

## Reviews

*Racially Writing the Republic: Racists, Race Rebels, and Transformations of American Identity*, edited by Bruce Baum and Duchess Harris. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 340 pages. \$84.95, cloth. \$23.95, paper.

In this collection of fourteen essays, editors Bruce Baum and Duchess Harris seek to show how America's ideals "can be realized only by racially rewriting the republic—that is, by fully dismantling its racially exclusionary character." They "are committed to exposing the false neutrality of a racially white America" and to making "visible the various ways in which exclusionary racialized power has been deployed in the construction of American identity, freedom, and citizenship" (p. 5). The editors also want to merge their "respective academic disciplines: political theory and American studies" (p. 4). Not that long ago, political theory was a part of the American studies approach, and some of the volume's essays fit comfortably in what was once mainstream American studies—for example, Gary Gerstle's excellent essay on Theodore Roosevelt, in which he explores the tension between Roosevelt's commitment to civic and racial nationalism. Other essays are influenced by more recent literary and critical race theory, and a few, such as Catherine A. Holland's on Abraham Lincoln that ends imagining him as a black man, display a postmodern playfulness.

All of the essays focus—again, like earlier work in American studies—on public intellectuals and their writings. The public intellectuals discussed include "canonical, white, and generally racist American thinkers" and "a set of race rebels who improvised audaciously on the salutary parts of the American dream while vigorously contesting its oppressive manifestations" (p. 5). Seeking to "go beyond the narrow black/white model of reading the racialization of America" (p. 9), the editors include essays that explore other ways white Americans defined themselves by race and that discuss "race rebels" from other ethnic traditions.

Along with those on Roosevelt and Lincoln, five more essays examine "canonical thinkers." John Kuo Wei Tchen explores how George Washington and early American elites defined their identity in part by their use of Chinese porcelain. Baum and Harris look at Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, bring in Strom Thurmond's relations with Essie Mae Washington, and explore how the descendants of Hemings and Washington as well as other "black-identified Americans" have a "possessive investment... in their white lineage" (p. 57). Laura Janara, through an analysis of the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Baumont, argues that European Americans initially viewed Indians as bothers, but by the 1830s, treated them as "othered 'red blacks,'" and that whites, because of the

fear of losing their own place in society, held “blacks at an unbridgeable distance” (p. 77). Through an analysis of the attitudes of Samuel Gompers, Gwendolyn Mink reveals the role of anti-Chinese racism in unions’ success in organizing and in their alliance with the Democratic Party. Dorothy Roberts shows how an “exclusionary understanding of citizenship and reproductive freedom” (p. 211) influenced Margaret Sanger.

The essays on race rebels include four on African Americans. Patricia A. Schechter analyzes Ida B. Wells-Barnett’s autobiography to explain the roots of her activism. Joel Olson concludes that, toward the end of his life, W. E. B. DuBois conceived of race as a social construction and thought it rooted in power relationships. Ben Keppel explores playwright Lorraine Hansberry’s unsuccessful drama *Sidney Brustein’s Window*, and Bruce Baum finds in James Baldwin’s writing on the “white problem” (p. 273) Baldwin’s hope for reenvisioning America. The remaining essays focus on “race rebels” from other ethnic traditions. Jerry Thompson recounts Juan Nepomuceno Cortina’s violence in Texas in 1859-1860, which “started as a personal feud but evolved into a struggle against Anglo-American racial nationalism and expansionism” (p. 82). Cari M. Carpenter offers Sarah Winnemucca’s *Life Among the Piutes* “as an alternative origin story of the United States” (p. 112) and Allan Punzalan Isaac analyzes Carlos Bulosan’s *America Is In the Heart* as a means of understanding Filipino immigrants’ complex response to American society.

In the conclusion to *Racially Writing the Republic*, George Lipsitz reiterates the importance of racism in American identity and then chronicles how, over the last half century, white America undermined the ideals set forth in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The essays, though, cover the years from the founding of the republic in the 1770s to 1965, when racial and ethnic hierarchies did not disappear, but at least came under new challenge. The editors’ periodization makes sense, but it may discourage the book’s use as a supplemental reading text in American history survey courses, usually divided at the Civil War or Reconstruction. Moreover, the essays may be too complex for most students in such classes. The collection would be more appropriate for advanced classes in race or race relations. Teachers of both types of courses, though, will benefit from reading its essays.

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Gaines M. Foster

*History: Core Elements for Teaching and Learning*, by Robert Blackey. Rockville, MD: Borgo Press, 2011. 254 pages. \$15.99, cloth.

In the eleventh year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the field of history education was populated by rigorous studies. The research has identified the skills historians use to engage in their evidence-based and interpretive discipline; beliefs and misconceptions students develop about the nature of history; teacher beliefs about the nature and purpose of history and how these influence their teaching methods; and that students’ socio-cultural identities and contexts influence how they learn. This realm of inquiry has gained momentum since the late 1980s and created awareness that if we want to teach history with disciplinary integrity, we must engage students in interpretive textual analysis. It is a principle, however, that runs upstream against the lecture- and textbook-centered classroom, and what we know about effective history teaching does not yet influence actual K-12 or post-secondary classroom practice on a wide scale. How-to books and articles that provide teaching strategies informed by the history education research are among the essential tools for closing this gap between research and practice. Such resources are few but increasing in number.

Professor Blackey's book, unfortunately, is not part of this tradition and is limited in significant ways by the author's disdain for history education research. A compilation of previously published essays, it would be a somewhat enlightened, folksy collection of tips on how to lecture, how to help students write better, how to construct essay test questions, and how World History AP test questions evolved over time, were it presented as just that—random tips from a bygone era. Instead, it is subtitled *Core Elements for Teaching and Learning* and is introduced as a “practical” alternative to “education theory” (p. 11). Because it promotes only the lecture method and is intentionally uninformed by the collective research on history teaching and learning, it is egregiously mistitled. In the future, it will hopefully be a curious artifact of 2011, when some members of the history profession still expressed contempt for and cultivated ignorance of the compelling research on teaching and learning in their discipline. Powerful studies on history education begin with a definition of history and its components. By making these elements explicit, we can develop classroom activities to engage students in learning them. If we do not define the skills involved in doing history, we tie our hands behind our backs and are left trying to teach something we can define only as I'll-know-it-when-I-see-it. Professor Blackey is part of this tradition; he makes some excellent general suggestions in his book, such as modeling source analysis by thinking aloud, but he offers no concrete steps to systematically teach students a set of skills for analyzing sources themselves, presumably because he is not familiar with the research that has identified the skills and/or is unfamiliar with existing innovative ways to teach them. Similarly, he encourages the use of historic images and lauds their inclusion in textbooks, but he fails to raise a red-flag warning against using historic images as simple, unsourced illustrations, and again he does not provide a system for teaching students how to effectively analyze historic images.

This book exudes a warmth that makes me suspect I would greatly enjoy the author's lectures. The book's off-the-cuff, rambling style is, unfortunately, emblematic of an approach to teaching history that lacks intentional connection between the skills of the discipline and the methods of instruction. Many of us who persisted in history into graduate school learned the analytic skills of the discipline by osmosis, much like blind people feeling an elephant, and we often teach the same way, leaving our own students to randomly develop skills and then practice interpreting texts. In contrast, how-to books that are emerging from the realm of history education research are the antithesis of the blind-person-and-elephant model. They intellectually challenge and assist readers to design lessons that engage students in systematically developing historical thinking skills. For all who are working to wrest history from the lecture hall and omniscient textbook, a book on history teaching and learning that promotes only the lecture has no place on a shelf of essential texts.

*bringinghistoryhome.org*

Elise Fillpot

*Critical Civic Literacy: A Reader*, edited by Joseph L. DeVitis. New York: Peter Lang, 2011. 522 pages. \$54.95, cloth.

There are several definitions of “critical civic literacy” in this sprawling collection of three dozen essays; two may be taken as representative. Christopher Leahey writes, “At the heart of critical civic literacy is the notion that students must be taught to question the constructs and categories offered in schools, the corporate media, and dominant cultural groups” (p. 194). Cara Mulcahy distinguishes “critical literacy” from mere “critical thinking.” While

the latter—now standard in any serious pedagogy—equips students “to analyze arguments and ideas presented to them in their texts,” the former “challenges students to identify issues such as gender bias, cultural bias, [and] omissions of narratives by marginalized groups from texts. . . [It] accepts nothing less than social and political equality for all American citizens by educating students to upset the status quo” (p. 9).

So these essays, written primarily by professors of education, variously seek to critique education and teacher training as it exists, denounce trends of the past decade that have fettered the development of an independent spirit in education, lay out the philosophical rationale for new approaches, and highlight small-scale practices that point the way toward transformative education. Many authors invoke John Dewey, not only in the now-familiar formulation of progressive education’s “learning by doing,” but in his more radical challenge in the 1920s and 1930s to American and global trends toward militarism, corporate power, and conformity. The general flavor of these essays can be gleaned in part from those who appear most often in the references: Michael Apple, Paulo Freire, Joel Spring, Jacques Derrida, James Loewen, Henry Giroux, and Nel Noddings (the last two are also contributors to the volume). The tenor can also be seen in the targets of many of the authors: the testing components of Bush’s *No Child Left Behind*; the constrictions on teachers in Obama’s *Race to the Top*; the militarization of American society in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq War; and “neoliberalism’s” pro-corporate agenda.

Any such collection is bound to be uneven, but this one is more unwieldy than most. The editorial footprint is very light—just a three-page introduction, and no discernible order to the essays. Moreover, about a third of the essays are reprints (several from *Phi Delta Kappan*); while these are valuable, even some of the best give the volume a dated feel. Some of the case studies do not deliver as much as they promise. I was not convinced by the specific arguments of two authors who critiqued social studies textbooks (John Marciano on the Vietnam War and Aaron Cooley on immigration). Other authors—including E. Wayne Ross and Kevin Vinson, who resurrect 1960s-era “situationism”—veer off in directions that are hardly practical for classroom application. A briefer, more focused (and less expensive) collection might have been preferable in reaching the presumed target audience: social studies methods and philosophy of education professors and students, and dissatisfied social studies teachers.

Nevertheless, many of the essays here are of value to anyone concerned about the state of civics education today, and they could be assigned as course readings in undergraduate or graduate education programs. Lawrence Stedman’s analysis of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests is useful not only for civics teachers, but also administrators and policy-makers; Leahey’s critique of the Fordham Institute’s paean to “American exceptionalism” after 9/11 is hard-hitting and compelling; Donald Lazere’s proposal for a college core curriculum based on “civic literacy” merits discussion; and Kenneth Teitelbaum’s essay elaborating different models of “citizenship” deserves to be on the syllabus of any social studies methods class. Several case studies on models of critical civic pedagogy, while necessarily limited in scope, are worth examination, including J. B. Mayo’s look at gay-straight alliances and Barry Franklin and Steven Camicia’s essay on immigrant children in an age of globalization.

While most essays advance a roughly similar perspective, several clusters constitute sites of debate. Readers can fruitfully contrast the views of Robert Kunzman and Nel Noddings on how to approach religion in the classroom, as well as the differences between Daniel Liston and Joseph Wegwert on whether teacher training can explicitly promote “critical civic literacy.” This last debate opens up an issue that deserves much closer interrogation in this volume: the tension (some would say “contradiction”) within the concept of “critical civic literacy” between having students reach their own conclusions and the expectation

that critical educators have succeeded only when students adopt the approach to American society put forward by Leahey, Mulcahy, and company.

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Robert Shaffer

*Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, by Tanya Harmer. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 375 pages. \$45.00, cloth.

In November 1970, a throng of exuberant Chileans packed the national stadium in Santiago to herald the beginning of Salvador Allende's presidency and his effort to steer Chile down what he called the "peaceful road to socialism." Over the next three years, Allende, whom the author characterizes as "a highly contradictory figure" (p. 12), struggled to keep his unstable political coalition, Popular Unity (UP), together in the face of mounting pressure by powerful opposition forces and deteriorating economic conditions. Adding to this combustible mix were efforts by Castro's Cuba and Nixon's White House to either protect or destroy Allende's efforts. Just three years later, that same stadium was filled with military officers who arrested, tortured, and murdered thousands of their compatriots in the name of an extreme anticommunist ideology. In this book, Tanya Harmer deftly analyzes and unravels the causes and consequences of those tumultuous three years. She does so by placing the events within a multi-tiered national, hemispheric, and global framework. What emerges on the pages is a sometimes bewildering array of historical actors and forces: opportunistic Cuban revolutionaries, idealistic Chilean dreamers and cynical schemers, arrogant U.S. manipulators, and brutal Brazilian counter-revolutionaries. Of these, Harmer assigns primary agency to Chilean political and economic factions, with Cuba and the United States serving as the most powerful external forces (pp. 5-6). One of the many strengths of *Allende's Chile* is the author's ability to track and make sense of the intersections between these complex forces. The result is, as the title denotes, a compelling story of a "multisided inter-American Cold War battle" waged "between regional proponents of communism and capitalism" (pp. 1-2).

The Norwegian historian Odd Arne Westad (*The Global Cold War*, 2007) has been at the forefront of efforts to de-center the Cold War by going beyond Washington and Moscow to understand how local actors came to terms with the transnational forces unleashed by that superpower competition. Harmer was a student of Westad's at the London School of Economics, where she now teaches as well. Given that pedigree, readers of the book will find that it fits firmly within that "London School" of international history. In addition to a lengthy introduction and conclusion, the book features seven chronological chapters that chart what Harmer concludes is "a rather depressing story" (p. 256). The analytical sophistication of the book, while a boon to scholars, probably limits its utility in an undergraduate classroom. It is most suitable for specialized upper-division courses and seminars. Graduate students in particular will appreciate the author's engagement with the growing literature on the Cold War as defined on the periphery. Harmer has mined archives in seven countries and conducted scores of interviews with participants on all sides. Of note, the author makes good use of Brazilian diplomatic records, demonstrating that Chile's neighbor, even more so than the colossus of the north, helped plan, plot, and execute the military coup that toppled Allende on September 11, 1973. Eschewing the simple binary of victors and vanquished, Harmer writes with recognition of unintended consequences and gray areas. As she puts it, "The past is mostly far more nuanced than

a simple battle between good and evil” (p. 255). Though there are heroes and villains in her tale, to be sure, it is one primarily of seeking to understand the past as it was, not as it ought to have been.

While *Allende's Chile* exemplifies the transnational turn in diplomatic history over the past decade, it also shares an important shortcoming of that framework: its underplaying of U.S. domestic political factors. Although Harmer effectively argues against the “mastermind” view of Nixon and Kissinger (pp. 221, 253), the sections of the book devoted to their pursuit of a “two-track” policy fail to convey a broader sense of just how electoral and party politics or the ongoing war in Vietnam influenced the decision-making process. It is difficult to imagine a similar confrontationist policy issuing from a Democrat in the White House, for example, or in the absence Henry Kissinger’s outsized advisory position. Nevertheless, Harmer has written a cogent and impressive work that will easily serve as the starting point for college faculty and students seeking to understand the intertwining of the local and global forces that created South America’s 9/11.

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*Warfare and Culture in World History*, edited by Wayne E. Lee. New York: New York University Press, 2011. 231 pages. \$23.00, paper.

As this very good little book of essays makes clear, the idea that there is still a “new military history” has finally ended. What now exists is something different from the past, and perhaps better for the change. Over the past twenty years, the amalgamation of the study of conflict and the study of culture have come together to provide a greater understanding of the how’s and why’s of war. The concept of using the study of culture to understand war is no longer novel, and should be seen as the standard in academia, not the exception. Professor Lee’s collection of nine essays on the topic of “warfare and culture” makes for a learned introduction into this important area.

*Warfare and Culture in World History* offers the reader a series of glimpses into nine specific topics written by experts in their fields of study. As further evidence of expertise, a brief online search revealed that each author’s chapter is actually a summary of a larger argument made in a full-length manuscript, often with the same title as the essay. Therefore, the reader already well-versed in the existing literature will find little that is original. That said, for anyone new to the topic of culture and conflict, this work would make an excellent primer. The essays move through a broad sweep of time and space; however, only two are distinctly non-Western (those covering ancient Assyria and late Ming China) and one essay is on late Republican Rome. The other six essays presented deal with topics of modern Europe or America. This is disappointing for the role as a primer because many readers will not be familiar with Indian, Japanese, or African topics at all. More non-Western essays would have gone a long way to fulfilling the title’s promise of “World History.” But this is a minor problem, and all of the essays presented are well-written and generally well-sourced, with solid editing. Each is worth reading.

For the educator, the book could serve two purposes. The first, and more narrow, would be as a resource for students at the collegiate level, especially for the graduate student. Each essay assumes at least a functional background in its topic and would not be accessible to the beginner. There are few maps and little by way of introduction. Students in a military history course, especially modern or world, would find these essays of great use. The book would also be an excellent addition to any serious university library collection.

The second, and more likely, use for this work is as a source for the instructor. Here, the work makes for a great place to get a handle on nine different topics on the confluence of culture and warfare in just over two hundred pages of reading. Any one of the essays would provide the instructor with a number of starting points for teaching the topics at hand. For example, John Lynn's essay on the aristocratic culture of "forbearance" and warfare is an outstanding introduction to war in the eighteenth century. Also of use is the fact that several of the essays' authors look to assert new ideas, great ground for discussion and disagreement. In Mark Grimsley's essay on organizational culture and command in the American Civil War, he makes use of modern notions of business concepts and applies the terminology to the interaction of leaders and the various levels of command structures. While this initially comes off as using twentieth-century business speak to understand mid-nineteenth-century thinking, it is useful in establishing a vocabulary that is effective in looking at the issues of officers and people at the time. The final essay by Adrian R. Lewis, on the American experience of modern, "limited" war and the devolution of our culture as a result, is often problematic. However, this apparent problem would be an asset in a classroom setting where students could be set to proving or debunking many of the essay's weaker arguments.

In the end, *Warfare and Culture in World History* is less of an introduction to the broad topic that the title seems to suggest, and more a series of interesting, useful essays on the topic. In the hands of someone that is relatively well-read on the topic of conflict, the book's essays will add a great deal to their own knowledge and act to stimulate all forms of classroom discussion.

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*Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*, edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. 402 pages. \$40.00, cloth.

Danielle McGuire and John Dittmer, both noted civil rights historians, edit this collection of twelve essays at the request of Steven F. Lawson for a series of work on American Civil Rights stretching over the entire twentieth century. Lawson's opening essay argues for expanding the "The Short Civil Rights Movement" (p. 28), traditionally viewed from 1954-1968, to a broader and deeper understanding of the longer origins, earlier struggles, and more varied local venues than often recognized in textbooks or by the media.

McGuire and Dittmer choose widely varying authors and topics to lay this new foundation. Author Justin Lorts traces the NAACP's 1940 efforts at influencing Hollywood's portrayal of African Americans in film. He lays a backdrop of the independent black film efforts to counter the negative examples of blacks assigned stereotypical parts as maids and servants or as "Negro[es]...addicted to tap dancing, banjo plucking and the purloining of Massa's gin" (p. 49). Lorts expands the history to radio and television as he blends culture with the politics of the period. Abigail Sara Lewis looks at the efforts by the international Young Women's Christian Association to expand multiracial activities after World War II. The organization recognized three influences that demanded their changing outreach: racial minorities in the wartime labor market, returning African American soldiers, and the relocation of Japanese Americans. As with other selected historians, she focuses on these efforts well before the more recognized black-white struggles of the 1950s and 1960s.

The variety of included essays holds much to offer a history teacher, but some articles might not be appropriate for high school or younger students. Editor McGuire, who is author of *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Race, and Resistance*, includes her own essay on sexual violence against African American women and the particular legal case of Joan Little in 1970s North Carolina. Stacy Braukman's essay highlights the Johns Committee established in Florida in 1963-1965, and explains its legislative creation to "tarnish the reputation and hamper the efforts of the NAACP," but she explains that the committee expanded its "anti-subversive mission" over a longer period to target student groups, college professors, pornography, indecent literature, and homosexuals. Braukman argues that the committee's extended work influenced public opinion and earned a place in the New Right as it attacked what it saw as "a dangerous liberalizing trend in American politics and culture" (p. 186). Jacqueline Castledine writes a cultural history of jazz, particularly women jazz singers and their lyrics, in breaking down cultural barriers and furthering black liberation not only in Jim Crow USA, but also in the breaking of apartheid in South Africa.

The remaining seven chapters continue the broad reach into civil rights struggles. Krystal Frazier proposes that the death of Emmett Till activated young African Americans nationally to join the movement. Pippa Holloway highlights "felon disfranchisement" and points out that criminal convictions make up the largest area of denying the vote to adult citizens, where African Americans are affected at seven times the rate of whites. She traces several historical legal cases in which defendants petitioned for a restoration of their citizenship. Emily Zuckerman looks at Ronald Reagan's attempt to dismantle the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Sara Rzeszutek Haviland examines the 1950s fear of communism through the experiences of the James and Ester Cooper Jackson family, who also championed black civil rights. George Derek Musgrove and Hasan Kwame Jeffries contrast the efforts and expectations of voting rights activists of the 1960s to the present local political situation in several Black Belt counties in Alabama, while Brian Ward's final chapter dismisses the notion of a post-racial America simply because of the election of this nation's first black president.

This volume is successful in answering the call to expand the history of America's Civil Rights beyond the desegregation of schools and the political movements of the 1960s. It is recommended for college classrooms and as a guide to teachers who work at a lower grade level.

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