status of both as “poet’s poets” stuck. Scroggins’s book charts a career that spans from the 1920s to the late 1970s, and considers the implications of Zukofsky’s lifelong critique of skepticism: his rejection of epistemology in favour of trust in the evidence of the physical senses. Zukofsky’s major critical account of such an agenda comes in *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, a book that he grandly described as marking an end to epistemology. Scroggins deals with this book in detail, but does succumb to some special pleading on Zukofsky’s behalf. He counters justifiable criticism of the simplicity of the Shakespeare book’s arguments by – predictably – emphasizing its formal status as poem/quotation collage. This is not a new idea; it is present within “Language poet” and Charles Bernstein’s essay “Words and Pictures.” Scroggins embellishes the idea into the questionable assertion that the book’s status as collage “allows the voices of a community of speakers to be heard and thereby transcends the Cartesian skepticism to which its explicit argument is vulnerable.” Bernstein’s essay is a much sharper account of the issues: reminding us that, in 400 pages valorising “physical sight,” Zukofsky never discusses any biological or ideological accounts of the structure of sight – and that his theory remains “purely metaphysical and naively neopositivist” (*Content’s Dream*).

Scroggins’s discussion of Zukofsky as Jewish Marxist Modernist makes for productive reading, and should rightly serve to complicate canonical accounts of modernist poetry. The mammoth twenty-four section poem “A” preoccupied Zukofsky for 46 years, and Scroggins gives an effective and useful guide through it. The helpful explication is framed by discussion of the complex literary–historical interrelationship between musical and poetic form. Discussion of “A,” in the context of Scroggins’s preoccupation with Zukofsky’s anti-skepticism, inevitably centres around the question of whether the poem’s (in)famous hermeticism is a sign of solipsism. The conclusion he draws will be familiar to any reader of contemporary avant-garde poetics: the “difficulty” is a fundamentally democratic renegotiation of reader/writer relations wherein the reader “is no longer a passive consumer of the text but an equal participant in the construction of its meaning.” This is not a groundbreaking book, but it is a very worthy introduction to Zukofsky’s complex oeuvre.

University College Northampton

SIMON PERRIL

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802526803

Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of the Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763–1840* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1998, £14.50). Pp. 342. ISBN 0 8078 2394 5, 0 8078 4698 8.

In the mid eighteenth century, a group of Moravian religious dissidents settled in a remote corner of North Carolina seeking to sustain their faith in a private and

dignified manner. A century later the Moravians had been fully integrated into the mainstream of Southern society and culture. It is this assimilation, and its effect on black Moravians, which is the focus of Sensbach's excellent new book.

Sensbach has turned to the rich, but underutilized, records of the Moravian church in North Carolina to outline the experiences of white Moravians in their new home. Central to their Americanization was their accommodation with slavery. Moravians were never explicitly anti-slavery; they knew full well that such ideas were unacceptable in the late colonial South and, gradually, they began to find African slavery to be an acceptable solution to their labouring needs, though slaves were initially owned by the church rather than by individuals. Moravians had previous experience of slavery in the West Indies, and had always been willing to accept black converts to their religion as integral, if unequal, members. Sensbach is particularly insightful on the lives of these black Moravians, showing how they partook of a biracial religious experience which simultaneously granted rights and privileges to African Americans while denying them total equality with whites.

While early religious encounters between the Moravian Brethren and new black converts evinced a great deal of spiritual equality, white Moravians could not avoid acculturation to Southern racial prejudices. By the early nineteenth century, blacks were being marginalized in church and being denied a role in certain religious ceremonies. Eventually, Moravians joined with other denominations by making blacks worship separately from whites in their own church. While it was white Moravians who insisted on this measure, black Moravians might not have been entirely displeased. Segregated worship allowed slaves a degree of control over their religious lives that was normally denied them, and gave black Moravians a religious experience that was similar to that of an increasing number of black Baptists and Methodists in the late antebellum South.

Sensbach's book is well written and comprehensively researched. It can be highly recommended to scholars of colonial history, of African slavery or to those interested in the religious lives of immigrants, white and black, in America.

University of Warwick

TIM LOCKLEY

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S002187580253680X

Margit Stange, *Personal Property: Wives, White Slaves, and the Market in Women* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, £27.00). Pp. 171. ISBN 0 8018 5626 4.

Susan L. Roberson (ed.), *Women, America, and Movement: Narratives of Relocation* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1998, £29.95). Pp. 291. ISBN 0 8262 1176 3.

These two essentially very different works are linked to a degree by their interest in the location of American women, socially, politically, culturally, economically and geographically. *Personal Property* aims to provide a fresh angle on the great white slavery scare of the Progressive Era by juxtaposing white slavery literature with some of the major American writings of the period. It looks at a selection of texts published between 1899 and World War I, which "affirm a view of

women's social condition that derives from nineteenth-century anthropology," namely the idea that "male-dominated monogamous marriage, found in tandem with the institution of private property, marks the turning point from barbarism to civilization." These texts, Stange argues, "all give voice to the period's near-obsession with the view that in the booming market economy of the early twentieth-century, women constituted a form of private property acquired through the market." Stange's choice of texts is, however, somewhat limited. Although in theory *Personal Property* looks at the writings of Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Jane Addams on this subject, in fact the focus of the work remains pretty firmly fixed on Edith Wharton, particularly on *The House of Mirth*, and even more specifically on her heroine Lily Bart. The work is divided into two sections, the first of which opens with an examination of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* before turning to Wharton, and the second of which ("The Great White Slavery Scare") attempts to take a broader look at the implications of white slavery literature. Two full chapters out of a total five, therefore, are devoted to Wharton and *The House of Mirth*, and Lily Bart makes a further appearance in the second section in Stange's assessment of "textualized female value and identity."

The essential thesis that informs Stange's study is certainly not without merit, but its exposition is neither as rigorous nor as confident as it might have been. In places the argument is either hesitant or repetitive. The reader is advised that, because "white slavery literature foregrounds Progressive Era concern about non-nationals, historians see it as a nativist reaction to immigration" and then, reminded that because "white slavery literature foregrounds a Progressive Era concern about 'aliens,' scholars have classed it among the reactions to immigration." The historian/scholar in question here is Mark Connolly, who made this point in his study of *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (1980). There is, however, little attempt made to look beyond Connolly's work at studies, such as Paul Boyer's *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (1978), which might have helped place Progressive Era concerns in the broader context of American reactions to the city and to the threat it was deemed to pose to the moral fabric of the nation ever since Thomas Jefferson warned his countrymen against the dangers of replicating the European urban experience.

By contrast, the collection of essays edited by Susan Roberson is far more broad-ranging. *Movement*, as Susan Roberson reminds us in her introduction, constitutes an essential part of the American national experience, yet "the canonized narratives of the national impulse tell only a part of the story, for by and large they have been the narratives of, by, and about men." *Women, America, and Movement* examines "the impact of migration, movement, and dislocation on the identity of women, their senses of self and their roles in family, home, and social life," through the study of a wide range of literature, including novels, short-stories and autobiographies. The first section, ("Boundaries and Border Crossings") comprises essays on Constance Fenimore Woolson, on Kaye Gibbon's novel *Ellen Foster*, and on the difficulties faced by Mexican-American women for whom the problem of finding an identity between two cultures is compounded not just linguistically and geographically but equally by the domestic violence that limits, and defines, so many women's lives. Subsequent

sections look at the immigrant experience, at the sense of dislocation prompted by the westward movement and at the strong sense of regional and personal identity invoked and interpreted by such writers as Caroline M. Kirkland, Harriette Arnow, Louise Erdrich, Zora Neale Hurston and Gertrude Stein.

Section II of *Women, America, and Movement*, ("Immigrations"), returns us to ground covered by Margit Stange. Kay Ferguson Ryals opens this section with an ambitious and persuasive examination of Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1794). Telling the story of the eponymous heroine's migration to America from England at the time of the Revolution, her loss – somewhere between the Old World and the New – of her virtue, followed shortly by her death, *Charlotte Temple*, Ryals argues, represents "a kind of quest romance in which a female character attempts to occupy the position of the wandering 'errant' hero," only to be let down by her gender. The concepts of "virtue" and "corruption" addressed in the novel, Ryals shows, were central "not only to the didactic sexual language of women's fiction, but also to the political vocabulary of the founding era." Little had changed by the Progressive Era, as Katherine Joslin shows in her study of "The White-Slave Narrative in Theodore Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt*." Taken together, these two essays have much to say about the historical as well as the literary location of women in America. What they reveal is that the concerns and contradictions surrounding the position and role of women which Stange (among others) has identified as belonging to the Progressive period in fact lie at the heart of the American national experience.

University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

S.-M. GRANT

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802546806

Claudia Tate, *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, £38). Pp. 238. ISBN 0 19 509682 7.

Tate's book uses psychoanalysis to read African-American literature, examining five texts which have (with one exception) been ignored by critics. In the process, it also suggests the racial and cultural assumptions built into psychoanalysis itself. Using a mixture of insights derived from Freudian, Lacanian and object-relations theories, Tate discusses Emma Dunham Kelley's *Megda* (1891), W. E. B. Du Bois's *Dark Princess* (1928), Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* (1954), Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* (1928), and Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph on the Swanee* (1948).

Readings of Larsen's novel, Tate argues, have only stressed its depiction of racial and sexual injustice, while the other four have been neglected because they have not been seen as political texts. Her book is an attempt to show that the black canon has overlooked work which tells "stories about the desire of black subjects that do not fit the ... paradigm of race as exclusion, vulnerability, and deficiency." Her investigations focus on the unconscious and preconscious anxieties and longings which power these texts, concentrating on personal, usually familial, dramas.

The strength of Tate's work is that these exercises are not divorced from, and frequently illuminate, social and political contexts. *Megda*, for instance, which is

ostensibly a sentimental fusion of courtship-plot and conversion narrative, becomes in Tate's account a black consumerist fantasy, which "eroticizes" and "spiritualizes" black political desires. Here, as with her discussion of the Oedipal overtones in *Dark Princess*, Tate's reading makes the novel's flaws its most interesting features, and also suggests a much wider and more complicated history of black political aspiration than the canon generally allows for.

Her most interesting chapter uses the matricidal rage of *Savage Holiday* to re-examine the misogyny in Wright's other fiction. Tate believes critics too often explain this away as "racial rage," when there are strong textual and biographical indications of a sense of maternal betrayal in Wright's work, which lie behind the ambivalence and hostility. Recognizing the "unconscious desire of his narratives" does not discredit them as protests at injustice, nor does it absolve society, for it was fear of that society which lay behind the brutal punishments of Wright's maternal relatives, and sowed the seeds of his textual antagonism to women.

Tate is not afraid to use biography in this way, although she makes the real interest lie in the novels themselves. However, her most fascinating insights – the limitations of the black canon, and of the "culture-neutral" family of psychoanalysis – play only an incidental part in this book: it would be good to hear more of them.

Nottingham Trent University

SARAH MEER

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802556802

Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528–1990* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988). Pp. 415. ISBN 0 393 04105 0.

Until recently historians of the West have tended to ignore the limited but far from insignificant contribution which African Americans have made to the development of the vast plains region and the West Coast since the early nineteenth century. Quintard Taylor's sprawling but none the less useful study furnishes plentiful evidence to counter the existing, albeit corroding, orthodoxy that the West was peopled solely by a colourful cast of whites, Indians and Hispanics. *In Search of the Racial Frontier* makes it clear that blacks have played a positive role in the region from the Spanish colonial period onwards: as slaves in antebellum Texas and Indian Territory, southern migrants in Kansas, Federal troops on the frontier, wartime workers in the defence industries of the Pacific coast, and civil rights campaigners throughout the West since the mid-nineteenth century.

Taylor plays to his strengths as an accomplished urban historian, illustrating effectively the extent and durability of black community building in cities as diverse as San Francisco and Topeka. To his credit he also eschews political correctness by indicating that western blacks have not always interacted amicably with other racial minorities. Inevitably in a study as ambitious as this there are a number of gaps and weaknesses. One or two chapters, including, perhaps surprisingly, the last on the civil rights movement, struck this reviewer as rather thin. Apart from the occasional reference to literature, blues and jazz, African-

American culture receives relatively short shrift and symbolic representations of western blacks in art and film are ignored. The intriguing appearances of African Americans in classic paintings such as Emmanuel Leutze's *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862) and movies such as Sam Peckinpah's 1965 western, *Major Dundee*, are thus neglected, an unfortunate omission in view of the excellent illustrations which accompany the book. There are problems of definition too. Texas's ambiguous position as both a southern and a western state leads to recurring problems of analysis. And the author's decision to define the West in static terms means that the antebellum West – what is now the midwest – is excluded entirely. Overall, however, this is a lively and informative survey which can be recommended to all those interested in African Americans and the history of the Far West.

University of Sheffield

ROBERT COOK

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Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos and Leon Surette (eds.), "*I Cease Not to Yowl*": *Ezra Pound's Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998, \$34.95). Pp. 327. ISBN 0 252 02410 9.

Olivia Rossetti Agresti was the daughter of William Michael Rossetti, one of Walt Whitman's earliest admirers and interpreters. She was thus the niece of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, also the cousin of Ford Madox Ford, and via Ford indirectly a source of inspiration for Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. Born in 1875, ten years before Pound, in 1897 she married Antonio Agresti, like herself at the time an ardent anarchist, and lived thereafter mainly in Rome. By the time she came to know Pound in the 1930s, she was a widow, a devout Catholic, and a Fascist supporter. She was, however, crucially in the present context, devoid of any taint of anti-Semitism.

The letters gathered here were written between 1937 and a few months before Agresti's death in 1960, the majority in the decade from 1947 to 1957, when Pound was confined in St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington. The editors have reproduced as faithfully as possible, without deletions, corrections, or clarificatory emendations, Pound's idiosyncratic, formally careless, and thoroughly eccentric manner of correspondence; and their detailed and extensive footnotes, bibliography, and glossary of the many names mentioned, are fascinatingly informative and illuminating. Amidst the Poundian outpouring, the occasional, contrasting extracts from Agresti's letters, with their more ordinary humanity, may come as something of a relief.

Nothing altogether new is revealed here, and yet the whole has the force of a revelation. Whether encouraged by the politics they shared (fascism, anti-socialism, disdain for democracy) or goaded by the politics they did not (anti-Semitism, contempt for Christianity), Pound expresses himself in these letters even more emphatically and even less inhibitedly than he does elsewhere. The talk is seldom literary, but mainly of politics and economics, of government and money, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental: *paideuma*, indeed, and *sagetrieb*, and *kulchur*. The landscape is familiar: nearly all that is of positive value

comes out of the Mediterranean or the Chinese Middle Kingdom or the early United States of America, wisdom and right conduct being embodied variously and successively in Confucius, Mencius, Sophocles, Dante, Jefferson, Jackson, and Mussolini. Silvio Gesell more often now than C. H. Douglas is the prescribed economic authority, and Brooks Adams rather than brother Henry the principal historical guide, along with Alexander Del Mar, although unsound tendencies in the latter become a little more apparent after Pound's discovery in him of Jewish ancestry. Christianity, being one of "the three Jew religions," is taken to be largely destructive of human mentality, especially Protestantism, with its attachment to "the god DAMNED Jew book." A growing accommodation with Catholicism is detectable, until by 1955 Pound is taking pleasure in hearing the *Cantos* described by a British Benedictine as "THE Catholic poem, at least since the Catholic era."

China, Greece, Italy notwithstanding, Pound's basic attitudes and instinctive prejudices can again be seen to have grown from a purely American soil and been nurtured in a purely American hothouse, one where, as William Carlos Williams put it for another purpose, "the pure products of America/go crazy." It is ground on which over the years agrarian populism, xenophobic isolationism, WASP racism, and paranoid anticommunism met, mingled, and mutated. Setting aside the range of his intellectual excitements and the electric vitality of his intelligence, one may see in him just another American extreme right-winger of his times, applauding the earlier radio-ranter, Father Coughlin, or the British founder of the League of Empire Loyalists, A. K. Chesterton (G. K.'s cousin), or the newspaper columnist, Westbrook Pegler (running "his lone hopeless BITCH-hunt") or Senator Joe McCarthy ("Gawd bless him"), and encouraging younger men who were in effect disciples, such as Eustace Mullins, director of the Aryan League of America, and John Kasper, member of the White Citizens' Council. Pound himself, however, was keen to have it known that "nobody likes blacks better than I do." After all, in America "the coons" endearingly talked funny: "marse Blakman him LAZY;" while in Africa, as for Leni Riefenstahl, they were splendid creatures "of the animal kingdom unbitched by Calvin."

However, where Pound outflanks all others of his American kind is in the intensity, the virulence, and the obsessional iteration of his anti-Semitism, as disclosed in this correspondence more continuously and more chillingly than ever before. Here is page upon page of visceral hatred felt for Jews and Jewishness, albeit he may now and again stop to claim that the target is usury rather than something racially specific. (But then, "a usurer is a spiritual kike whatever his blood count.") All around, hindered barely at all by Belsen and Auschwitz, is the Jewish conspiracy, infecting, subverting, masterminding the press, the law, the institutions of government, the book trade, the drug trade. Even poor Adolf became contaminated, for all his "lucidity" over money, when he was "bit by dirty Jew mania for World Dominion, which he got from 'yr/idolized and filthy biblical bastards," "your beloved kikes," Agresti being time and again berated or mocked for her myopic refusal of anti-Semitism. The dehumanizing language and imagery (of disease, bacillus, pus, poison, pollution, sewer filth, crablice, vermin, rats, the "lump of suet" that was "the late unlamented" Gertrude Stein) is precisely the language and imagery of Nazi propaganda that eased the way to

extermination policy and practice, even if, by 1954, Pound considered “genocide impractical,” though the “pseudo-Cambridge voice of ambass/fr Issrael on radio” could yet have him “howling for a pogrom.” Yes, page upon page, letter upon letter of raging and cursing, for all that – a grotesque irony, this – “the whole idea of cursing is Mesopotamian/not a trace of it in Confucius or Mencius.”

Pound’s story (the story of his intellectual life and his work) may still be told as a tale of misdirected heroism or distorted idealism or good sense spoiled and gone bad. But as this correspondence confirms so shockingly, he was also possessed of an inherent malevolence that, whether called mad or evil, was simply murderous, wishfully death-dealing. The volume is therefore essential reading, less for those who already repudiate Pound, than for those of us who know that he is great poet, a maker of great beauty; it is essential reading for us, not so that our opinion of the poetry may be lowered, but so that, necessarily and rightly, our understanding of “the problem of Pound” may be still further complicated.

University of Essex

R. W. (HERBIE) BUTTERFIELD

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Lee Upton, *The Muse of Abandonment: Origin, Identity, Mastery in Five American Poets* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1998, £25.00). Pp. 162. ISBN 0 8387 5396 5.

Lee Upton’s *The Muse of Abandonment* considers the work of five contemporary American poets: Charles Wright, Russell Edson, Jean Valentine, James Tate and Louise Glück. Rather than dealing with the poetry thematically and offering explicit comparisons, Upton elects to devote discrete chapters to the individual poets and invites readers to make their own comparisons. It becomes clear from the beginning that the trope of “abandonment” is interpreted so loosely that it operates not to synthesize these various interpretations of contemporary poetry but rather to disrupt the notion of a singular, dominant poetic “tradition.” What we have is a series of responses to the work of each poet, written in a rambling yet readable style, which emphasizes differences rather than similarities or shared preoccupations. While there is no “master narrative” as such, structuring Upton’s readings of the poetry, this becomes one of the book’s strengths for it refuses to impose an interpretative framework upon what is a diverse and disparate group of writers.

While the insights offered into the work all five poets are always thoughtful and perceptive, particularly interesting is the discussion of Russell Edson’s prose poetry as a politically charged exploration of unconscious structures framing identity. Edson’s depictions of family life offer a series of grotesque and disturbing characters who seem more intent upon inflicting pain rather than bestowing love or affection. Jean Valentine is also preoccupied with the ways in which family life structures psychic identity. Her poems return obsessively to the theme of loss, which Upton explains in terms of the child’s primary loss of the mother; this first, traumatic wound is then re-enacted and replayed in language. Upton draws from the work of Julia Kristeva in her analysis of Valentine’s work,

and this proves to be a highly effective strategy which she returns to in her readings of Louise Glück's poetry. Here she uses Kristeva's theory of abjection to explain the poetic speaker's apparent alienation from her own gendered body. This results in an original and suggestive series of readings which certainly encouraged this reader to return to Glück's poetry with renewed enthusiasm.

University of Northumbria at Newcastle

VICTORIA BAZIN

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Kerry S. Walters, *Benjamin Franklin and His Gods* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999, \$44.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper). Pp. 213. ISBN 0 252 02433 8, 0 252 06739 8.

Despite his advocacy of worldly and spiritual order, Benjamin Franklin's religious statements are often bafflingly contradictory. In his own times, some critics regarded him as an orthodox Christian thinker, while others described him as an atheist. This diversity of judgement persists until our day. In his admirably lucid study of Franklin's religion, Kerry S. Walters takes issue with some of the most influential earlier views, in particular Alfred Owen Aldridge's over-smooth account of Franklin as a polytheist in *Benjamin Franklin and Nature's God* (1967). Sensitive to Franklin's perplexity and sudden U-turns in religious matters, Walters aims to confront this very human confusion by making his own reading suitably open-ended.

Walters argues against Aldridge's main claim by substituting what he calls "theistic perspectivism" for polytheism. There are as many ways to God as there are sects and religions. The "lesser gods" we ourselves create serve as intermediaries, as God is too distant to be approached directly. Walters makes Franklin's religious views seem compellingly modern and clear-sighted. He approved of religious diversity. He thought of religions in a practical way as "useful fictions," which, quite regardless of God's existence, served an essential regulating function in people's lives. And his beliefs were independent to the point of doctrinal ambiguity; they do not fit neatly under any established headings.

Drawing on biographical material and religious history, Walters paints a vivid picture of Franklin the spiritual seeker. Franklin was writing at the juncture between New England Calvinism and Enlightenment deism, a clash that accounts for many of the contradictions in his religious thought. Against this background, Walters traces Franklin's spiritual development chronologically through analysis of a series of key documents. He pays particular attention to his polemical treatise, *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain* (1725), which he later condemned as one of his life's "great errata," and his private devotional memorandum, "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion" (1728).

Walters's enjoyable re-examination of Franklin's religious views is both scholarly and fast paced. His account is occasionally repetitive but, given the complexity of the subject-matter, this often serves a good purpose. Walters is writing with the reader in mind, explaining each line of thought in sufficient detail to ensure clarity. The only real weakness of this impressive work is its continual

reliance on James Fowler's theory of developmental "stages of faith," which draws on Erik Erikson's notion of psychological life stages. Walters's thinking becomes too speculative and dogmatic in this area, falling into the very trap he prides himself on avoiding: over-simplifying complex issues to fit a template of progressive development. Given his laudable intention to face the confusion of Franklin's religious thought, it is a shame that he stops short of taking this approach as far as it will go.

University College London

MADELEINE MINSON

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John White, *Artie Shaw: Non-Stop Flight* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1998, £9.99). Pp. 183, 11 illustrations. ISBN 0 85958 666 9.

Richard Palmer, *Sonny Rollins: The Cutting Edge* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1998, £9.99). Pp. 221, 7 illustrations. ISBN 0 85958 667 7.

It is continually surprising to me that jazz music and culture are so frequently ignored in American Studies programmes at British universities. These two books are the first in a welcome new series called East Notes: Hull Studies in Jazz, which focuses on individual jazz musicians. Books in the series combine biographical and historical narrative with critical discussion of music, and include illustrations, discographies and sometimes transcriptions of solos, to offer a necessary introduction to the complexities and energy of the American century, the jazz century.

Artie Shaw, the Jewish (real name Arshawsky) big-band leader and Swing clarinetist, was one of the first white band leaders to employ African-American musicians, notably Billie Holiday in 1938 and Roy Eldridge in 1945. Aside from the well-documented instances of racism Holiday endured from some audiences, and theatre and hotel managers, there could be musical difficulties as her pure jazz style clashed with Shaw's arrangements: "song pluggers pressured Shaw not to allow Billie to sing their songs over the radio, because of her deviations from the written melodies." This raises an issue which is described rather than analysed by John White, not just around the "dilution" of African-American jazz by white musicians like Shaw, or worse, Glenn Miller – in his book, Richard Palmer notes that "young black musicians viewed the white-dominated 'Swing' movement with distaste and resentment" – but also about the ambivalent nature of Shaw's own music. Contemporary critics described his late 1930s work as having "a nice balance between sweet and swing," doing "a neat job on both swing and schmaltz," but these contrary tendencies are not interrogated sufficiently. Shaw's playing of classical music to a jazz audience at the Bop City venue in 1949 can be seen as a reaction to the new form of jazz: while bebop makes swing sound instantly dated, the response of white musicians like Shaw and Benny Goodman is to play Debussy and Prokofiev. The irony White does identify is that, shortly after Shaw's final retirement in 1954, the cool chamber jazz of, for instance, the Gerry Mulligan Quartet or the Modern Jazz Quartet was becoming popular, and may have led to a reappraisal of Shaw's own small combo work of the 1940s if he had stuck around for a few more years.

Tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins made his name on the modern jazz scene in the aftermath of bebop and in the period in advance of free jazz. According to Palmer, “Rollins’s playing was *always* a mixture of the traditional and the radical,” a mixture exemplified in what would become a feature of the Rollins repertoire, a free-wheeling solo over a simple calypso rhythm. For Palmer, Rollins personifies a key critical debate in jazz, that concerned with the formal relationship between improvisation and arrangement, between performance and recording: critics frequently suggest that Rollins is at his best live, that studio recordings of his music are always already secondary. For Palmer, Rollins’s stuttering career and extensive sabbaticals are in part a symptom of the fact that, as Rollins himself put it, “all recording is a traumatic experience.” The bulk of Palmer’s book is an album-by-album critical survey of Rollins’s entire *œuvre*, over forty years worth of records; the effect is of an overview which manages also to be potentially fragmented.

Before the runaway success of “Begin the Beguine” in 1938 forced him reluctantly to reconsider, Shaw’s theme tune was a number called “Nightmare.” The biographical coincidence of stress and suffering both he and Rollins endured, sometimes embraced – both musicians gave up playing at various times, Shaw because of “\$ucce\$\$” (as he spelled it in his autobiography), Rollins more due to excess (of narcotics), perhaps – is slightly worrying, since it implicitly confirms the romantic view of jazz as an expression of suffering, even of existential angst. Jazz Studies needs to be wary of a continued repetition of the hagiologic critical position of (usually) “horn” player as misunderstood master (or “titan,” as Palmer describes each of his favourite tenor saxophonists) – there is enough of that in the autobiographies of musicians like Art Pepper, Miles, Mingus. In the project to balance the roles of enthusiast and cultural critic, there is an occasional tendency on the part of both Palmer and White to favour sentiment over analysis. Further, in its focus on individual musicians, the series may find it difficult to address some of jazz’s limitations – not least, for example, its overwhelming masculinity as a cultural form for both musicians and audience. None the less, on the basis of the first two in the series, *East Notes: Hull Studies in Jazz* will provide a timely narrative contribution to the reassessment of this great all-American – that is, essentially hybrid – cultural form.

University of Central Lancashire

GEORGE MCKAY

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John White and Brian Holden Reid (eds.), *Americana: Essays in Memory of Marcus Cunliffe* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1998, £14.99). Pp. 380. ISBN 0 85958 6707.

It was not always to be *Americana*: on its first publication (1991) in “Honour” rather than in “Memory” of Marcus Cunliffe, we had *American Studies* as the first leg of the title – a more stolid and institutional, more solemn and ceremonial idea of tribute. None of these adjectives applies to Cunliffe’s work; a body of investigations for which the change in title is fitting and felicitous, a body that is “occasional” in its proper sense – diverse and various, impelled by the delight

of unflagging inquiry, the pleasure of an eclectic and fascinated temperament that is, above all, curious about things.

The great appeal of the present collection (and thoroughly in tune with the subject it commemorates) lies in its mixing of firm research with a speculative adventurousness whereby scholarship releases history from authorised (and authorising) appropriations. So we have a bedrock provided by Louis Billington's account of British Methodists in the United States between 1800 and 1860, Bruce Collins's recasting of Southern exceptionalism in an essay on the Southern military tradition during roughly the same period, Vivien Hart's powerful contribution to the complicated history of "fairness" through her investigation of the Minimum Wage Laws in Britain and America, Brian Holden Reid's documentation of anti-Americanism in the British army during World War Two, John White's fascinating display of the emergence of a distinctive black jazz style during Tom Prendergast's administration of Kansas City (a notable quarrying of popular culture through hard politics), and Mick Gidley's wise and measured argument for the extent to which Indians "have yet to receive representation as autonomous beings in White American cultural artefacts." In a particularly acute reading of Scott Fitzgerald's non-fiction, Arnold Goldman provides a refreshed image of the personal and autobiographical Fitzgerald – a confessional figure, caught by the urgencies for self-revelation.

In his Foreword, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. observes how well Cunliffe understood that "America is an imaginary as well as a real country," and two essays here offer revived testimony to the usefulness of that understanding. Malcolm Bradbury, thinking of the 1840s and 1850s, pursues a line of anti-Utopian irony in fiction, a line he finds "characteristically suspended in the space between the ideal and the real." This irony, in its assumption of a scepticism towards all forms of absolutist proclamation, finds later figure for Richard Crockatt through the career of Carl Becker, understood as an index to the life and times of American liberal democracy during the first half of the twentieth century. Becker's oscillations between "the will to believe and the predisposition to doubt" mark a clear inheritance from the forms of irony deployed by Hawthorne or Melville – and, incidentally, provides the most apt description of a "professor" that I know, as "one who thinks otherwise." To think otherwise may take several guises. For Peter Parish, charting a history of British Men of Letters on nineteenth-century America, it is found in a choice of material not from specialists or politicians but from "men of distinction who happened to have interesting things to say about America" (Thackeray, Trollope, Macaulay, Acton, Bagehot, Arnold, Wilde, and, in a particularly nice find, Edward Dicey, editor of the *Observer* and neglected author of *Six Months in the Federal States*). For Hugh Brogan, exploring the American friendships and correspondence of Tocqueville's later years, it is found in demonstrating the continuance of an interest in American affairs despite the fact that he published virtually nothing on the United States between *Democracy* and his death. And for Howard Temperley, considering antebellum images of American society after Emancipation, it is found in thinking about "what people before the war *thought* might happen" where the subjunctive mode attempts to redress a history so beset with the knowledge of what *did* happen once slavery had been abolished.

Schlesinger's observation gains further currency in the collection's opening essay where Robert Lawson-Peebles attends to the discourse of theatre and the language of fame informing both Washington's construction of himself and the attention he receives in the perpetuation of his historical and quasi-mythic status. Here, we are given a fascinating account of familialism and its role in transforming national heroes, particularly through dramatic form, by providing models for personal and national conduct. As the collection begins with theatre, it seems appropriate that it should end with play, with the playfulness Rupert Wilkinson associates with the "American character" and exemplified through Margaret Mead, David Potter, and David Riesman; all of whom he designates as "inside outsiders" where their sense of not quite fitting in becomes a creed of "responsible independence." This designation applies to Cunliffe himself in sharing a scepticism towards professional authority, rebelling against the specialisms of the age, and being, above all, "reverent to the play of the mind." In these parsimonious and over-disciplined times for the intellectual life, such playfulness (thriving usually on the margins of things, on the interstitiality of forms of inquiry) has become increasingly fragile. The revitalising variousness of this tribute offers the collection not only as a proper acknowledgement of the man it honours but as a reminder of the scholarly model he presents.

University of Keele

IAN F. A. BELL

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Linda Barrington (ed.), *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations into Native America* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998, £50.00 cloth, £17.50 paper). Pp. 301. ISBN 0 8133 3395 4, 0 8133 3396 2.

Economic history as a discreet discipline is relatively young within the United States (dating from around 1940) and the detailed study of Native American economic history is in its infancy. This makes this collection of essays edited by Linda Barrington of Columbia University's Barnard College both welcome and distinctive. Stemming from a 1994 conference at Columbia which included some of the most respected names within the economic history field, the essays she has brought together seek to lay foundations for further research so as to ultimately create a "detailed and accurate account of the economic history of the United States and the indigenous peoples within its borders." It is a project rooted in the relatively recent impetus amongst university-based economic historians to make the US economics curriculum more "diversity-friendly." This movement and Barrington's collection of essays has much to recommend it, from her useful, if conservative, opening consideration of "pre-contact" population estimates, through to Sumner J. La Croix and Louis A. Rose's fascinating discussion of the political economy of Hawaii since contact in 1778 and their reasoning as to why the existing Hawaiian Homelands Program needs restructuring if it is to redress the post-contact decline in native Hawaiian fortunes.

There is, none the less, a problem with this collection of work from non-native scholars affiliated to predominantly American and Canadian universities. One of the very first economic historians, Guy S. Callender, writing at the beginning of

this century, advised that the science of economics should be applied to the past in the same way that it is ordinarily applied to the present. This approach is just one part of the difficulty with this collection. Of course, the great value of economic history is its unique perspective, and here we understand issues such as the fur trade, warfare and Indian removal in a new and seemingly objective fashion. But it is also one which does not concern itself directly with colonialism or in any systematic way deal with the ideological and culture-bound implications of the bases of its analyses. Hence, in this collection, there is a real need for better integration of the knowledge and ideas of other disciplines such as anthropology, cultural history and post-colonial studies and, centrally, for the inclusion of indigenous scholarship and indigenous perspectives. Several essays stand out in this regard. Vernon L. Smith's discussion of "Economy, Ecology and Institutions in the Emergence of Humankind" falls squarely into the trap of reductionist economic determinism he seeks to avoid, reiterates as current the kind of social evolutionary thinking originally put forward in the United States by pioneer anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan in the mid nineteenth century and ends by suggesting that "we are a 'kinder and gentler' species today than were our ancestors" because three great whales trapped in a hole in the Arctic were saved and "we" have "learned to treasure the value of individual responsibility for preserving and managing natural resources." Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis's discussion of beaver depletion in the eighteenth century concludes that a lack of property rights on the part of Natives was what caused the beaver to disappear and informs us, without qualification, that "After all, it was the Indians who hunted, trapped, and traded furs to the Europeans."

It is undeniably a good thing that historical approaches to Native Americans move beyond conceptualising them as single and separate others and that Native Americans become less alien within accounts of the American past. However, if there is a general theme to this collection it is that non-indigenous Americans have simply continued basic economic approaches to resource and environment already practised in different ways by Native Americans before and after their arrival. The underlying concept is that there is one, essential, species-wide set of economically motivated responses to any given set of variables. The wider implication of this is that non-indigenous Americans were and are, simply better able to respond economically. If economic history wishes to add something truly valuable to the field of Native American Indian Studies, it must take a much more critically reflexive approach than this and begin to encompass the wealth of material across disciplines and registers which will inevitably qualify its most immediate and convenient conclusions.

Anglia Polytechnic University

JOY PORTER

Journal of American Studies, 36 (2002), 1. DOI: 10.1017/S0021875802626805

Christopher Beach (ed.), *Artifice and Indeterminacy: An Anthology of New Poetics* (Tuscaloosa, Ala. and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998, \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper). Pp. 354. ISBN 0 8173 0946 2, 0 8173 0954 3.

Artifice and Indeterminacy assembles eighteen "significant previously uncollected essays by avant-gardist poets and critics" in an admirable and indeed successful

attempt to clear the opaque waters of contemporary poetics. Some of the terms and definitions employed in the anthology, however, are open to challenge. For example, Beach's characterisation of Language and avant-garde poets barely distinguishes their genre from any other. He suggests that the poets under discussion "have produced texts that can be read in dialogue with such disciplines as critical theory, cultural studies, feminism ... aesthetics" etc. Surely it would have been more *outré* if they had not?

The anthology is divided into four thematised sections, opening with "Form Syntax Speech." Here, Charles Bernstein contemplates artifice and synthesis, absorption and resistance, offering fine readings of poems by Dickinson and others in explication. Marjorie Perloff is similarly on form in her theoretical reappraisal of Eliot and Wordsworth's valorisation of common speech. Michael Davidson's "'Skewed by Design'" is marred only by its brevity. His argument (about aesthetics and social action) is incisive and informed. Moreover, unlike some of the other poets' contributions (several of whom may best be advised not to give up the day job), it is elegantly written.

The highlight of the second section ("Pattern Experience Song") is Lyn Hejinian's "Strangeness" which reflectively and innovatively integrates ideas about perception, embodiment, topography and temporality. Hank Lazer's article in the next group ("Institutions and Ideology") provides a frank and productive appraisal of previously published critiques of contemporary poetics – although its impact might have been greater if placed as an introductory piece.

"I always knew that Wonder Woman was an afterthought," declares Rae Armantrout. This is ironic considering that her contribution, and the other essays on "Poetics and Gender," are relegated to the book's final chapters. Armantrout, Rachel Blau, DuPlessis and Susan Howe consider many of the same issues (subjectivity, identity, aurality, reading and power) as preceding contributors. Their comments would have had more impact if they had been placed in dialogic conjunction with earlier essays, rather than segregated at the end of the text.

This apart, *Artifice and Indeterminacy* is a timely, perspicacious and fascinating summary of contemporary poetics. The essays collected here should inform readings of a far wider range of texts than the introduction's emphasis on the avant-garde so modestly suggests, and than our historical tendency to taxonomise poetry would usually permit.

Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education

JOANNA GILL

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Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998, \$27.50). Pp. 217. ISBN 0 691 01559 7.

The sentimental body as both the site of the pre-political authentic self (concerning sex and sexuality) and the public site of political contestation (concerning citizenship and national identity) is the tension on which *Sentimental Bodies* bases its rigorous and sophisticated analysis of liberal and republican ideology.

In the introductory chapter Burgett maps out a theoretical understanding of republican and liberal ideology and rhetoric concerning the links between the body and the body politic; the private individual and the public citizen. This theoretical focus continues in Part 1 with a thorough critique of Arendt's classical republicanism and Habermas's modern republicanism. Particularly fascinating in this chapter is Burgett's explicatory analysis of their ideological responses to the question of personal autonomy and state heteronomy. Maintaining this focus on the negotiation of citizenship between private and public spheres, Burgett considers George Washington's "Farewell Address," exploring both republican and liberal tendencies in the authorship and critical reception of the speech. This has important implications for the understanding of nationalism and national identity in the public and private spheres of a democratic state.

The following chapters focus almost exclusively on literature and a consideration of gender, sex and sexuality. Burgett proposes that the act of publication by women suggests a climate of literary egalitarianism as he examines Foster's epistolary novel *The Coquette* and John and Abigail Adams's *Selected Letters*. He scrutinises the consequences of the (de)politicisation of gender and the advent of "republican womanhood" as the private sphere of the sentimental body transgresses into the realms of the public sphere, a sphere which, according to Burgett, maintains a normative masculine moral code. When considering Brown's *Clara Howard*, the alternative gendered embodiment of sentiment and reason, with respect to republican concepts of public and private spheres, is carefully argued.

The final section considers the relationship between sentiment and sexuality, more specifically the boundaries between public and private morality, with particular reference to Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The crucial aspect is the tension between Jacob's attempts to preserve privacy with respect to her sexual history and the political necessity to publish (publicise) her history in order to counter racial, sexual and economic exploitation. The liberal and republican ideological underpinnings of her narrative are well documented.

Sentimental Bodies is an incisive, imaginative and thoroughly engaging book which illuminates, by carefully chosen examples, complex ideological debate.

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Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, £34). Pp. 378. ISBN 0 8032 1491 X.

This is a book about the American National Park system with a difference. Most previous authors have concentrated some if not all their attention on how the American wilderness was saved from exploitation. From the setting up of the first National Park in Yellowstone in 1872 and the first National Forests between 1891 and 1893 until the present day there has been a conflict of interests. Those who would preserve or conserve national assets, beginning with the visionary agronomist John Muir, have always pitted themselves against short-term

capitalists eager for quick bucks. Carr pays little attention to the Ballinger–Pinchot skirmish over Hetchy-Hetchy dam or other political imbroglios. Instead, he introduces a more abiding factor, that of the impact of tourism. Whereas some parkers in the early 1920s, like Stephen Mather, complained that insufficient visitors were arriving, now the growing numbers of tourists threaten to overwhelm the system. In Carr's introduction, figures are quoted of 15 million visitors in 1939 compared with 250 million in 1991. Yet planning for such increased numbers remains the lynchpin for success. An overall confidence that the system will survive is based on the assumption that the American people have a right to enjoy their heritage, a notion encapsulated in Woody Guthrie's famous lyric "This land is our land." Thus, the National Park system is programmed to deliver.

Carr's book is more than just a comprehensive historical guide, since the author seeks to underline the planning activities that have been so instrumental in the proliferation and protection of available parks. This he does with an illustrated investigation of the Grand Canyon Village District, the Going-to-the-Sun Historic District around Glacier National Park and the Mount Rainier National Park Historic District before turning his attention to recreational planning activities during the Great Depression. There sadly, the book stops. We are given no indication, except through introductory asides, whether the strategies adopted over a thirty-year period for park access and people distribution, continue to obtain. Surely the recent difficulties that have arisen at Yosemite with its rationing policy deserve a mention in the epilogue, rather more urgently than the tail piece included on the Blue Ridge Parkway. To be fair though, perhaps Ethan Carr is planning a sequel. If so, it will be worth waiting for.

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Sherry Ceniza, *Walt Whitman and 19th-Century Women Reformers* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1998, £27.95). Pp. 291. ISBN 0 8173 0893 8.

This book looks at the relationship between Whitman and three radical feminist reformers of the nineteenth century, all of whom were known by Whitman, even though the precise degree of intimacy often proves somewhat difficult to trace. Abby Hills Price, Paulina Wright Davis and Ernestine L. Rose were remarkable women and Sherry Ceniza carefully traces the main lines of their approaches to feminist questions, constantly alert to their differences of opinion and the often complex nature of their adopted tactics. She finds echoes of their persuasions in Whitman's poetry and, perhaps more surprisingly, manages to trace rhetorical figures in the poetry which spring directly from their own writings. She also insists that the radical edge of this influence was somewhat blunted after 1860 when Whitman turned to an increasing emblematisation of the figures of women, giving his republic something like the archetypes he felt it needed. The sharp specificities of political necessity were thereby lost, discoloured by the swelling

tones of an organ music in which Whitman's foot was too emphatically pressed down on the pedal.

Ceniza is also keen to rescue the earlier poetry from the masculinist and Freudian horror of the mother which marks so much of the earlier criticism of Whitman; part of her project involves not only a rereading of the poetry but also a rather charming revaluation of the role played by Whitman's mother, who she sees as a strong and enabling presence. She never satisfactorily explains why Whitman failed to take this paragon of strength into his own home, despite the series of promises he made to her, and there are elements of special pleading in her treatment of the mother's reception of Whitman's poetry; furthermore, the problematic inheritance set by Whitman's father tends to be underplayed, despite the Oedipal traces which underscore it.

Despite this, Ceniza is surely right to insist that his mother's vocabulary and paratactic expression entered into her son's celebrations and yet, as with Ceniza's feminists, one still has to wonder about the degree of influence, particularly when faced by a poet as startlingly omnivorous as Whitman. Paul Zweig and others have presented us with a Whitman who was born aloft by the multiple excitements of an exceptionally crowded culture, a Whitman radicalised or stimulated by debates over slavery, the exhibition of Egyptian hieroglyphs, the latest advances in geology and so on. Such a dazzling maelstrom of influence and provocation makes it hard to isolate the importance of any single element and, even on her own terms, Ceniza fails to adequately explain why she has chosen her central three figures, particularly when we remember Whitman's lifelong adoration of figures like Margaret Fuller and George Sand. One can no longer doubt that Price, Davis and Rose influenced Whitman and yet, faced by the sheer plenitude of what did influence him, it remains unclear how deep that influence cut and, more widely, whether Whitman was more interested in incessant movement than he was in the shaping and development of particular angles of attack. Lawrence's figure of Whitman as a self-inflating steam engine may be overdone, but it has the virtue of fixing in our minds why Whitman is such a characteristically American figure, charging off into an unspecifiable future while remaining heedless of the more mundane realities of the historical moment. Swept up in that rush are the contradictions of something approaching a national character, hideously xenophobic at times, yet also truly democratic at others – a creature both of empire and of everything that rightly colludes against it.

Viewed from this perspective, Ceniza's book is an honourable and important extended footnote, almost achingly decent in its procedures. Modest and thorough, it is the kind of book anyone interested in Whitman will want to read. Putting it down, one is grateful for its presence, even as one begins to hear another creature breathing behind you, energetic and possessed by a need for endless display, often heedless of the dictates of taste, yet also furtive and, finally, ungathered.

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CLIVE MEACHEN