

## Reviews

*Useful Cinema*, edited by Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 386 pages. \$26.95, paper.

Cinema, broadly defined as all moving images, has become so pervasive, foundational, and even constitutive, that we sometimes verify the validity of something with the phrase, “as seen on TV.” Moreover, we can go to a concert or baseball game and get a better view by watching the jumbotron. This volume shows that such cinematic saturation in America is not a recent phenomenon, but was established in the early twentieth century.

The scope of *Useful Cinema* is the period from the 1920s into the 1980s. The authors address “useful cinema,” that is, moving images that lie outside the domain of artistic and mass-market entertainment. They study cinema that is largely non-commercial and instrumental—primarily education, job training, and civic management (voting instructions, for example). Useful cinema, then, is didactic. It informs, instructs, demonstrates, and persuades—not in feature film venues, but in such places as schools, factories, museums, planetariums, churches, YMCAs, and libraries.

Fittingly, the volume begins with a chapter on the beginning of educational films in classrooms through the 1930s. In that article, Eric Smoodin explores the blurry border between mass-market and useful cinema. Joseph Clark examines the propaganda functions of one of the most well-known forms of useful cinema, World War Two newsreels. As one would expect, there is also a chapter on health films, particularly those that ostensibly addressed sexuality. Health films, Kirsten Ostherr shows, grew out of World War Two propaganda films. Zoe Druick studies the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sympathetically, but nonetheless finds that it unwittingly endorsed the nationalism that gave rise to some of the problems that UNESCO tried to alleviate. Stephen Groening’s chapter is a case study of how Western Union trained its female workers by forming them into proper ladies and recreating their subject positions and gendered behavior. Gregory A. Waller’s piece demonstrates how the manufacturers of 16 mm film technology used not only their printed, but also their filmed advertising to spread the availability of movies beyond theatres.

There are also several welcome surprises. In a particularly trenchant chapter, Jennifer Horne explains that, ironically, the institution that has probably made the most use of cinema is the bastion of print: the library. Gradually superseding religion as a mode of spiritual and educational uplift, libraries were well funded because they served as an alternative to unwholesome entertainment. Libraries, then, were a site of social control, a place to combat idleness, drunkenness, and criminality. Haidee Wasson explains how some museums have

replaced their printed guides to the holdings with filmed guides. Another chapter shows how the YMCA was central to the development of 16 mm film. And in Alison Griffith's article, there is even a brief history of one kind of venue often overlooked in film study: the planetarium. This piece also manages to make a discussion of the Zeiss projector readable, while showing the planetarium's role in drawing people into nationalistic narratives about space exploration. Finally, the concluding article by Michael Zryd takes the reader back to the border, where mass entertainment meets useful cinema. Humorously and accurately, he skewers self-indulgent experimental films as "useless cinema."

As scholars in Communication Studies, these editors and contributors do not focus on cinema as art, leaving that job to film studies, literary studies, and art history. Although they attend to historiography, they hit only the high water marks left by such scholars as Robert Sklar and Lary May. Similarly, the two chapters on the technology of 16 mm film would be more useful to historians had they been situated in the work of such historians of technology as David F. Noble and David E. Nye. Likewise, a chapter on the uses of cinema in religion might have enhanced this collection. But at 386 pages of scholarship that is valuable for both research and teaching, including a thorough filmography, this anthology provides a resource that most historians will probably find more than useful. K-12 teachers as well as undergraduate instructors will find both specific information and general ideas for preparing lessons and lectures. Conceivably, this book might be assigned in a graduate course on film in particular or media in general. Anyone researching this topic will have to examine this book.

*Arizona State University West*

Darryl Hattenhauer

*A History of the Cuban Revolution*, by Aviva Chomsky. Viewpoints/Puntos de Vista series. Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 241 pages. \$21.95, paper.

Historian Aviva Chomsky has produced a magnificent introductory text on the Cuban Revolution. Chomsky begins her presentation of this significant Cold War era event with a helpful introduction that broadly considers issues of freedom, revolution, capitalism, and socialism in popular attitudes and scholarship in Cuba, Latin America, and the United States. A brief first chapter on Cuban history prior to the triumphal entry of Fidel Castro's guerrilla forces into Havana on New Year's Day of 1959 is followed by a chapter on Cuban socialism, which began with an agrarian reform that set in motion the thorough nationalization of the economy. Revolutionary leaders enthusiastically began the 1960s with attempts to shift the economy away from sugar, only to return to it later in the decade. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, dependence on the former Soviet Union came to characterize socialist Cuba.

Not surprisingly, Cuba's post-revolutionary relationship with the United States occupies an entire chapter. Emphasizing nationalism, redistributive social justice, and political and economic sovereignty, the Revolution challenged the long-standing extraordinary influence that U.S. government officials and U.S. companies enjoyed in Cuba. Before explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis and its interesting historiographical trajectory, Chomsky recounts the deterioration of Cuban-U.S. relations and the failed U.S. attempt to overthrow Castro through the Bay of Pigs invasion. She then relates how Cuba and Miami, the primary destination for Cubans leaving the island, have each been transformed by the emigration and immigration occurring since the beginning of the Revolution. Turning to the larger

international arena, Chomsky chronicles the evolution of Cuba's foreign policy, which is notable for its extensive military activities and substantial civilian aid programs in Africa and Latin America.

In a chapter on cultural life and the Revolution, Chomsky explores the liberatory and repressive aspects of the Cuban government's cultural policy. She notes the process by which the Cuban revolutionaries "set about to democratize access to formerly 'high' culture, and to elevate and promote Cuban cultural forms formerly viewed as 'low'" (p. 125). After effectively outlining the Revolution's impact on Cuban literature, film, music, sport, dance, political culture, and eating habits, Chomsky takes a frank look at the Revolution's attempts to eliminate social inequity in Cuba. Useful comparisons are made between struggles in the United States and efforts in Cuba to overcome racial and gender inequalities since the 1960s. Chomsky provides succinct explanations of the two main facets of the Revolution's gender policies—the incorporation of women into the workforce and the 1975 Family Code that decreed equality between men and women. While applauding the Cuban government's success in improving and equalizing access to education and health care, Chomsky suitably examines the scholarly debates as to why racial and gender inequality persists in Cuba.

The disintegration of the Soviet bloc in 1989 left Cuba without the trade and aid relationships that upheld its economy for three decades. As Chomsky explains, Cuba's leaders responded by permitting some forms of private enterprise, facilitating remittances from abroad, welcoming foreign investment, and encouraging tourism. Cuba also underwent a religious opening in the 1990s. In 1992, amendments removed language in the Cuban constitution that had defined the nation as atheistic. Cuba was redefined as a secular nation and discrimination against religious believers and practitioners was banned.

Social inequalities increased as the Cuban leadership pursued economic policies it thought necessary to maintain the nation's social services. By 2003, the Cuban government was clearly reversing some of the market-oriented economic reforms of the 1990s. In the book's final chapter, Chomsky describes the social and economic challenges faced by the Revolution in the first decade of the twenty-first century. As part of the Viewpoints/Puntos de Vista series for use in undergraduate courses, *A History of the Cuban Revolution* clearly and concisely presents the Revolution without overemphasizing politics. Teachers of undergraduate courses on Cuba and modern Latin America survey courses will appreciate Chomsky's comprehensive overview of the Revolution's political aspects in combination with its artistic, cultural, economic, and social characteristics.

Brooklyn College

David M. Carletta

*The Missing of the Somme*, by Geoff Dyer. New York: Vintage Books, 2011. 157 pages. \$14.95, paper.

Although written in 1994, *The Missing of the Somme* has only recently come out in the United States. Author Geoff Dyer credits current work on World War I by historians John Keegan and Niall Ferguson for renewed interest in the war. This, he believes, has led to the consequent American publication of his unusual and thoughtful work on how the Great War is remembered and memorialized. *The Missing of the Somme* explores poetry, literature, photography, and war memorials in France and England in an effort to understand not just the war, but the effect "the idea" of the war had on his generation (p. 85).

Dyer not only conveys “the idea” of the war, but his musings on the English memorials and his account of his tour through the French and Belgian countryside—with their vast cemeteries—capture the consequences of an event that, for Dyer, “ruptured the historical continuum...[and ushered] in a future characterized by instability and uncertainty” (p. 5).

The numbers of dead alone are jarring, and Dyer’s interpretation of them can benefit history teachers in the United States who attempt to cover World War I in an American school curriculum that often minimizes the Great War’s impact. For example, Dyer notes that “if the Empire’s dead marched four abreast” by the Cenotaph, a London memorial, “it would take them three and a half days” (p. 23). He observes that on the Western Front, there are 918 cemeteries “with 580,000 names and 180,000 unidentified graves” (p. 14). The cemetery at Notre Dame de Lorette covers twenty-six acres, the scale of which, he remarks, “exceeds all imagining” (p. 102). The scale of deaths continues even after the war, when the dead gave work to the living; in France, alone, “thirty thousand war memorials—or fifty a day—were raised between 1920 and 1925” (p. 64).

Despite his concentration on the French and English memorials, Dyer sides with no belligerents in the conflict. He focuses on the lives lost, not on uniforms or ideology. At one point, he discusses the memorial in Hampstead, England, erected to the 375,000 horses killed in the war; such a slaughter, he notes, is also described in Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* as the “vilest baseness”—the use of horses in war (p. 45). For Dyer, “the real aggressor was industrial technology itself” (p. 47). He notes wryly that during the war, the ordinary soldier continued his labor by other means, working long hours, without a union, and with no safety standards. As if in recognition of this universality of slaughter, Dyer observes that the official idiom for remembrance is not patriotism, but sacrifice, and he remarks that the “memorial inscriptions were not to ‘Our’ [Glorious Dead] but to ‘The Glorious Dead’” (p. 15).

*The Missing of the Somme* is a small book. It is one person’s attempt to understand the events he refers to as “slaughter,” “untellable,” and “unimaginable.” It features photographs of many of the memorials and cemeteries discussed. Despite this impressionistic approach, the book is well grounded in scholarship and research. It contains a useful bibliography, extensive notes, and an index. *The Missing of the Somme* would be an appropriate companion to many history classes on the twentieth century, world wars, and memory studies.

California State University, Long Beach

Linda Kelly Alkana

*The Contemporary Global Economy: A History Since 1980*, by Alfred E. Eckes, Jr. History of the Contemporary World series. Oxford, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 306 pages. \$34.95, paper.

Alfred Eckes holds the enviable position as contemporary historian at Ohio University, and is the former chair of the U.S. International Trade Commission, a position that prepared him to write an insider history of the entire process of trade and finance liberalization. This book’s trajectory takes us from the post-World War II era of state interventionism to the birth of a new state-fostered and deregulated global economy whose growth and expansion eventuates in risk and collapse. The three most important chapters detail the rise of globally competitive multinational corporations, the reasons for the dramatic expansion of international credit markets, and the staggering collapse of credit markets following a decade

of increasingly fantastic financial shenanigans, speculative bubbles, and systemic risk. Eckes even includes a chapter on what might be called the new satanic mill of the global economy, with its slave labor, human trafficking, unsafe and exploitative labor practices, and environmental disasters. It is a sobering book, one in which the author ultimately sides with the economic modernizers over the critics. While Eckes does acknowledge the limitations of market economies, on balance, his view is that increases in GDP remain the measurement against which social good can be judged. Since international capitalism produces tangible gains, it is the best system going.

Eckes initially operates from a neo-liberal model contrasting state intervention and market autonomy. This assumption allows him to construct a history of a global economic world. Thus, the period from the early nineteenth century until the First World War is the “golden age” of market independence. This age was followed by a period of national intervention in markets brought on by wars, depression, and cold war. However, since the 1980s, the market system has made a comeback and produced the current regime of global capitalism. The first half of the book is a powerful compilation of data on population, economic growth, and the transformation of the international economy as a result of globalization. As a consequence, life spans, literacy, per capita incomes, and consumerism grew. In the second half of the book, the author turns critical of the trends and institutions under investigation. Here, one finds the sharpest insights and searing judgments about the problems with the system of international finance and exchange, and a devastating critique of the pundits (Thomas Friedman), economists (Milton Friedman), and policy-makers (Alan Greenspan, Senator Phil Gramm) that promoted free-market ideology and especially financial deregulation.

Eckes weighs in on so many contemporary economic issues, it is impossible to summarize the range of his analysis in this review format. However, on the issue of the rise of the multinational corporations, the overall explanation is one of defensiveness as to the reasons why corporations abandoned national markets and went global; Eckes tells that such corporations had to go global or be destroyed by international competition. One can almost hear the Champaign corks popping in the boards of directors of these outfits as they were “forced” to embrace the unprecedented new structures of opportunity that allowed for unprecedeted profitability.

His interpretation is also notable for its acknowledgement of the extraordinary success of the Asian nations—China, South Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong—in driving export- and service-oriented economies as national policy, thereby creating an alternative to the neo-liberal model. It was in this part of the world the greatest gains in life spans, literacy, GDP per capita, and consumerism occurred. These nations proved particularly effective in weathering the economic crisis of 2007-2010, by generating highly positive current account balances and enormous financial reserves. Eckes’ most important conclusion is that the global economy may be witnessing a historic shift in its center of gravity and regenerative forces toward an Asia-centered world.

A number of years ago, I attended an Organization of American Historians Summer Workshop at El Camino College and listened to several well-known historians discuss the historiography of very recent America. The emphasis was on the incarceration state, civil rights, feminism, and the like. What was missing was a useful introduction to the economic anatomy of our time. Alfred Eckes has provided that introduction. For those historians struggling to make sense of the major trends in trade, investment, corporate behavior, international finance, employment, production, and distribution, this is the book to provide that basic information. It is an excellent primer on the rise of a global economy, warts and all. As such, it offers a welcome contribution to the literature on contemporary political economy.

Eckes' book appeared prior to when the Occupy Wall Street movement dramatized public outrage at the inequalities and lost opportunities implicit in the move of formerly American businesses into an international venue. Last year was also the first time in the history of General Motors Corporation that the company sold more cars in China than in the United States. Alfred Eckes helps us to understand the economic context for these extraordinary and deeply disturbing events.

Long Beach City College

Julian J. DelGaudio

*The Crimes of Elagabalus: The Life and Legacy of Rome's Decadent Boy Emperor*, by Martijn Icks. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. 276 pages. \$29.95, cloth.

The emperor known in modern times as Elagabalus has largely been an embarrassment to historians of Rome. Only fourteen when he gained the throne, through the machinations of his mother and grandmother, he was living in the Syrian town of Emesa and serving as hereditary high-priest of the local deity Elagabal. He arrived in Rome the following year with Elagabal—worshipped in the form of a black stone—in tow, installed the god, had himself proclaimed “invincible priest-emperor,” and ultimately sought to make his divine protector supreme in the Roman pantheon. Extant coins depict Elagabalus wearing a flowing cloak and eastern-style trousers as he sacrificed; the contemporary historians Cassius Dio and Herodian further describe how he orgiastically danced before the god. Writing after his death (at the hands of his Praetorian Guard in 222 CE), both also felt free to expatiate on Elagabalus’ licentiousness and effeminacy. Dio regularly calls him Sardanapalus (after the mythical Assyrian king) and tells of how an especially well-endowed athlete, Aurelius Zoticus, was summoned to the emperor; seeing him, Sardanapalus “jumped up with rhythmic movements” and when Zoticus addressed him with the customary salutation, “Lord Emperor, hail,” Elagabalus bent his neck, turned his eyes on Zoticus with a melting gaze, and replied, “Do not call me Lord, for I am a Lady.”

For today’s generation of students and their teachers, Elagabalus’ short reign and later accounts of it raise important questions—about religion, ethnicity, and sexuality in the Roman empire; about the imperial office and imperial image, and the relation between power and dress; and about the nature of ancient history-writing and its value as evidence. Icks’ generally well-researched and clearly composed book provides a useful guide. The first half gives a sober reconstruction of Elagabalus’ reign. The emperor’s Syrian and Emesense background is fully described, although, as Icks points out, Elagabalus might have spent much of his youth in Italy. His changing public image is charted: presented in 218 (almost certainly falsely) as the son of the recently assassinated emperor Caracalla, Varius Avitus, as he was likely born, was renamed Aurelius Antoninus and cast in largely traditional ways until 220, when he sought to assert Elagabal’s primacy. In the offense caused, Icks argues, lay the seeds of his downfall.

The fourth chapter, “The Rejected Ruler,” discusses the main ancient accounts of Elagabalus, all posthumously written, and marks a transition to the second half of the study, which concerns images of Elagabalus in more recent times. Whereas in early modern European history and literature—such as Dutch playwright Gysbert Tysens’ *Bassianus Varius Heliogabalus*—the emperor essentially is a tyrant, in the nineteenth century, he became an “iconic figure...of the Decadent movement” (p. 148), even as scholarship, when not ignoring him, focused on him as a distasteful “Oriental.” Later twentieth-century

literature—such as Martin Duberman’s 1973 play, *Elagabalus*—downplayed “Orientalism” and turned him into “a modern gay role model” (p. 181) and cast Elagabalus, as recent historical scholarship has too, as a consciously “constructed character” (p. 196).

Traditional historians will be less interested in the second half of the book, although it harmonizes well with classicists’ growing interest in reception studies—and provides a deft model of how to blend survey with case study. I only wonder if some of the verve of Icks’ readings here is missing from his treatment of Cassius Dio and Herodian. It is striking what a role humor plays in their narratives—for example, Dio’s constant use of nicknames (Elagabalus is not just “Sardanapalus,” but frequently “False-Antoninus,” while Zoticus is called the “Cook” after his father’s trade). Political jokes are a familiar part of repressive regimes—one thinks of Stalinist Russia—allowing individuals quietly to mock their rulers and to retain some sanity (for an overview, see Elliott Oring, “Risky Business: Political Jokes under Repressive Regimes,” *Western Folklore* 63, no. 3 [Summer 2004]). Contemporary jokes, as Icks very briefly suggests (p. 122), are a likely source for our historical accounts, for contemporaries did make jokes: Herodian, for example, recounts Alexandrian lampoons against Caracalla and his mother, Julia Domna, nicknamed “Jocasta.” Regardless, then, of its veracity, Dio’s contemporary history in particular can be viewed as symptomatic of an autocratic society and finds good parallels across Roman imperial history, from Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis* all the way to the sixth-century *Secret History* of Procopius. One might almost be inclined to leave this book with some sympathy for the early modern responses and a tinge of regret that today’s Elagabalus—as Icks so well shows—has to be an imaginary one.

Georgetown University

Josiah Osgood

*Abolishing the Taboo: Dwight D. Eisenhower and American Nuclear Doctrine, 1945-1961*, by Brian Madison Jones. West Midlands, United Kingdom: Helion & Company, 2011. 176 pages. \$49.95, paper.

In this work, Brian Madison Jones examines the views and policies of Dwight D. Eisenhower regarding nuclear technology from the end of World War II through the end of his second term as president. Jones argues that, as president, Eisenhower hoped to utilize nuclear technology to bolster national strength during the nation’s ideological and moral struggle against communism. As such, Eisenhower believed that not only should the nation’s nuclear arsenal be expanded, but nuclear technology should be made available to private industries, as well as other countries, for a variety of constructive rather than destructive uses. During Eisenhower’s two terms in office, the nation’s nuclear arsenal increased immensely. Yet, Jones argues that Eisenhower sincerely desired peace through strength, as well as the increased usage of nuclear technology in peaceful applications. To attain these goals, Eisenhower hoped to make nuclear technology seem ordinary to the American public.

Jones focuses on four main themes within Eisenhower’s views on nuclear technology. First, nuclear weapons offered a fiscally responsible way to defend the nation, Eisenhower believed. As a staunch fiscal conservative, Eisenhower objected to the vastly increased national security spending under President Truman. Eisenhower believed (incorrectly, Jones points out) that he could spend less on national security by building up the nuclear arsenal rather than conventional forces. Second, Eisenhower believed that nuclear weapons greatly increased the military strength of the nation in facing its enemy, the Soviet Union. Third, Eisenhower believed that nuclear technology could have great benefits for humanity.

Nuclear reactors, for example, could provide cheap electricity to Americans, or to people in the Third World (thereby promoting closer ties with the United States). And even the destructive power of nuclear weapons could be used in the construction or mining industries. Finally, Eisenhower, a deeply religious man, sincerely believed that nuclear technology could be used for the greater good, in both protecting the nation and in its peaceful applications. Eisenhower had no moral qualms about the massive expansion of the nuclear stockpile during his presidency, and saw no inconsistency in building bombs while calling for peace.

The book is organized topically rather than chronologically. Following a brief introduction, chapter one gives the reader an excellent introduction to Eisenhower historiography. While orthodox scholars have seen Eisenhower as an aloof, anti-intellectual, and largely ineffectual president, revisionists argued the opposite: Eisenhower was in charge of his administration and, for better or worse, was actively engaged in governing, usually quite successfully. More recently, the post-revisionists have found a middle ground: Eisenhower was generally an engaged leader, but had plenty of failures to go along with his successes. Jones' work is part of the post-revisionist camp. Jones does an excellent job of presenting a balanced view of Eisenhower's leadership qualities and his intellectual capabilities. Chapters two through five then examine the four themes noted above regarding Eisenhower's beliefs in the economic, military, industrial, and moral strength that would accrue to the United States thanks to nuclear technology.

Therein lies the main problem with the book. It is generally well written, although there are numerous typographical errors. However, the book lacks an effective chronology. Each of the four topical chapters covers Eisenhower's entire presidency, and this can sometimes make for confusing reading. In chapter five, for example, within the span of ten pages or so, the discussion moves from disarmament talks in 1957, to a nuclear test in 1954 (the *Lucky Dragon* incident), back to disarmament/moratorium issue in 1957/1958, to the 1959 movie *On the Beach*, to Eisenhower's 1953 Atoms for Peace project. The topical nature of the chapters leads to some disorganization within the book. For example, while we learn about fallout shelters on pages 68-72, the effects of fallout are not mentioned until pages 108-110. There is also some redundancy in the work, especially in chapters two and three. The same quotation, for example, is used on both page 32 and page 50.

Despite these issues, this is a worthwhile study of an important topic. Anyone who teaches Cold War history, military history, or twentieth-century U.S. history could benefit from reading this work and incorporating material from it into lectures. The book might be appropriate as assigned reading in upper-level college history courses or graduate-level courses, especially on the Cold War, although the above-mentioned flaws might frustrate student readers.

*University of Maine*

David C. Turpie

*Rancho Los Alamitos: Ever Changing, Always the Same*, by Claudia Jurmain, David Lavender, and Larry L. Meyer. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2011. 256 pages. \$35.00, paper.

This book presents a microcosm of California history in the story of the Rancho Los Alamitos. The Long Beach site evolved from a Native American village to Spanish, Mexican, and American ranch property. While much of the book dwells on the Bixby family, this text adds a rich context of broader trends in California and the West, as well as more specific details about workers and other residents of the area that have often been overlooked.

The first quarter of the book focuses on the Tongva people, for whom this land was Povuu'ngna, the center of creation. Here, they gathered to trade and share rituals that upheld their beliefs and regulated their daily lives. As the Tongva came under the purview of Mission San Gabriel in the 1770s, Povuu'ngna was abandoned. Notably, the text includes photos and interviews with descendants of the Tongva.

Spanish soldier Jose Manuel Nieto received the land in reward for his services and began pasturing livestock at Los Alamitos. Nieto died in 1804 as a well-off ranchero. His son built an adobe to shelter vaqueros, which became the core of the rancho house standing today. During the Mexican era, Governor Jose Figueroa owned the property for a time. The text provides ample historical context on the decline of the missions and rise of the ranchos under a secularization process that gave Californios control of vast properties and Native American labor. Yankee trader Abel Stearns purchased Los Alamitos in 1842. He added a north wing onto the adobe with wooden floors and a gabled roof, reflecting his New England sensibilities. Payroll records, census data, and correspondence help recover the story of laborers on the rancho, including thirty-three Native Americans employed in 1850. Debt cost Stearns the rancho in 1866, when financier Michael Reese took over.

The rest of the book celebrates the Bixby era. The Bixbys are presented as American pioneers and entrepreneurs who travelled west and prospered as California grew. The Gold Rush enticed the first of the Flint and Bixby cousins west. They sold beef to miners, then began sheep ranching. The Bixbys partnered with James Irvine to purchase land in Southern California and expand their ranching enterprise. John Bixby leased Rancho Los Alamitos, then purchased it in 1881. The family built more rooms surrounding the old adobe. John Bixby diversified the ranch to include cattle, farming, and cheese making and hired workers of European, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American descent. The authors demonstrate both the diversity of employees and the era's biases, showing accounts with "Old Swede...Manuel Portuguese...Andrew Mexican Boy..." who generally worked for less than \$1 per day, less room and board, as well as "Vegetable Chinaman," produce peddler (pp. 88-89). Some lands were also rented to tenant farmers, including Belgian immigrants. As population grew, John Bixby hoped to sell lots to build a city nearby, but he sold the real estate venture to another firm that named it Long Beach.

John's son, Fred Bixby, took over the ranch in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He maintained Rancho Los Alamitos despite its lack of profit in this period. Fortunately, oil strikes near Signal Hill and Seal Beach on Bixby-owned property in the 1920s brought wealth and allowed Fred to enjoy raising shire horses and running his ranches. His wife, Florence, expanded the house with tennis courts, a music room, and a partial second story of bedrooms, and cut a skylight in the roof of the old parlor as she turned the room into a library. The Olmsted Brothers landscaped gardens around the home in the 1920s. This period constitutes the golden age of the rancho, whereas the 1940s saw the rancho property diminished, as hundreds of acres became parts of a military munitions depot, a naval hospital, and a new state college—California State University, Long Beach. Only 7.5 acres remained when the Bixby family deeded the property to the city of Long Beach in 1968. Still, they maintain interest in the Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation, which runs the historic rancho and garden site today and published this book.

Although at first glance, this looks like a mere coffee table book, *Rancho Los Alamitos* is certainly more substantial. It is a valuable local history, useful for teachers and students in courses on California, the West, and U.S. history. The text is excellent, and numerous sources—including hundreds of photographs, diary excerpts, ledgers, maps, and oral histories—enrich our understanding of the rancho and the diverse peoples who lived and worked on the land.

*Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots*, by Thomas S. Kidd. New York: Basic Books, 2011. 306 pages. \$28.00, cloth.

How does one write a patriotic history of a Founding Father who rejected the United States Constitution? This is the task that Thomas S. Kidd, a conservative historian on the faculty at Baylor University, has set for himself in his new biography of Patrick Henry. Teachers will find much to value in this study, not least of all the author's exposition of Henry's moral and political worldviews and his impact on his contemporaries. What readers will not find is an answer to the question that most students today are likely to ask: How could Henry, so fearless a critic of tyrannical government, reconcile his love of liberty with his active complicity in Virginia's slave system?

Kidd covers all the highlights of his subject's career. The son of a Scottish immigrant, Henry burst upon the American scene in 1765 when, as a newly minted 29-year-old member of the Virginia colonial legislature, he delivered a blistering attack on the Stamp Act. Henry again drew attention in 1775, when—as far as is known, since Henry did not write down his speeches—he concluded a dramatic oration favoring armed resistance to Great Britain with the indelible peroration: “Give me liberty or give me death.” Henry spent all but a few weeks of his life in Virginia, where he served as a legislator, as a soldier in command of the Virginia provincial forces in the Revolutionary War, and as governor for five one-year terms, falling in and out of political allegiance with most of Virginia's leaders along the way. He was renowned for his evangelical-style rhetoric, although he was Episcopalian in practice and belief. He was a lifelong admirer of General Washington, but it is fair to say he was an enemy of Jefferson, a man of a distinctly more subdued temperament.

As Kidd shows, Henry's opposition to the proposed federal Constitution in 1787-1788 derived from his suspicion of government-by-elites and conviction that local government would best preserve the people's liberty. He recognized that the new Constitution represented a “consolidated” version of federalism that gave the central government power to legislate for the states, and bestowed executive and judicial authority on two new potentially tyrannical branches of government. Henry was the leading anti-federalist at the Virginia ratifying convention in June 1788. Kidd argues that at this critical juncture, as through all his life, Henry's political ideals “were ultimately rooted in his Christian republican ideals and his preference for limited, local government” (p. 203). His admiration for George Washington prompted him to favor the Federalists over the Republicans in the great political divide of the 1790s, despite the ideological connection between anti-federalism and Jefferson's party. Henry died in June 1799 on the eve of Jefferson's presidential victory.

Henry likely resembled his generation of patriots more closely than did the more “high-ranking” Founding Fathers. He was a larger-than-life actor, but one who played on a small stage in a verbally adept culture, where performances were remembered as much for their vivid delivery as for their content—aspects that unfortunately are hard for historians to pin down. Kidd has captured some of that fire, but his larger aim of linking Henry to a small-government tradition in America results in somewhat flat depictions of the business that engrossed most of his time—store keeping, plantation farming, a private law practice, speculation in western lands, involvement in the Anglican Church, and his family life. It also leads to a less than satisfactory discussion of slavery, and the incorrect assertion that the South made significant sacrifices when it agreed to ratification of the national constitution (chapter 9). In fact, the slaveholding interests at the Federal Convention got nearly every concession they sought, only most visibly in the Three-Fifths Clause that was to favor the region electorally for decades thereafter.

Kidd concludes that Patrick Henry has much to say for Americans seeking clarity in today's ideological wars, and his “ideals of liberty, religion, a moral society, small

government, and local politics were essential principles upon which America was built" (p. 254). But Kidd's overall support for Henry's politics can lead to the unintended conclusion that his most significant legacy was as a forerunner of the Southern secession of 1860-1861. One needs no clearer example than secession of how "ideals of liberty" and "small government" can go awry and a "moral society" can go astray. In short, there is much for teachers and students to ponder in this clear but not always tough-minded account of Patrick Henry's life and legacy.

*California State University, East Bay*

Dee E. Andrews

*Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins*, by J. E. Lendon. New York: Basic Books, 2010. 576 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

J. E. Lendon's eloquent *Song of Wrath* focuses on the Archidamian War of 431 to 421 B.C.E., the beginning of the larger Peloponnesian War fought from 431 to 404 B.C.E. Lendon devotes the majority of his clearly reasoned and elegantly written account to the logic of the conflict and the cultural assumptions and forces at work upon its leading participants, the Athenian and Spartan allegiances. He presents a provocative study on the primacy of recognition and rank in Classical Greek behavior, further supporting and expanding the general thesis of his earlier work on the subject.

*Song of Wrath* is chiefly concerned with the notions of honor and revenge and the unparalleled importance of such factors on the strategic decisions of Greek states. Lendon's argument radically departs from the political realism of Thucydides, the leading primary source for the war. Lendon instead emphasizes the amorphous conception of relative standing amongst various city-states in the Greek world and downplays military and political necessity. He suggests that both the Athenians and the Spartans abstained from a war of annihilation and instead chose limited engagements that best displayed their particular brand of martial excellence, either by sea or on land.

The guiding force behind Greek politics, Lendon argues, is a strict adherence to the principles of Homer's *Iliad*, wherein the wrath of a vengeful Achilles and the insulting behavior of Agamemnon drive the plot. Lendon postulates the same motivation on the part of Greek states, where their *timē*, or worth, is the overriding obsession compelling their actions and shaping their character. The author sees affronts to *timē* and the resulting *hybris* (analogous to "hubris" and stemming from inaction or reaction to perceived insults) as fueling a cycle of nearly ritualized proportional retaliation. Furthermore, Lendon ultimately attributes nearly every political action and strategic decision of the war to the conscious calculation of a state's relative standing in the Greek world. The logic of *timē* dictated the Spartan invasions of Attica, the Athenian raids on the Peloponnesian coast, and reciprocal assaults of both against the other's allies in Northwest Greece. In Lendon's analysis, the conflict was first and foremost a "war of symbols" (p. 171) fought by the Athenians to establish their equality with Sparta and Sparta's efforts to maintain their own hegemony over honor, ending only when both sides were willing to admit their parity in *timē*.

Although Lendon offers a plethora of evidence concerning the importance of rank, his insistence on reciprocity and prestige as the primary motives for strategic decisions and his rejection of Thucydides' power analysis may be unsatisfactory to some readers. Lendon's thesis revisits and expands his earlier work, *Soldiers and Ghosts*, on the importance of competitiveness and cultural forces on Greek military development. Although *Song of Wrath* contains some of the same ideas, it does present a much more in-depth case study

and a fuller exploration of fearsome competition and social distinction, providing a comprehensive view of these societal factors at work in a particular Greek conflict.

The addition of a number of maps and illustrations offers a welcome visual reference for readers, although the style of the maps may occasionally seem dated, mostly owing to their adaptation from a 1903 original. The chronology and glossary are an excellent resource for students and the brief note on ancient dating is a welcome explanation for individuals unfamiliar with scholarly conventions.

*Song of Wrath* is best suited to an advanced undergraduate course that focuses solely on the Peloponnesian War or Classical Greek conflict. Used with another volume that offers a realist narrative of the war and combined with Thucydides himself, this work could be an excellent tool in examining how radically differing conclusions can be derived from the same source material. A general course in Greek history might find *Song of Wrath* less appropriate for a central text, although it may act as a serviceable supplement for such endeavors. Lendon's thesis on the domination of *timē* and *hybris* is an exceptional primer on the impact and dominance of these concepts in ancient Greek culture. Furthermore, in just six pages, Lendon effectively outlines the current debate surrounding hoplite battle and his analogy with heavily armored riot police and crowd dynamics in Japan (pp. 307-313) is a brilliant and pertinent support in favor of the orthodox conception of massed hoplite tactics.

*University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

Ryan Horne

*"Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?"*: Teaching Historical Thinking in Grades 7-12, by Bruce Lesh. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2011. 230 pages. \$22.00, paper.

Veteran high school history teacher and author Bruce Lesh enriches existing work and research of proponents of historical thinking and historiography by proffering pragmatic and tangible classroom strategies centered on students' investigation of evidence and development of historical explanations. *"Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?"* opens with a predictable discussion on the purposes of history education, and promotion of the progressive history teacher's regular motivations: student-centered instruction, engagement, empowerment, and deeper historical understanding. Early on, Lesh explains that his approaches are driven by his personal pursuit of student engagement through effective questioning, which is sharply influenced by his significant classroom experience and exposure to prior works by "pioneers" in the historical thinking movement.

What makes Lesh's work unique is his smooth transition from theory into practice as he shares seven original and comprehensive lesson/unit examples of his strategies. Each example focuses on a particular historical event or era to introduce a strategy for facilitating a specific component of students' historical thinking development. Chapter 2 addresses the manners in which he introduces students to concepts of historical thinking, challenges he encounters, and how he carefully nurtures students' development of questioning skills. Chapter 3 focuses on students' critical evaluation of primary and secondary documents. Lesh empowers students to draw conclusions based on their exploration of historical text, subtext, and context, which reinforces their understanding of the subjectivity and bias evident in various sources. Chapter 4 provides means for engaging students in chronological understandings of historical events, while enabling them to recognize causal relationships among relevant examples of evidence. Chapter 5 presents examples

of strategic questions about historical evidence to reinforce the significance of presenting multiple perspectives. Chapter 6 addresses the importance of historiographic thinking and teaching students that historical understandings and interpretations change over time. In this chapter, Lesh demonstrates to students the means by which history is constructed and provides strategies for students to understand how the representations of historical events are manipulated. Chapter 7 focuses students' attention on historical significance of persons and events often omitted from history textbooks, thereby stressing the nature of history as bigger than any one iconic image or popular symbol. In the final chapter, Lesh presents means for introducing students to arguably the most significant of all historical thinking skills: empathy for those who came before us.

Throughout "*Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?*", Bruce Lesh advocates the facilitation of students' abilities to think as historians. His refreshingly comprehensive strategies speak directly to teachers as they encourage and enable students to question sources, recognize and account for bias, and move away from a "grand narrative" understanding of history. His global views of the purposes of history education, his passion for accomplishing such noble and inspiring goals, and his honest and reflective account of each lesson example (including student feedback and performance) make this book immediately relevant, particularly to novice and preservice teachers. "*Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?*" makes for worthy supplemental reading in a secondary social studies methods course. Preservice history teachers would do well to use Lesh's examples as archetypal models for their own historical thinking approaches, and methods instructors could use the aforementioned chapters to illustrate the advantages and potential challenges of infusing their lessons with historical thinking and historiography strategies. Additionally, inservice history teachers could use Lesh's wit, wisdom, and advice to refresh their approaches to engaging their students in historical thinking, encouraging their development of questioning skills, and facilitating their deeper understandings of history and historical phenomena.

*The University of Alabama*

Michael Lovorn

*Chinese Chicago: Race, Transnational Migration, and Community Since 1870*, by Huping Ling. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012. 316 pages. \$24.95, paper.

This book lives up to every bit of its title and subtitle. Huping Ling, Professor of History at Truman State University, traces the history of the Chinese community in Chicago, Illinois, from the arrival of the city's first Chinese residents to the present day. This is an ambitious task, but Ling has written a comprehensive study that is not only a history, but is a truly interdisciplinary work. Moreover, it is also a timely one, as its final chapter examines the transnational connections between the Chicago Chinese and their relationships with relatives and business contacts in the People's Republic of China and in other Asian countries. Students who may be familiar with the Chinatowns in large cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York will find this study of Chinese Chicago informative and frequently surprising. The story Ling tells is similar to the Chinatowns in other cities, but it is also unique in many ways.

The first Chinese immigrants showed up not long after the famous Chicago fire of 1871; they were a largely male group that included former gold seekers and transcontinental railroad workers. Faced with bigotry from those who believed them incapable of

assimilation, these Chinese pioneers gained a foothold in Chicago by starting businesses that did not compete with the white majority—restaurants, groceries, and laundries. They were also astute enough to avoid accusations of cheap labor competition with whites if they stayed away from the jobs that whites ordinarily took. From modest beginnings, the Chinese community grew slowly in Chicago, staying in a “Chinatown” neighborhood and preserving their own culture and heritage while trying to adapt and to deal with the society that surrounded them.

Ling provides a broader perspective in examining the federal government’s racist policy that excluded Chinese immigration to the United States from 1882 to 1943. However, loopholes in the law enabled Chinese merchants to return to China, to bring wives back to the United States, and to conduct business in both countries. The severe curtailment on the immigration of Chinese women impacted the Chicago Chinese community, as the ratio between men and women remained unbalanced over several generations. The lack of marriageable women compelled Chinese bachelors to patronize prostitutes. Married men left their wives in China to deal with family matters, taking concubines with them to America. Working long hours at low wages, Chinese men sought recreation with gambling and opium dens, contributing to stereotypes about Chinese that Ling addresses forthrightly.

Although largely isolated from mainstream Chicago social activity, Chinese formed social and mutual benefit societies to care for their own. Ling points out that the Tongs, though stereotyped as criminal organizations, provided assistance to Chinese seeking to open businesses and defended their interests. Chicago Chinese operated Chinese language schools, published newspapers, and cultivated contacts with white politicians and businesses. Compelled to live in crowded and substandard housing, Chicago Chinese made the best of their situation through hard work and strongly supporting education for their children.

Attitudes toward Chinese changed significantly after World War II, with China having been an ally and American-born Chinese serving in the war. Economic conditions improved, and reform of the immigration laws in 1965 prompted a large increase in Chinese immigration to America. From fewer than 10,000 in 1970, the Chinese in Chicago numbered more than 43,000 by 2009. Although the traditional occupations of laundries, groceries, and restaurants continue in Chicago, Chinese Americans are deeply involved in such professions as medicine, engineering, and education.

Teachers, college students, and possibly high school students will find Ling’s book not only invaluable for its broad perspective, but also for her thoroughness of research. She presents numerous capsule biographies to show the human interest side of Chinese Chicago. Ling also provides an important evaluation of the scholarship on Chicago Chinese from the studies done during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, distinguishing between “insider” and “outsider” views of the Chicago Chinese community. The bibliography, divided between Chinese- and English-language sources, offers opportunities for anyone wishing to delve further into the remarkable history of Chinese Chicago.

*Los Angeles Valley College*

Abraham Hoffman

*Place of Encounter: Time, Place, and Connectivity in World History, Volume I: To 1600*, edited by Aran MacKinnon and Elaine MacKinnon. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012. 250 pages. \$38.00, paper. *Place of Encounter: Time,*

*Place, and Connectivity in World History, Volume II: Since 1500*, edited by Aran MacKinnon and Elaine MacKinnon. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012. 270 pages. \$38.00, paper.

A recurring complaint about history curriculum and teaching is that they are too often dominated by chronological content coverage without broader thematic or geographical connections. The new two-volume *Places of Encounter*, edited by University of West Georgia historians Aran and Elaine MacKinnon, with chapters from over two dozen U.S. and international scholars, is an intriguing and ambitious alternative that takes advantage of “new approaches in environmental and place-based history” (p. xxvi). The result is a collection of up-to-date accounts of select historic locations and their broader connections across space and time that are usually quite interesting individually, but that collectively only partly constitute a comprehensive study of global historical causation.

In contrast to the broad survey of most history textbooks, *Places of Encounter* offers a picture of the past that is “like a satellite map of the world at night: as a particular place becomes important, it glows and then fades as another location takes preeminence...history not as a simple sequential process but rather a dynamic, multitextured combination of overlapping eras” (p. xxiv). The two volumes are “organized around three main principles: change over time, connectivity, and the recurrence of certain themes throughout human history” (p. xxiii). To illustrate change over time, the chapters are presented in roughly chronological order. To demonstrate connectivity, each chapter focuses on an individual location as part of a global nexus linked through interactions of environment, movement, trade, empire, and technology. To emphasize recurring thematic elements, the chapters are keyed to particular themes like “migration (where and why people moved around the continent or globe); class, race, ethnicity, and gender (how humans form social and economic identities); urbanization and colonialism (how they organized themselves spatially and politically); and technology, trade, and commerce (what they built and the values they placed on those things)” (p. xxiv).

All chapters follow a cogent, uniform pattern. A place and its global-connection theme are identified and conversationally introduced in a personal prologue. Next is the main narrative of the historical context of the place and time. This is followed by “Global Encounters and Connections” tying the place/time into the wider world and subsequent historical eras. Each chapter concludes with a few excerpted primary documents (most of which are engaging, though some like Hammurabi’s Code employ awkward old translations) and thematic questions about the place and era. Though print-heavy, every chapter is illustrated by at least one or two helpful maps.

History educators will not be surprised by many of the places selected for chapters: Athens, 900 BCE–324 CE (volume I, chapter 4); Constantinople/Istanbul, 324–1500 (I, 7); Mecca, 400–1500 (I, 8); Venice, 1350–1550 (I, 12); Potosí, 1545–1600s (I, 13); Nagasaki, 1571–1945 (II, 3); London, 1660–1851 (II, 4); Paris, 1700s (II, 6); Calcutta, 1700–1840 (II, 7); St. Petersburg, 1890–1918 (II, 11); Berlin, 1945–1991 (II, 13). However, readers may be surprised by which places are not selected to have chapters. Ancient Egypt receives but scant mention in the chapter on Babylon, 3700–539 BCE (I, 2). Ancient Rome is folded in to the chapter on Carthage, 800 BCE–700 CE (I, 6). Alexandria and Jerusalem are not featured, and no North American place has a chapter besides New York, 1911–2011 (II, 14). Hadar and Makapansgat, hotspots for hominid evolutionary fossils in Africa, have their own chapters (I, 1 and 2) that, while interesting on their own merit, relate more to prehistoric anthropology than the history of human culture and society. Gallipoli, 1915 (II, 10) is chosen as the representative place for the era of the First World War. No chapter specifically focuses on the era of the Second World War.

On the whole, the chapters are well written and richly detailed in current archaeological and historical research. A small but mostly recent list of reference readings is provided at the end of every chapter. A real strength of these volumes is how they offer in-depth study of so many truly consequential places in world history, with particular emphasis on the geographic, economic, and cultural connections that made them so important to wider global developments. Instructors with flexible course design should appreciate the “modular” chapter arrangement: because chapters are not directly sequential and encompass wide, overlapping time ranges, they can be deployed in virtually any preferred order. The only serious downside of the selective, place-based approach is reduced emphasis on comprehensive historical causation and why the world turned out the way that it did. These volumes are not the place to turn for explanation of, for example, how European nation-states began to emerge in the late medieval period or why the Second World War occurred and the Axis Powers were defeated.

The target audience for *Places of Encounter* appears to be collegiate history classes. While instructors of introductory world history survey courses may find the limited breadth of content coverage problematic, the place-based focus and modular chapter structure make these textbooks valuable for courses beyond the introductory survey. At the high-school level, they could be appropriate for Advanced Placement or Gifted and Talented classes (as they are above the typical reading level of upper-secondary grades). High school teachers would find these volumes very useful background reading to strengthen and update their content knowledge about key places in world history. In conclusion, *Places of Encounter* is an innovative world-history textbook that offers a geographically thematic, depth-based alternative to the sequential, broad-coverage survey.

*The Pennsylvania State University*

Scott Alan Metzger

*Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*, by Erik S. McDuffie. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 311 pages. \$23.95, paper.

When studying issues of race and class in the first half of the twentieth century, most students associate the “Old Left” with Sacco and Vanzetti or McCarthyism—not the 1928 Black Belt Thesis or “Queen Mother” Moore. Erik McDuffie sheds new light on the growth of American Communism from the 1920s to the 1950s by reaching out to an often overlooked, but substantially affected group within the movement—African American women. Without delay, McDuffie hooks the reader on the first page with a description of “flying squads” of black women and children who participated in a Harlem protest march against the prices of food at the height of the Great Depression. Ultimately, the march, which confronted white storeowners about the high prices and low quality of meat, resulted in fifty stores reducing food prices by twenty-five percent. It was a small victory for the movement, but a significant moment for organizer Bonita Williams. McDuffie reveals many such vignettes to show the importance of the communist movement, particularly on local levels, and he focuses on the role of black feminism as a subtle yet significant force within the “Old Left.”

Many historians are familiar with the life and work of black communist and feminist leaders such as Grace Campbell and Claudia Jones, but McDuffie widens his scope of inquiry to include women’s collective activism during this crucial socio-political period.

McDuffie argues that the “oppositional consciousness” of black feminists who joined the communist movement represented a fluid but collective identity as wives, mothers, sisters, community leaders, and American women over a fifty-year period. These women understood gender, race, and class in “intersectional terms and as interlocking systems of oppression” (p. 5). In other words, the role of African American women remained vital to the communist movement even if the movement did not embrace the plight of black women as part of its manifesto.

In the first half of the twentieth century, African American women had the most to gain from class warfare and civil rights. However, many female leaders of the initial black feminist movement found that their greatest hope for change lie within the larger apparatuses of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) or the Socialist Party of America (SPA). These groups largely relegated both blacks and women to the political sidelines, focusing more intently on white male workers. McDuffie recurrently prompts the reader to consider the triple oppression these women faced as poor, black, and female. And yet, Williana Jones Burroughs, Maude White, Esther Cooper, and others made their voices heard through their persistence and participation, despite the relatively low number of “Sojourner” activists. Few African American women held leadership positions in male-dominated organizations during this period, but they remained extremely active. Although concentrated primarily in Harlem, black feminists continued to organize, meet, march, petition, and protest in urban areas across the nation.

The introduction thoroughly lays out the book’s purpose, historiography, sources, and temporal parameters. Instead of enticing undergraduate or graduate readers to continue reading, the introduction’s comprehensive nature and twenty-four-page length may have the opposite effect. Once the reader reaches the content chapters, McDuffie’s organization is well-defined and follows a chronological course. Chapter one focuses on black women who were pioneers as activists and radicals, and highlights Harlem as the home base of a more secular brand of racial uplift and empowerment. Chapters two and three examine a new generation of African American feminists, who joined the movement in the 1930s, and engaged in a transnational approach to American communism through travel to the Soviet Union, Europe, and Africa. Upon their return, black women applied lessons learned from their experiences abroad to volatile situations at home, as their opposition toward “capitalism, imperialism, national oppression, poverty, [and] women’s subjugation” grew more virulent (p. 71). The final three chapters deal with the communist and black feminist reactions to fascism, colonialism, Jim Crow, and the Cold War. McDuffie highlights the importance of the Cold War as a turning point for black left feminism as McCarthyism crushed much of the momentum gained in the 1930s and 1940s. The 1950s further marginalized the movement’s female members; Claudia Jones was in fact deported from the United States in 1955. Many, such as “Queen Mother” Moore, severed ties with the communist party, but continued to work with other black radical groups.

This book is important not only because of the successes of the movement or group, but also because McDuffie explains why the black feminist movement was not more effective. Much like Populism in the late nineteenth century, racism (and sexism) prevented the socialist/communist movement from gaining greater strength in the United States. Yet, as McDuffie argues, African American women activists during this early period laid the groundwork for later movements involving civil rights and racial empowerment in the 1960s and 1970s.

*A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Vol. 1: The Artisanal Era, 1897-1941*, by Hamid Naficy. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 456 pages. \$29.95, paper. *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Vol. 2: The Industrializing Years, 1941-1978*, by Hamid Naficy. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 560 pages. \$29.95, paper.

These two volumes are part of a four-volume magnum opus work of the well-known film and social historian, Hamid Naficy. Dr. Naficy is the Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication in the Department of Radio/Television/Film at Northwestern University. Each volume is chronologically arranged, as the subtitles indicate. The first volume covers the end of the Qajar dynasty to the first Pahlavi Shah and the second covers the second Pahlavi period to the fall of this last Shah. Within these two volumes, the author covers the progression from artisanal to commercial film production in Iran. Naficy sees the political regime changes presented in each of the volumes as transformative for film (p. 10), clearly defining this body of work as sociopolitical and not just a social history.

The first volume has a long personal preface (pp. xxix-lxv). The preface is written in the first person and includes family discussion, drawings made in the author's youth, frustrations and experiments with building the equipment of photography and projection as a young man, and the early bootlegging of films. Drawing on his experiences in the 1950s and early 1960s in Iran, the author comments, "We were becoming modern through our personal syncretism, much as the nation was becoming modern through state-sanctioned syncretic Westernization" (p. xl). The author indicates the topical coverage and intellectual viewpoint, stating that in this book, "films are not regarded as autonomous art objects or just commercial products but as works resulting from complex social, political, industrial, cultural, and authorial processes of signification, production, consumption, and negotiation that are individual and collective as well as national and transnational" (p. lii). He adds that the book "engages film texts, film authors, and film history and theory, but in the context of the microphysics of both national cinema and modernity" (p. 2).

Film making and film projection in Iran are shown to be highly problematic at various times as well as sources of conflict for both religious and political leaders, due in particular to the role of the West—Russia, France, England, and, later, the United States—and of the varying definitions of modernity in Iran. Naficy describes, "The safety derived from anonymity turned the movie houses into sites both for resisting the state's official politics, such as refusing to stand up for the national anthem film containing images of the Shah, and for violating cultural and religious taboos against moviegoing" (p. xlvi).

Some of the recurrent themes covered throughout the two volumes are: Islam, modernity, orientalism, nationalism, the role of women as defined through or by film, "syncretic westernization," uses of film by foreign powers in Iran to project their viewpoints during the Cold War, the role of ethnoreligious minorities and foreign émigrés in the film and theatre industry in Iran, "interstitial self-fashioning," censorship, Christian missionaries in Iran and their use of film, epistemic violence, changing movie genres and acting styles, and varying projection sites and their social roles.

This reviewer strongly recommends this work for all those interested in the social or political history of Iran over the past 150 years. The volumes would be difficult for readers without a foundational knowledge of the political history of modern Iran. The works are beyond the reach of most high school and undergraduate history students. However, for those with a real curiosity about modern Iran and about film in modern Iran, there is no better secondary source. The depth and breadth of research for these volumes is laudable. Each volume has an extensive and volume-specific bibliography. The bibliographies

and endnotes show secondary source citations in both Farsi and English as well as other European languages. Numerous oral interviews and personal communications are cited, occurring over decades in time, and archival research was done in North America, Europe, and Iran. There are both parenthetical source citations and extensive endnotes. Each of the endnotes, almost without exception, provides more food for thought on the various issues covered in the main text. Each chapter has photographic illustrations from the period under discussion. The author is very adept at pointing out the intersect between both social and political changes in Iran over the periods covered and media technology and exhibition—both still photography and film.

These volumes are not a quick read. This is not because of their length or the density of the prose, because the writing is quite clear and sometimes quite engaging. However, Dr. Naficy brings out so many points of comparison and consideration in this reader's—and probably any reader's—intellectual and cultural dictionary, that she was forced to stop, ponder, go back and read again, and then continue. Reading these volumes provides a continual enriching experience as there is always something not caught on the first read. Kudos to Hamid Naficy.

*Mississippi Valley State University*

Kathryn Green

*A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution*, by Jeremy D. Popkin. Viewpoints/Puntos de Vista series. Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 212 pages. \$89.95, cloth. \$24.95, paper.

Jeremy Popkin has thoroughly mined the Haitian, U.S., and European secondary literature to provide an engaging overview of the Haitian Revolution suitable for upper-division undergraduate courses. Unlike most survey treatments, Popkin explores the global significance of the revolution and contextualizes the events of 1791-1804 by centering Haiti within the larger Atlantic world. The work is also unique in that it extends beyond the 1804 declaration of independence to the 1843 overthrow of Jean-Pierre Boyer, which the author views as “the last direct confrontation between the democratic and elitist currents coming out of the revolutionary period” (p. 6). Popkin’s larger argument, however, is one of definition. While the Haitian Revolution bears little resemblance to French and American models, he argues convincingly that its effects were revolutionary and that it “is central to the understanding of the process in which our modern definitions of liberty and equality emerged in the decades around 1800” (p. 166).

The bulk of the text proceeds chronologically and moves deftly between France and Haiti as the author illustrates how the evolving French Revolution impacted colonial society. Popkin’s opening chapter provides a description of Haiti’s slave society in the years leading up to the slave insurrection of 1791, focusing on the complex relations between whites, free blacks, and slaves. There follows a detailed examination of the slave revolt in the North Province—led by Boukman Dutty, Jean-François Papillon, and Toussaint Louverture—and the contemporaneous uprising of free blacks in the West—headed by the likes of André Rigaud and Jean-Paul Boyer. Neither set of leaders understood their movements as primarily directed against slavery as such. As Popkin points out, the former group “resorted to selling black prisoners of war and women and children who could not participate in the army to the Spanish” in order to pay for supplies (p. 49). The latter often benefitted from slavery and sought only to claim the political rights granted to them by the metropole in the “Rewball Amendment” of May 1791.

Given the array of antagonistic leaders that arose from the divisions of the initial movements in the North and West, Popkin's study is particularly successful in clearly and concisely presenting the complexity of the revolution for a lay audience. As is to be expected, the author dwells on the contradictions of Louverture, the former slave owner and eventual dictator who hoped to "limit the violence of the uprising" and reach a lasting peace with whites while forcibly maintaining the island's plantation economy over the objections of freed slaves (p. 44). Yet, following Robert Louis Stein, Popkin also cedes a central role to Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, the civil commissioner who issued the emancipation decree in August 1793. Drawing selectively on primary sources gleaned from decades of research, he provides detailed portrayals that should capture students' interest.

The final chapters recount Napoleon's failed attempt to reassert metropolitan control in 1802 and the continuing struggle to unify the island after the promulgation of Jean-Jacques Dessalines' 1805 constitution. Despite independence, "not until the middle of the nineteenth century was it clear what the lasting characteristics of Haitian society and politics would look like" (p. 142). After Dessalines' assassination, the fledgling nation was split between Henry Christophe's government in the North and Alexandre Pétion's in the South. Popkin covers the eventual unification of the country under Jean-Pierre Boyer, the occupation of Santo Domingo, and the disastrous 1825 indemnity agreement with France. Here, too, he surveys the impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Atlantic world, stressing its ambiguous effects on slavery and European colonialism. Unfortunately this final chapter, which spans some forty years of Haitian history, is necessarily short on detail. For example, the lengthy occupation of Santo Domingo, the legacy of which continues to impact relations between the nations of Hispaniola, merits only a few sentences.

Nevertheless, this volume succeeds admirably in "providing students and general readers with a concise overview of the generally accepted historical facts about the Haitian Revolution" (p. 8). Moreover, Popkin provides a detailed historiographical essay that will be of interest to graduate students and more seasoned scholars—especially those interested in consulting the Haitian literature. Though slender, Popkin's survey provides a nuanced recounting of the Haitian Revolution and its global legacy. It could be assigned in upper-division courses in Caribbean History and the African Diaspora and will prove valuable to instructors compiling lectures for World History and Western Civilization surveys.

Texas A&M University

Micah Wright

*Real Folks: Race and Genre in the Great Depression*, by Sonnet Retman. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 336 pages. \$24.95, paper.

In this provocative book, Sonnet Retman, Associate Professor of African American Studies at the University of Washington, challenges the conventional wisdom regarding cultural representations of the people or folk in the 1930s. Traditional readings of literature, film, photography, and music during the depression era stress the documentary approach to authentic representation of the folk. Retman, however, argues that the focus upon social realism obscures the fact that New Deal cultural representations supported the state and capitalism by making the folk commercial objects with an emphasis upon "whiteness," which discouraged an authentic interracial working-class coalition.

Retman employs the Federal Writers' Project's *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* to develop her assessment of the New Deal's approach to cultural representation. Although the Florida guidebook and others in the series enjoyed collective authorship, Retman argues that the book is essentially written for middle-class white readers and tourists

who own automobiles and could visit the authentic folk—African Americans, Seminoles, and “Crackers”—as quaint relics of the past surpassed by modernism reflected in capitalism, the nation state, and a culture of whiteness. In Retman’s study, the Florida guidebook is representative of the 1930s documentary art found in the photographs of the Farm Security Administration and the writings of such proletariat authors as John Steinbeck. Retman asserts, “a liberal politics of empathy and its solution of personal charity potentially prevents a more progressive, collective response to the systematic poverty of the Depression and the economic injustices of racial capitalism” (p. 222). Rather than embracing New Deal cultural icons, Retman finds more promise in the Popular Front culture of the late 1930s and early 1940s, which was founded upon the vision of an interracial populism.

To support her criticism of the hegemonic New Deal state, Retman concentrates upon sources that are usually overlooked in 1930s cultural studies. For her analysis, Retman selects what she considers to be texts that are modernist burlesque and unmask the assumptions of popular narrative through political satire. The rather eclectic texts selected by Retman are African-American journalist George Schuyler’s novel, *Black No More* (1931); Hollywood screenwriter Nathaniel West’s novel, *A Cool Million* (1934); novelist and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston’s collection of African-American folktales, *Mules and Men* (1935); and the Preston Sturges film, *Sullivan’s Travels* (1941).

In Schuyler’s *Black No More*, the dominant whiteness of American culture is satirized when an invention turns black people white, and the black protagonist Max Disher employs a mask of whiteness to infiltrate a Klan-like organization and gain the white woman he desired. In this satire, consumption turns black people white and bestows full citizenship upon them. Modernist burlesque is also used by West in his little known novel *A Cool Million*. The protagonist Lemuel Pitkin is literally torn apart in his futile pursuit of the mythic American Dream, while his love interest Betty becomes an object of capitalist exploitation. Returning to her native Florida, Hurston’s *Mules and Men* suggests a diverse African-American culture resistant of capitalist commodification or the encyclopedic accounts of the guidebooks. *Sullivan’s Travels* is usually interpreted as Sturges’s effort to poke some fun at more serious directors who belittled his comic films. Protagonist Sullivan (played by Joel McCrea) finally learns that his comedy films brought laughter and relief to the folk. Retman challenges this reading, asserting that the almost manic laughter of the interracial audience of the chain gang and black church members suggests a more subversive interpretation of New Deal cultural efforts at commodification and unification. In conclusion, Retman argues that inauthentic depictions of the folk continue to play a prominent role in American culture through examination of the 2000 film *O Brother, Where Art Thou* by the Coen Brothers.

Retman’s book is a fascinating study that encourages a re-examination of depression-era culture. Unfortunately, the grounding of Retman’s work in the jargon and vocabulary of cultural studies will make the book almost inaccessible to general reader and most history students in the schools or even at the undergraduate level. Nevertheless, Retman introduces some non-traditional texts that history teachers might incorporate into the classroom to spark debate and critical thinking. Reading Retman’s book certainly convinces the reader that one must be discerning when examining representations of the people. Retman, however, sometimes seems to overstate her case. For example, it is difficult to perceive a figure such as Woody Guthrie as inauthentic—and Retman does not really engage with music culture in this volume. Certainly, Guthrie did lend his support to New Deal public power with the Bonneville Power Administration, but he walked away from lucrative radio deals in New York City that would have limited his freedom of expression. Retman’s interpretation of 1930s depiction of the folk often appears too encompassing, but nevertheless, *Real Folks* is a valuable contribution to cultural studies of the depression era.

*Hitler: Beyond Evil and Tyranny*, by R. H. S. Stolfi. New York: Prometheus Books, 2011. 520 pages. \$27.00, cloth.

R. H. S. Stolfi begins his biography with the conceit that the “time has come for some hero to save the world of Hitler interpretation” (p. 34) because even “after half a century no biographer or historian has put together an adequate interpretation of Adolf Hitler” (p. 9). Stolfi makes this mission his own, claiming to accomplish it through a re-interpretation of the works of the most-respected Hitler biographers, “the great biographers” (Alan Bullock, Werner Maser, Joachim Fest, John Toland, and Ian Kershaw). He accuses them of “arrogant passion” in interpreting Hitler as banal and evil (p. 239), and claims that they seriously underestimate Hitler’s greatness and genius, his heroic vision, and his messianic qualities. Stolfi argues that these biographers denigrate Hitler out of fear of being labeled apologists, and they incorrectly disparage Hitler as an adroit egomaniac and pathological demagogue, when instead, he asserts, Hitler should be more accurately understood as a messiah and prophet, an infallible leader and savior. Stolfi’s stated goal is to present a counterbalancing portrait of the real Hitler and his achievements, but in fact, he produces precisely the admiring Hitler apology that he accuses more thorough and scholarly biographers of seeking to avoid.

Stolfi’s method consists of a simplistic and tediously repeated rendition of the purported “conventional wisdom” of the “great biographers” for each topic under consideration, followed by his assertion that the biographers are incorrect (because of their predisposition to see only evil in Hitler). He does not propose to adjudicate between competing conceptions, but rather presents his own *opinion*, without adequate substantiation, as if it were a well-researched *re-interpretation*. Stolfi asserts, for example, that Hitler really was an excellent painter, a potentially brilliant architect, and a knowledgeable art historian; that his disastrous decision to invade the Soviet Union was both correct and necessary; that he was a strategic genius in conducting World War II; and that, far from being an international aggressor, Hitler in fact only responded to the iniquities forced on him by the Allies in order to rescue Germany from its mortal enemies. In portraying Hitler’s actual aggression, Stolfi describes him as showing “a stunning sense of the heroic” (p. 335) and as “revealing himself as a towering mystic” (p. 362). The book offers no evidence of complex analysis, supporting argumentation, or thorough investigation of the substantial body of existing research on Hitler. Nor does it pose a fresh set of questions or even answers (Stolfi’s primary interpretative claim that Hitler was a kind of religious prophet already has been much discussed in other more academic Hitler biographies). Having ruled out the adequacy of the work of the “great biographers,” Stolfi uncritically and heavily relies on Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (accepting it as factual truthfulness), in addition to accepting at face value the book of August Kubizek (Hitler’s impressionable best friend in his Vienna period) and the statements of other Nazi cronies. He argues that Hitler’s own words and those of his followers are a better guide to who Hitler actually was (p. 165). Not surprisingly, then, Stolfi concludes that Hitler was a kind of “precocious genius,” and that “what would have been a brilliant thought to another statesman took on the cast of revelation applicable to all of Europe with Hitler” (p. 46).

The deficiencies, and true nature, of Stolfi’s work are most jarringly clear in his treatment of Hitler’s anti-Semitism. Contrary to all evidence, he argues that Hitler had a “thoughtful and complex style of analysis” of the Jewish question in *Mein Kampf* (p. 103), that he “rationally and calmly pictured the German Jews” (p. 398), and that he “came to quite objective conclusions about the menace of world Jewry” (p. 270). Stolfi further claims that Hitler “received the inspired insight” that the Jews had “created Marxism which had become its political combat arm” (p. 270), that Hitler understood the “ominous objective reality”

that “there could be no such thing as a German Jew” (p. 272), and, absurdly, that “Nazism would bear a striking resemblance to Judaism with its absolute exclusivity” because “only ethnic Germans...could practice Nazism as only ethnic Jews could genuinely practice Judaism” (p. 269). Stolfi calls the intensity of Hitler’s anti-Semitism “awe inspiring” (p. 161) and complains that his biographers have “underestimated the historical sweep and astounding coherence in Hitler’s anti-Semitism” (p. 270). His chronological account conveniently ends in 1939 so that he does not have to deal with the death and destruction caused by Hitler in the Holocaust.

While a broad range of perspectives is always important in historical study, I can’t imagine that any legitimate teacher would welcome this Hitler hagiography in the classroom.

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*Louis Armstrong: The Soundtrack of the American Experience*, by David Stricklin. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2010. 182 pages. \$26.00, cloth.

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois predicted that the “color line,” or race relations, would dominate the twentieth century in the United States. Just two years earlier, jazz musician Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans—in David Stricklin’s concise biography, *Louis Armstrong: The Soundtrack of the American Experience*, Armstrong’s fascinating life provides the musical context for race and American culture during much of the century. While Stricklin is far from the first biographer to declare the musician a genius or to stress his remarkable rise from the poverty and crime of New Orleans, Stricklin’s account emphasizes how Armstrong’s accomplishments were in part a product of an especially fruitful transitional period in American music, culture, and race relations in the early twentieth century. The result was that American music became, in the author’s words, the “preeminent force in the world’s popular culture” (p. 3).

When Armstrong picked up the coronet as a boy, there was no such thing as jazz, and his formative musical experiences involved classical music, marches, minstrel music, ragtime, and the sentimental songs of the nineteenth century. Armstrong’s willingness to experiment with and even embrace different styles of music remained with him his entire life, as his later years involved creative, yet controversial, forays into modern jazz, rhythm and blues, and even the popular music of both Broadway and rock and roll. He lived until 1971 and, according to Stricklin, seemed to be present at virtually all the seminal moments in the creation of modern American culture as evidenced by his role in the evolution of radio, musical recordings, film, theater, and eventually television.

Teachers and students of American history will be especially interested in how Stricklin adroitly weaves Armstrong’s life and the history of modern American music within the larger historical context of modern America. Born amid the rigid racial hierarchy of the Jim Crow South, Armstrong established himself as a talented musician in New Orleans only to eventually participate in the Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities such as Chicago and New York City. He honed his professional skills as a live performer in the new urban musical culture, largely controlled by organized crime, of the 1920s. Later, Armstrong struggled amid the challenges of being a traveling black musician often dependent on white audiences during the Great Depression and World War II. As American officials competed with the Soviets for the hearts and minds of less-developed nations during the Cold War, Armstrong toured Africa on behalf of the federal government

and performed in front of hundreds of thousands of Africans eager to embrace African Americans and their culture as a reflection of their efforts to resist decades of European colonialism. In 1957, his interest in touring as an American cultural ambassador waned when Armstrong openly criticized the federal government's lack of support for the African American civil rights movement.

While Stricklin's account is accessible to different levels of readers, the biography is based solely on published sources with little documentation. His use of direct quotes, a few of which are from Armstrong himself, originate in older secondary sources and any sense of historical debate over the long career of Armstrong comes from competing interpretations of the musical icon's earlier biographies. The result is a sweeping and ambitious biography that lacks the intriguing voices of Armstrong and his contemporaries or the use of primary sources so important to establishing a rich historical context. The irony is that the often controversial artist who entertained so many and shaped the contours of American music and culture remains elusive and somewhat silenced.

However, Stricklin's readable narrative is convincing as to the historical importance of Armstrong's life. In part, this stems not just from his long and eventful career, but also from the fact that Armstrong as an artist always thrived on the cultural margins between so-called pure jazz and other forms of American culture. The fact that he was criticized by different groups of Americans such as white music critics, black musicians, racist whites, and even moderate blacks throughout his life makes the trajectory of Armstrong's career and his artistic and political decisions especially valuable to historians. Of course, he was also adored, and in chronicling the tension between Armstrong's challenges and accomplishments, Stricklin helps students of history better understand the evolution of American music and the complexity of race, class, and art within modern American culture.

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