Book Reviews

***Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution*. By Michal Jan Rozbicki. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press. 2011. x, 288 pp. Cloth, $35.00; paper, $24.50; e-book, $24.50.**

***The Genius of Democracy: Fictions of Gender and Citizenship in the United States, 1860–1945*. By Victoria Olwell. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press. 2011. 288 pp. Cloth, $59.95; e-book, $59.95.**

***Liberty of the Imagination: Aesthetic Theory, Literary Form, and Politics in the Early United States*. By Edward Cahill. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press. 2012. 318 pp. Cloth, $65.00; e-book, $65.00.**

Studies of the relationship between US literary culture, political theory, and the public sphere are booming. Landmark works by Pricilla Wald, Russ Castronovo, Dana Nelson, Lauren Berlant, Wai Chee Dimock and others have opened a rich field of inquiry into the impact of literary culture on political culture and vice versa, a field that attacks on the humanities and the continued instrumentalization of American culture make more relevant than ever. Three recent works by Michal Jan Rozbicki, Victoria Olwell, and Edward Cahill intervene into this loosely defined field in an effort to articulate the impact of popular, elite, and literary cultures on the American Revolution, women's civic inclusion, and early national literature, respectively. These books, and perhaps Olwell's in particular, also extend scholarly conceptions of early American and nineteenth-century publics and counterpublics in significant ways.

In *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution*, historian Rozbicki attacks, head-on, the "radicalism" of the American Revolution depicted by Gordon Wood and others. Arguing that previous accounts of the cultural and intellectual origins of the revolution are marred by the ahistorical application of modern conceptions of liberty to the conflict, Rozbicki seeks to recover the eighteenth-century Anglo-American sense of liberty, and to describe how it changed over the course of the revolution.

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Rozbicki stakes his revisionist account on the claim that the "liberty" so central to the founding of the United States was understood in the eighteenth-century British world as a rhetorical "mannerism" (87), a "metaphor" indicating "a cluster of specific immunities and entitlements existing along a continuum" whose "fullest enjoyment [was] exclusive to members of the uppermost elites" (11). Against the egalitarian ideal assumed by many historians, Rozbicki makes a convincing case that the Founders understood liberty as "a relation of difference": "to be free meant there had to be others who were less free" (11).

Over the course of six chapters, Rozbicki offers a historically grounded account of eighteenth-century liberty; uncovers liberty's "British legacies"; identifies the sharp social distinctions that characterized colonial society; demonstrates that the colonial elite's interest in preserving their gentry status was a driving force for the revolution; explains the elite's enthusiastic embrace of new rhetorics of liberty during the revolution by pointing to their expectation that these rhetorics would consolidate elite power; and explores the post-revolutionary elite backlash, as the language of liberty began to be appropriated by non-elites.

The strength of Rozbicki's project is his careful historical recovery of lost eighteenth-century valences of key concepts such as *liberty* and *the people*. The project's weakness is its somewhat imbalanced consideration of who produced those valences; in his zeal to counteract populist celebrations of the American Revolution's radicalism, Rozbicki develops a top-down portrait of the revolutionary period in which only the elite maintain the ability to create culture or define liberty.

Working with a broader cultural archive, Olwell's *The Genius of Democracy* attempts to recover the radical potential that discourses of "female genius" held immediately before, and just after, women's incorporation as voting citizens. Feminists, Marxists, and other types of critics have usefully critiqued discourses of genius for their tendency to mystify artistic production and to reify gender, racial, and other social hierarchies. Olwell seeks not to overturn, but to complicate this narrative by emphasizing the alternate democratic publics that ideas of female genius in particular could sometimes bring into being.

Olwell's central claim is that genius played a significant shaping role in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century formulations of women's identity and civic status. She elaborates this claim in chapters that consider Louisa May Alcott's *Work: A Story of Experience* (1872), Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1886), George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894), Mary Hunter Austin's *A Woman of Genius* (1912), and Jessie Redmon Fauset's *There Is Confusion* (1924). A particularly strong coda acknowledges the limits of genius discourse through readings of self-proclaimed genius Gertrude Stein's war memoirs, "The Winner Loses" (1940) and *Wars I Have Seen* (1945).

Olwell convincingly complicates the critical consensus on genius by demonstrating the diversity of the cultural sites of its production during her chosen historical period, including Emersonian romanticism, psychology and biology, mass culture, Civil Rights activism, and literary fiction. Less uni-

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formly convincing are the claims made for the emancipatory possibilities of female genius. In her first chapter, Olwell excavates the "protofeminist activist" (27) possibilities opened up by female genius in Alcott's *Work*, suggesting, fascinatingly, that Alcott is able to imagine a vision of civic participation characterized by collectivity rather than individuality, and embodied specificity rather than disembodied universality. But the chapters on James, Austin, and Fauset demonstrate the limitations of genius discourse just as convincingly as its potential. Overall, Olwell's impressive archive and in-depth readings make the book an important compliment to existing studies of the literary treatment of genius as well as gender and democracy.

Unlike either Rozbicki or Olwell's books, Edward Cahill's *Liberty of the Imagination* does not always argue for a straightforward or direct relationship between cultural and political discourse, yet this is frequently one of its strengths. In his study, Cahill offers a remarkably in-depth examination of the transatlantic circulation of aesthetic theory during the early national period in order to suggest that aesthetic theory, and in particular aesthetic theory's articulations of imaginative liberty, provided a "critical vocabulary" for American writers exploring the challenges and contradictions of political liberty (5).

Liberty of the Imagination's six chapters cover a remarkable amount of ground in their ambitious quest to "define persistent patterns of formal representation within and across genres, to uncover what might be called the deep form of early U.S. writing" (9). Chapter 1 outlines the contours of eighteenth-century British aesthetic theory, and links the contradictions Cahill finds therein to contradictions of eighteenth-century US political culture. Chapter 2 explores the evolution of early US poetic expression in genres that include the pastoral and epic poetry through readings of Timothy Dwight, Philip Freneau, and others. Chapter 3, one of the most broadly appealing chapters, articulates a relationship between aesthetic theory, landscape writing, and westward expansion using examples from J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, William Bartram, Thomas Jefferson, and others. chapter 4 tackles early national political writings through *The Federalist*, while chapter 5 offers a thoughtful evaluation of the Charles Brockden Brown's work. The book ends with an account of genius and elite aesthetic taste that nicely bridges the central questions animating Rozbicki's and Olwell's studies.

Casual readers of Cahill's book may find the nuanced accounts of eighteenth-century aesthetic theory overwhelming in their detail, but serious students of aesthetic theory will appreciate the erudite evaluation of the transatlantic landscape of early national aesthetic politics. Moreover, the book's compelling account of the relationship between landscape writing's aesthetic investments and westward expansion will interest ecocritics, and Cahill's innovative readings of early American authors give the book broad appeal.

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***Miraculous Plagues: An Epidemiology of Early New England Narrative*. By Cristobal Silva. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2011. xii, 239 pp. Cloth, $74.00.**

***The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England*. By Sarah Rivett. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press. 2011. xvi, 364 pp. Cloth, $49.95; e-book, $29.99.**

Most works in contemporary Puritan studies in the last few decades have preferred to concentrate on local topics, calling attention to types of dissent and nonconformity, seeking out multicultural and multigendered voices for study. The two books under review take steps to resynthesize the field. Revisiting familiar touchstone events, they leave the overall contours of New England colonial history largely unchanged. But along the way, they recombine discourses usually studied separately and come up with some new readings that confirm what we already knew but also hold fresh new promise. For Silva, medical discourse is thoroughly implicated in the theological; for Rivett, seventeenth-century religion and science are not separate categories but engage the same questions and are imbued with the same conundrum, how responsibly to seek "forbidden" knowledge about God through the empirical study—the science—of the human soul.

Silva's *Miraculous Plagues* proposes that we understand the development of New England discourse through the lens of what he calls epidemiology. Early tropes of disease in New England literature establish strict hierarchies between the healthy and the sick, the orthodox and the heretical, English bodies and Native American bodies in ways that consolidate power in colonial elites. That binary language remains remarkably powerful, as modern historians have also adopted, for example, the "virgin soil" explanation of the decimation of Native New England populations in the early 1600s, embracing, even if not purposefully, a sort of "immunological determinism" in which Indian bodies are weaker, more susceptible to disease in the Americas than European. Silva seeks to replace such readings with a sensitivity to what he calls "immunological syntax." Rather than understanding the various populations in contact as having distinct biological or immunological identities, we should recognize the ways in which cyclically occurring diseases might ramify differently across different time periods.

So, in the first decades of significant New England contact, English immigrants who brought with them immunities to smallpox were not touched by the disease, while Native American populations, with no such immunity, were decimated, paving the way for the idea that the providential epidemic "made room" on the continent for English settlement. However, over time the original settlers' children were born without such immunity, and began to succumb to the disease again. Silva argues that an epidemic resurgence of smallpox, particularly as a disease of children, meshed well with other anxieties about generational turnover in the 1660s. Jeremiad literature and indeed the Halfway Covenant itself are "attempt[s] to make sense of immunological

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events that were threatening to derail New England's colonial project at mid-century" (140). Thus, well-known theologicopolitical documents (such as Michael Wigglesworth's "Gods Controversy with New England") contain traces of the cultural and biological experiences of disease, revealing as well settlers' own rethinking of the genetics of salvation, or rather, the genetics of settlement. The protocol of reading Silva suggests, then, recognizes that medical and theological discourses are very much intertwined.

The main burden of Rivett's deeply learned book is to argue that, despite our firmly ingrained view that religion and science competed with each other during the emergence of the Enlightenment, with science eventually winning out, "theologians and natural philosophers were engaged in a mutual endeavor to ascertain knowledge of God in nature" (227). They shared a belief that some knowledge of God is forbidden and blasphemous to pursue, but they also shared a confidence—she calls it a "Reformation optimism"—that empirical modes of inquiry, particularly into the individual soul itself, may legitimately expand humankind's knowledge of God.

More specifically, both natural philosophers and theologians were cautiously hopeful about the possibilities of using spiritual testimonies, of the sort proliferating around the Anglo-Atlantic world but especially theorized in New England, to provide reliable evidence about the nature of God. Early in the years of English settlement, Thomas Shepard's congregants—especially the male converts—evinced a confidence that "spiritual truth comes through the discerning capacities of the individual" (10), particularly in the special circumstances of performance of a spiritual relation in the congregational space and with the check of ministerial transcription. Later in the century, narratives of more liminal figures—Native Americans and dying women and children—seem to give the most reliable access to that knowledge, illustrating what Jonathan Edwards would call the "indwelling principle." Rivett's reading of the Salem trials is perhaps the most revisionary: "Rather than a symbol of a fading occult world view, the evil in Salem represented a phase of an emerging Enlightenment modernity" (226). The issue that divided the parties was not so much whether the invisible world existed but rather by what precise procedures empirical observations might give insight into its nature.

Both books reconfigure controversies as conversations, allowing them to tell the familiar story but to attend to its nuance and incorporate multiple voices in the same discussion. So, for Silva, Native American voices, as he discerns them coming through English documents, present "counter-epidemiologies," as Tisquantum, according to Bradford, "plays his own game" by giving the Indians an alternative explanation of how smallpox works its destructive power; for Rivett, Anne Bradstreet's "Contemplations" gives a very different account of the ways in which the human senses can learn about God from nature, one that insists on God's persistent mystery, but that account is still engaged in the intellectual project of the seventeenth century, to determine carefully what and how humans might know. Across the Atlantic, Descartes

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says "I think, therefore I am" in the very same year (1637) that Anne Hutchinson proclaims that she knows the Spirit "by direct revelation." However different, "each is a moment," Rivett says, "of epistemological certitude that can be achieved only through a form of self-study that is largely incommunicable to the larger community" (232). This is a surprising and delightful juxtaposition, just one example among many in this wide-ranging book.

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***To Live an Antislavery Life: Personal Politics and the Antebellum Black Middle Class*. By Erica L. Ball. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2012. xv, 175 pp. Cloth, $69.95; paper, $22.95.**

***Family Money: Property, Race, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. By Jeffory A. Clymer. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2013. ix, 204 pp. Cloth, $53.00.**

Jeffory Clymer concludes his otherwise excellent study with an unexpectedly idealistic vision: "Longing for racelessness, Chesnutt longed for a future in which material conditions were not predetermined by racial distinction, a future in which loving and intimacy were not pummeled by racial anxiety, and a future in which sex did not form a lightning rod for either personal or state violence. Those ideals, over one hundred years after Chesnutt's 'Race Prejudice' speech, remain as provocative and as worthy as they were in 1905" (153). Thus ends the lesson, which has been presented as "something even more awe-inspiring than reparations" (153). But if Clymer seems rather too quick at the book's end to opt for an optimistic vision of a postracial future over a realistic understanding of the demands of racial justice in the present, he more than makes up for it in a book that explains impressively well why we are not much closer to Chesnutt's vision than we were over one hundred years ago. At least if one is looking at American culture from the perspective afforded by the poorest among us—or by the prison-industrial complex and legal system—one has little reason to see much progress at all, beyond our ability to claim otherwise by pointing to, say, African Americans who have enjoyed a measure of success. But when we look to such success stories, or to the black middle class more broadly, we would do well to consult Erica Ball's *To Live an Antislavery Life* for background before deciding how to think about class and social standing in African American communities. Together, these two books draw us into a complex history that we too often simplify, and in the process they demonstrate how we might find in literature a way to untangle the narratives that rule the present as well as those that guided the past.

Ball responds to those many who find in the racial uplift rhetoric of nineteenth-century black leaders an avoidance of political solidarity with the

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enslaved. Focusing on "the literature directed towards elite and 'aspiring' northern African American readers in the three decades preceding the Civil War," *To Live an Antislavery Life* examines the process by which such figures as Frederick Douglass, Susan Paul, Martin R. Delany, and others "began crafting a form of personal politics especially for elite and aspiring African American readers that ultimately defined the worldview of the emerging black middle class" (2). Ball's research covers the broad range of black print culture and accordingly focuses not merely on the rhetoric of uplift but also on "a vibrant set of community institutions," including churches, schools, literary, temperance, and mutual-aid societies, and such forums as state and national conventions by which free African Americans worked to establish "a black public sphere and print culture to discuss and deliberate the political issues of the day" (10). She finds in the writing that both created and emerged from such forums a commitment to an encompassing political philosophy, grounded in the multiple demands of black abolitionism, and leading to a much more dynamic and progressive image of the black elite than generally emerges from scholarship on "uplift" ideology.

While Ball complicates our understanding of the black middle class in useful ways, Clymer takes us even deeper into the complexities of race, class, and social affiliations in *Family Money.* Early in the book, Clymer makes his case clearly: "Most literary studies of interracial sexuality emphasize the legal or social paradoxes of racial identity, or, often relatedly, the politics of drama and miscegenation relative to ideologies of American nationhood. While the turmoil around racial identity and sexual acts across the color line are foundational to my investigation, *Family Money* moves us past identity as a discrete analytical category" (6). Like Ball, in other words, Clymer believes that misguided assumptions have distorted our understanding of the past, especially the racial past. Like Ball, too, Clymer is interested in studying how cultures actually functioned by looking at their practical operations rather than their ideological outlines: "I ask how judges decreed and literary authors imagined property moving—or being prevented from moving—back and forth across the sometimes mutable color line in the nineteenth century, as well as how these movements both shaped, and were in turn shaped by, the often competing notions of family as legal construct, social practice, and literary idea" (9). In short, *Family Money* takes us into and through a complex and dynamic historical process—and Clymer argues persuasively that it is this process, rather the products of this process, to which we should attend when we are talking about race, wealth, and family.

Both books argue implicitly that historical understanding not only benefits from but requires attention to the dynamic operations of print culture. Ball works to clarify and correct our understanding of social class in African American communities; Clymer works to draw us into the economic and social dynamics by which not only class but also race are generally identified and understood. Both work against static conceptual categories and established

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analytical frameworks. Clymer is especially interested in the history revealed through literary representation, so he includes sustained attention to a handful of texts, among them works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frank Webb, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Chesnutt, and Lydia Maria Child. Ball is especially interested in the history that becomes visible when one views slave narratives in the contexts provided by a broad array of publications. Her attention, accordingly, turns to a range of cultural institutions, from which a few leaders emerge as especially revealing examples. Together, Ball and Clymer suggest a methodology that might encompass both books, one capable of leading to an understanding of history not revealed through print culture but operating in it. One hopes that others will take the hint and continue the work that these two scholars have started so well.

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***"That the People Might Live": Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy*. By Arnold Krupat. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press. 2012. xii, 242 pp. $45.00.**

***The Red Land to the South: American Indian Writers and Indigenous Mexico*. By James H. Cox. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2013. x, 275 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $25.00.**

***Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. By Mishuana Goeman. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2013. 245 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $25.00.**

***Winning the West with Words: Language and Conquest in the Lower Great Lakes.* By James Joseph Buss. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press. 2011. 328 pp. $34.95.**

If a single theme unites much of the scholarship that has been published in Native American literary studies since the 1990s, it is the inquiry into the social and political functions of Native writing. Scholars have interrogated the connections between literature and colonialism, the ways that literature supports Native quests for land and political autonomy, and more recently, the significance of gender and sexuality in cultural expressions by and about American Indians. The four books reviewed here broaden that inquiry by examining new genres, drawing attention to neglected periods of literary production, and bringing fresh insights and methodologies to bear on the thematics of land, the enduring center of indigenous politics.

In *"That the People Might Live,"* the first study of Native American elegy, Arnold Krupat extends conventional parameters of the genre to consider its social functions in indigenous communities. Elegy, Krupat explains, "conventionally serves to categorize a very great number of Western poems that

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address death and loss," and strictly speaking, there is no Native equivalent of elegy as a genre (1). Drawing on the work of Morton Bloomfield, Krupat redefines elegy not as genre but rather as "an expressive response to death and loss" that "offered mourners consolation so that they might overcome their grief and renew their will to sustain communal life" (3). This purpose describes a wide range of traditional and contemporary Native cultural expressions, though their social functions distinguish them from Western elegies. In Native contexts, elegiac expressions mourn deaths as well as the dislocations and losses brought by colonialism, especially the loss of land and disruption of ceremony and traditional life. Such expressions are further distinguished from Western elegy, Krupat contends, because they are "strongly oriented toward the community rather than the individual" (9), and they serve not only to console mourners but also to maintain a relationship with the past and to sustain the collective life of the community. (Indeed, Krupat's title reprises that of Jace Weaver's 1997 book, which argued that Native literature serves primarily to sustain American Indian communities.)

Defining elegy in terms of function rather than form enables Krupat to trace continuities across time, genre, and cultural context and to connect oral and written expressions. Each of the book's four chapters embeds masterful literary analysis in rich historical contexts. The first two chapters focus on oral and ritual performances including the Iroquois condolence ceremony, Tlingit potlatch, Ghost Dance songs, and speeches of dying Indians. The following two chapters focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century written autobiography, poetry, and fiction.

A major contribution of Krupat's scholarship as a whole is to focus attention on cultural expressions that precede the Native American Renaissance, the outpouring of creative expression that commenced in the late 1960s. This is also true of James Cox's *The Red Land to the South*. Cox analyzes Native American literature published between 1920 and 1960, a neglected period of literary production. Scholars usually consider works published during this period to be distinct from post-1960s literature, which emphasizes cultural revival and political restoration. Cox, however, refutes this distinction by illuminating the political dimensions of these earlier works. In particular, he connects them to contemporary literary nationalism and its project of underscoring cultural distinctiveness and supporting the unique political status of Native communities as nations.

Importantly, Cox identifies a preoccupation with Mexico as a theme that draws many of these works together, and he contends that Native authors of this era understood indigeneity in Mexico as a model for revolutionary indigenous politics in the United States. "By mapping an indigenous American world that existed prior to the colonial era and that continues to span settler-colonial national borders," he writes, "these authors produce an indigenous American transnational or transborder imaginary" (19). This "transnational imaginary" in turn supported nationalist community endeavors as "indigenous Mexican

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revolution held . . . a promise of retribution or tribal-national revitalization" (22). As this argument contributes to recent scholarship on transnationalism in Native studies, it also connects Cox's work to adjacent fields, most obviously Chicana/o literary studies with its emphasis on the US/Mexico border as a literary trope and political force.

Cox's work is notable not only for its focus on an underanalyzed period of Native literary production but also for its recovery of the popular detective novels of Choctaw author Todd Downing. These he analyzes alongside lesser-known writing by prominent Native authors Lynn Riggs and D'Arcy McNickle. The concluding chapter demonstrates continuities between this earlier era and contemporary Native writing through readings of novels by Leslie Marmon Silko and Gerald Vizenor. Although such comparisons are useful and often convincing, Cox's heavy emphasis on nationalism, a phenomenon that emerged from political shifts of the post-1960s era, neglects historical specificities of the earlier period and the ways that they inevitably shaped literary production.

The remaining two books under review here extend this inquiry into the political engagement of texts by focusing more specifically on conflicts over land. In *Mark My Words*, Mishuana Goeman takes as her starting point an understanding of settler colonialism as gendered spatialized violence. In this process, both women's bodies and land are "mapped" so as to socially marginalize and dispossess Native people with particular consequences for women. A colonial spatial logic that finds expression in maps and other cultural representations at once rationalizes and obscures historical and ongoing violence. A primary function of Native women's writing, Goeman argues, is to critically engage colonial spatial policies and practices. In her analysis, Native "literary maps" render "subversive or alternative geographies" that constitute "counter projects to colonial narratives and capitalistic endeavors" (24). At the same time, such works represent place-based Indigenous epistemologies that support Native claims to land.

In the four chapters that follow the introduction, Goeman employs theoretical insights from indigenous studies, literary studies, and feminist and cultural geography to analyze spatial representations in Native women's writing. Each chapter focuses on fiction and poetry by a different Native woman writer: E. Pauline Johnson, Esther Beling, Joy Harjo, and Silko. Goeman situates each author in her historical context to consider how she refutes colonial policies of her era and exposes their gendered dimensions; these range from Johnson's engagement with the 1876 Indian Act in Canada to NAFTA as a significant context for Silko's work. Among the contributions of *Mark My Words* are its focus on Beling's poetry, which has received little scholarly attention, and on the frequently overlooked spatial dimensions of work by more familiar authors. Additionally, by concentrating on Native women writers and insisting on the crucial gendered dimensions of colonization, *Mark My Words* adds to a growing body of feminist scholarship within Native literary studies.

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James Joseph Buss's *Winning the West with Words* examines the connection between linguistic representation and land conflict in the context of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century white settlement of the lower Great Lakes region and contemporary commemorations of this history. Buss is a historian, but the book takes up the fundamentally literary question of the role of language in the material dispossession of Native people. Buss employs methodologies from discourse analysis, geography, anthropology, and history to argue that conflicts between Indians and white settlers took shape in part through language, and these linguistic expressions carried material consequences. Specifically, dominant historical narratives "portrayed the erasure of indigenous communities as a passive and inevitable consequence of settlement" and thus "underplayed the very action of conquest" (4). By the same token, Native people endeavored to use language, sometimes successfully, to delay removal and dispossession. (The Wyandot, for example, used rhetorical strategies to forestall their removal from Ohio.) "Narrating conquest," Buss thus insists, "has real consequences for real people" (4).

Beyond its contributions to the history of present-day Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, the significant dimensions of *Winning the West with Words* include its vital insistence on Native peoples' active resistance to conquest and dispossession. The book is also remarkable for its attention to a wide and fascinating range of materials. Its nine chapters analyze treaties, historical documents, newspaper accounts, visual art, captivity narratives, international expositions, and historical reenactments and commemorations. Vividly written and rich in historical detail, *Winning the West with Words* should command critical interest from scholars of history, literature, and Native studies as well as others who are interested in connections between representation and politics.

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***After Translation: The Transfer and Circulation of Modern Poetics across the Atlantic*. By Ignacio Infante. New York: Fordham Univ. Press. 2013. xiv, 217 pp. $45.00.**

***The Worlds of Langston Hughes: Modernism and Translation in the Americas*. By Vera M. Kutzinski. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press. 2012. xvi, 344 pp. Cloth, $79.95; paper, $26.95.**

In *After Translation* and *The Worlds of Langston Hughes*, Ignacio Infante and Vera Kutzinski, respectively, confront the way modernist poetics have been construed by US English literature professors as largely Anglo-American in origin and value. In the final chapter of her book, Kutzinski explicitly links this perception to the way departmentalization (e.g., English Literature) and interdisciplinary "areas" (e.g., American studies) of scholarly investigation

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reinforce these blind spots. Moreover, Kutzinksi and Infante both criticize the conflation of professional and national identity as a contributing factor to the problem. However, neither delves into the history of this phenomenon, which began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Inasmuch as Kutzinski's penultimate chapter focuses on Langston Hughes's testimony before the Senate subcommittee led by Joseph McCarthy in the 1940s, it is all the more remarkable that she doesn't connect departmentalization to the rise of US nationalism, the subsequent pressure on academics to "use" scholarship to promote an idealized national culture (one of the impetuses for the implementation of tenure), and, in the wake of the 1917 October Revolution, the opening volleys of the Red Scare. These developments led to the other "modern" Indo-European languages being tagged "foreign" and shunted to the margins of American university and college curricula. This history is absent from both books under review here, but it informs the very premises of the authors' overlapping arguments concerning the importance of translation in constructing and promoting the tenets of modernist poetics. Both argue that translation, often perceived to varying degrees by history, philosophy, and English departments as an important adjunct to scholarly endeavors, is central to the founding principles of modernist poetry. Moreover, to the extent that the single-author monograph is analogous to the monolingual construction of modernist poetics, Infante and Kutzinski focus their analyses on literary networks fomented by travel, translation, and publishing endeavors.

In *After Translation*, Infante analyzes the aesthetic ties between poets throughout the Americas (North, Central, and South) with those in England, Spain, France, and the Caribbean. Though Kutzinski takes an apparently narrower and thus traditional tack, focusing on a single poet, Langston Hughes, she makes it clear that while she intends to demonstrate the importance of Hughes as an international poet and translator/editor, she is not interested in erecting another monolith beside Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, or Wallace Stevens. Instead she analyzes Hughes as less a "solitary author" than "a nexus" of aesthetic, cultural, and political affiliations and conflicts (13), reading Hughes's waxing and waning cultural capital from the late 1920s to the 1940s as indices of his fruitful if problematic relationships with poets in Latin America, Mexico, Cuba, and elsewhere.

As noted above, the question of translation (how to conceive of it) is central to both Infante's and Kutzinski's arguments. Essentially, Infante appropriates the Walter Benjamin model in order to show how a translation that emphasizes syntactical "form" over and above "semantic" content allows us to reconstruct modernist networks across spatiotemporal and cultural differences (111–12). Oddly enough, though Kutzinski attacks the Benjamin model for privileging the "original" source text over its translations into other languages (56), she also winds up as a kind of Benjaminian to the extent her criticism of Benjamin is off the mark. While Kutzinski rightly notes Benjamin's nostalgia

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for originals, she neglects to emphasize that he writes against his own desires when he dismisses the translation of "content" in order to argue that the "afterlife" of an original resides in a "pure language" inaccessible via semantics. Only form, writes Benjamin, provides access to this nether-realm of linguistic possibility.

Given their different views of Benjamin's theory of translation, Infante and Kutzinski use very different strategies in their analyses. Infante's book is organized around linguistic particulates deployed by the five major non-US poets he analyzes. Focusing on the poetics of Fernando Pessoa, Vicente Huidobro, Stefan George, Sousándrade and Kamau Braithwaite as formal—rather than thematic—objects of critical knowledge, Infante demonstrates how each poet translates or torques Anglo-American poetics for specific aesthetic, cultural, or political purposes. Pessoa's heteronyms expand John Keats's negative capability; Huidobro's *creacionismo* explodes literary cubism into a kind of protofuturism; Braithwaite's "tidalectics" retool Hegel; Sousandrade's *antropofagia* devours Pound's "luminous detail" and becomes, via Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, the antecedent to Brazilian *concretismo*, and so on. Kutzinski's book is divided more or less into three parts: Hughes as an intrepid, heterolingual traveler, Hughes as translated into Spanish, most notably by Nicholas Guillen and Jorge Luis Borges, and Hughes's translations of Guillen's poems into English under the shadow of McCarthyism. Unlike Infante's interest in formal, syntactical strategies, Kutzinski focuses on particular linguistic elements in order to demonstrate the semantic distance between the English and Spanish used by Hughes and his Cuban and Latin American counterparts. For Kutzinski, however, this distance, while revealing of cultural and political divides, is actually a good thing (and here her ideas about translation mesh with Benjamin's): it promotes transcultural polysemy and thus, theoretically, opens the original to all kinds of readers.

Infante's and Kutzinski's varying degrees of commitment to a theory of translation derived from Benjamin have other consequences. It's somewhat surprising that Infante doesn't underscore how much the poetics of Pessoa, Sousandrade, and Huidobro are fueled by the same antimodern prejudices as Pound, their different political "solutions" to the crises of modernity notwithstanding. Because Kutzinski is less wedded to Benjamin's ideas about translation, she is more forthright about the repercussions of colonialism regarding nationalism (to say nothing of US university language departments) than Infante, who keeps an unwavering eye on his formalist thesis. Taken together, then, both books complement each other, offering multidimensional analyses of the variegated origins of modernist poetry and poetics.

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The Golem Redux: From Prague to Post-Holocaust Fiction. **By Elizabeth R. Baer. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press. 2012. x, 229 pp. Paper, $27.95.**

Haints: American Ghosts, Millennial Passions, and Contemporary Gothic Fictions**. By Arthur Redding. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press. 2011. xii, 149 pp. $27.50.**

Dead Women Talking: Figures of Injustice in American Literature**. By Brian Norman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 2013. viii, 223 pp. Cloth, $45.00; paper, $29.95.**

Dying Modern: A Meditation on Elegy**. By Diana Fuss. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press. 2013. x, 150 pp. Cloth, $74.95; paper, $21.95.**

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." This famous quote from William Faulkner's novel *Requiem for a Nun* (1950) resonates throughout this cluster of books, all of which address the persistence of the past and the relation of that persistence to death. *The Golem Redux* tries to account for the persistence of the golem figure in both fiction and numerous forms of popular culture among post-Holocaust authors. Baer argues that, contrary to Theodor Adorno's pronouncement about the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz, "the use of the golem is an intentional tribute to Jewish imagination and imaginative literature, as well as to the crucial importance of such imagination in the post-Holocaust period" (3). Baer pursues this argument across a range of texts, some of which are expected (works by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Cynthia Ozick, and Elie Wiesel) and some of which are less so (an episode of *The X-Files* and James Sturm's 2001 graphic novel *The Golem's Mighty Swing*).

Throughout the book, Baer draws on the concept of intertextuality to explain the peculiar qualities of golem texts, describing it as "an approach to writing devoted to instability, multiplicity, and correction" (9) and thus particularly well suited to post-Holocaust literature: "Intertextuality as a concept can be said to instantiate the disruption, induced by the Holocaust, of our notions of human nature, evil, and history-as-progress,' of meaning itself" (8). Baer's use of the trope of intertextuality is especially helpful when she describes the golem legend as a palimpsest of texts, rather than a linear evolution (22). This is an approach that respects the complexity of the texts under discussion, which is why it is so jarring when Baer dismisses Gustav Meyrink's novel *Der Golem* (1915) and Paul Wegener's film *Der Golem* (1920) as examples of "intertextuality gone awry" (49). The issue is not whether Meyrink and Wegener's texts contain anti-Semitic elements, but whether golem texts of any kind can be simplistically categorized as good or bad for the ways they (re)appropriate the golem legend.

Just as Baer analyzes how and why the golem returns to address issues of social (in)justice, so Redding in *Haints* looks at the multiple ways in which ghosts continue to haunt American literature. Drawing on both trauma theory

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and work on the contemporary Gothic, he adroitly interrogates "the numerous fictional depictions of the spirit world, depictions that seem omnipresent in American fiction, film, and the culture at large over the last few decades" (1). In doing so, Redding's work both departs from and innovates in several ways upon the large volume of extant criticism on haunting, the gothic, and American literature that has been produced over the last twenty years. He emphasizes, for example, that although the persistent presence of ghosts is linked to the unfinished business of the past, haints also have an important relation to futurity: "Ghosts are revenants of a violent past, certainly, and are also spectral wavering images of potential alternative pasts. Additionally, we are haunted by potential futures" (7). Ghosts not only remind Americans of the sins of our national past, but also open up the possibility of a future that is more just and inclusive.

And yet Redding is not particularly sanguine about the potential of ghosts to provide healing. By insisting that ghosts possess a "real presence" (6) rather than being merely imaginary, he argues that they leave the question of recovery radically open: "Ghosts speak for a *justice that beggars any act of cultural recovery*: They want more, and more, and more" (75). Not surprisingly, although Redding discusses a wide range of novels in *Haints*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) is central to his argument. In *Beloved* the novel and the character, we can see how the work of memory is a form of labor that is a necessary part of the effort to pay the debts of the past. While there are no guarantees that the effort will pay off, Redding argues that it remains crucial for American culture in the twenty-first century to continue to make this effort, so that "whenever a fantasized 'America' has been staked out," there is a response that provides a counternarrative to that national fantasy (114).

Beloved also plays a key role in Norman's *Dead Women Talking*. Calling the character of Beloved the prototypical example of the dead woman talking, Norman argues that collectively these women "raise questions about gender and voice, sexual violence and nonnormative sexuality, class privilege and cross-class contact, reparations for past racial injustices, and the immigrant's fraught relationship with national identity" (2). This quote illustrates that though Norman may be more concerned with the redressing of past injustices than Redding in his discussion of ghosts, both of their analyses share an emphasis on potential futurity. This possible future comes across particularly clearly in one of the book's central claims: that what these dead women want is citizenship, to be active (albeit posthumous) members of the community.

Looked at in this light, Morrison's novel, according to Norman, hinges on whether Beloved's community will either accept her as one of its own or reject her as an intruder. Norman follows this dialectic between acceptance and rejection through an eclectic range of texts, beginning with those where, as Norman is forced to admit, women wail or ventriloquize rather than speak (Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" [1839] and Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw" [1898]) to more contemporary examples where dead

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women insist on forging a counterpublic in which they can participate as citizens (Ana Castillo's *So Far From God* [1993] and Suzan-Lori Parks's *Getting Mother's Body* [2003]). In a brilliantly unexpected conclusion, Norman finishes the book by analyzing a silent dead woman, the No Name Woman in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1975). Although dead women talking establish the various ways in which finding a voice can be empowering, Norman argues that Kingston's work suggests, perhaps counterintuitively, that silence can also be a form of empowerment and resistance. In this sense, according to Norman, "to demand that dead women talk may be a violation of their posthumous integrity and right to silence" (21).

Norman draws on Diana Fuss's work on corpse poems in *Dead Women Talking*, and this work forms just one part of the most interesting and thought-provoking book in this cluster, Fuss's *Dying Modern*. In a manner that is both concise and strongly typological, Fuss studies modern poetry's fascination with premortem and postmortem speech by focusing on three different voices in the modern poetry of death: the dying voice (in the form of last words poems), the reviving voice (in the form of corpse poems), and the surviving voice (in the form of the aubade). Fuss not only provides readings of multiple examples of each one of the types (which she also breaks down into various subtypes), but she also tries to account for their continued popularity.

Fuss draws on the work of numerous cultural historians in arguing that in the modern period, death has been both banalized and removed from public view, a matter for hospitals and funeral directors rather than families and communities. Against this background, Fuss argues that "cultural attempts to deny death were at once elucidated and counteracted by literature's growing interest in death's diminished presence. In response to the social decline of death and the cultural erasure of the human cadaver, poets began reviving the dead through the vitalizing properties of speech" (47). The aim of such revivals, Fuss claims, was not (or not only) to resacralize death, but more generally to make it mean again or, as she puts it in relation to the corpse poem, "to make dying 'dying' once again" (71).

Perhaps the most striking dimension of Fuss's discussion is her attention to what we might call the self-referential dimension of the poetic elegy. In accounting for the persistent popularity of the elegy among modern and contemporary poets, Fuss not only argues for the mutual imbrication of elegy and ethics but goes so far as to claim that "in a very real sense ethics *is* elegy: speaking, acting, and surviving in the face of loss, no matter how irretrievable those losses may be" (7). The reverse is also true, of course: the elegy has an ineluctable ethical dimension: "In an age of unrelenting skepticism, not to say fatalism, elegy may be the one voice that keeps on calling" (110). All of these books, in their different ways, advise their readers to heed the voice that calls.

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***The Nature of Trauma in American Novels*. By Michelle Balaev. Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press. 2012. xix, 141 pp. Cloth, $79.95; paper, $29.95.**

***Inhuman Citizenship: Traumatic Enjoyment and Asian American Literature*. By Juliana Chang. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2012. 241 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $25.00.**

"Trauma in the novel," muses Michelle Balaev, "is an evocation of suffering that invites the reader to see over the edge of her own life in order to cultivate an understanding of another" (xix). While an invocation of understanding another is commonplace enough in literary studies, applying this concept to literary trauma theory is a bold move. Suffering, or pain, or any of the various manifestations of trauma may not inevitably lead to a "place of opacity," as Nancy Miller and Jason Daniel Tougaw write in *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community* (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2002), "that cannot be illuminated or put into language" (11). Balaev in *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels* and Juliana Chang in *Inhuman Citizenship: Traumatic Enjoyment and Asian American Literature* interrogate interpretations of trauma that isolate the victim and his or her trauma in this "place of opacity" and instead propose new ways for readers to access and understand traumatic events and their psychological repercussions.

Balaev's cleverly titled study, *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels*, urges a reconsideration of how to understand trauma (that is, its nature) and argues the importance of contextual elements such as culture, temporality, place, and landscape (nature of the wilder sort) for understanding a traumatic experience in literature. Her first chapter offers an incisive summary and critique of the trend in literary trauma theory of "selective use of psychology theories that builds a solitary paradigm of pathology to explain trauma" (3). The traditional model of trauma, as seen in the work of Cathy Caruth and others, "claims trauma is a speechless void, unrepresentable, inherently pathologic, timeless, and repetitious" (3). Balaev meticulously demonstrates the limitations of this model, arguing instead that people experience trauma differently: not all traumatic experiences defy representation; not all traumatized victims experience dissociation; and not all traumatized victims heal through narrative recall and abreaction alone, but instead turn to other social and cultural elements to facilitate recovery and understand the world anew. Titled "Trauma Theory and Its Discontents: The Potentials of Pluralism," this chapter is required reading for anyone working on literary trauma theory.

The subsequent four chapters illustrate Balaev's argument that contextual factors are key to understanding a traumatized protagonist's experience. In Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge* (1997), place and temporality are underscored as determinants for constructing meaning for the traumatized protagonists, who are Vietnamese refugees to the United States. In Leslie Marmon Silko's

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Ceremony (1977), war is but one of many traumas that disintegrate the protagonist Tayo's sense of self; racial discrimination, poverty, and childhood neglect also contribute. In lieu of abreaction, Tayo heals by embracing Laguna cultural mythologies and rituals as well as establishing a relationship to the land. Either of these two chapters, paired with the first, would be an ideal reading for a graduate seminar on trauma and/or ethnic American literature. In her final chapters, Balaev examines Edward Abbey's *Black Sun* and Robert Barclay's *Melal*. *Black Sun* complicates the traditional understanding in literary trauma theory of silence and speechlessness: "This novel . . . suggest[s] silence is an active choice and one that demonstrates the reformulation of subjectivity" (72). *Melal* demonstrates the varying reaction of individuals to the same traumatic event—here, the displacement and health problems of the people of the Marshall Islands after nuclear bombs are tested by the American military—and challenges the notion of transhistorical trauma which posits that "the land represents the present-day victim status of peoples associated with that landscape" (94). Each individual, Balaev argues, reformulates the self after a traumatic experience, and the resultant transformation depends on contextual factors like nature, place, and cultural values such as mythology.

In her conclusion, Balaev suggests, "If viewed as a part of the tragic form, then trauma in the novel might even indicate that, in Nietzsche's words, 'life is indestructibly powerful and pleasurable'" (120). The placement of pleasure alongside traumatic experience is similarly evoked in Chang's *Inhuman Citizenship*. Using Lacanian psychoanalysis as her critical foundation, Chang argues that racial subjects are the site of traumatic enjoyment—her interpretation of jouissance—within the national imaginary of the United States. Chang investigates the racial inhumanity and "family business" seen in Asian immigrant families—and especially their second-generation children—that underlie the national fantasy of neoliberalism and exceptionalism. Texts such as Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone*, Brian Ascalon Roley's *American Son*, Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*, and Suki Kim's *The Interpreter* are not only "narratives about trauma, but they also produc[e] trauma. They rende[r] Asian Americans not only as the objects but also as the vehicles and agents of its inhuman suffering" (6). Each chapter examines a type of citizenship—melancholic, shameful, romantic, and perverse, respectively—that underscores the inhumanity of the racial subject and challenges "the myth of America as an exceptionalist and innocent site of new beginnings" (27). Chang's chapters explore four guiding tropes of the racial inhuman as embodied by a second-generation Asian American protagonist: "the living dead as surplus life substance; animal enjoyment that is unbound by law; the antifetish that shatters national romance; [and] the death drive that destroys even as it rebirths" (14). Merging meticulous textual analysis with rigorous theoretical foundations, Chang writes in a lucid prose that energizes the complex arguments proffered. *Inhuman Citizenship* would be most accessible to scholars already conversant in

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Lacanian theory and of particular interest to those working in Asian American studies.

In understanding jouissance as traumatic enjoyment, Chang argues that we readers often enjoy depictions of trauma, but then ourselves are traumatized by our seemingly unethical response to such texts. Implicating the reader in such a way charts a different course than postmemory or transhistorical understandings of trauma; indeed, pairing readerly pleasure and trauma offers a contentious but provocative new direction for literary trauma theory.

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***Disaster Writing: The Cultural Politics of Catastrophe in Latin America*. By Mark D. Anderson. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press. 2011. x, 241 pp. Cloth, $49.50; paper, $22.50; e-book, $22.50.**

***Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War: Representations of Nuclear Weapons and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds*. By Paul Williams. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool Univ. Press. 2011. viii, 278 pp. $85.50.**

Mark Anderson's *Disaster Writing* and Paul Williams's *Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War* ruminate on discursively man-made environments that benefit a nation's healthy bodies and economically elite populations (in Latin America, per Anderson's lens) as well as nuclear representations that indicate the thematic preservation of white civilization by Western Europe and the United States (as Williams demonstrates). National coherence has been achieved through the canonization of natural catastrophes and superweapons in cultural productions from the Hispanophone Americas and the Anglophone regions of the West. Anderson's and Williams's comparative scholarly works bring about sharp new insights on how to read particular subjects from particular geographies, prompting important questions on the human body, race, rights, and citizenship.

Anderson investigates how nationhood formation, ways of knowing, ideological struggles, and political control arise during massive scales of destruction, making his framing of disasters—more political than natural—compelling. Literarily traveling from South America to Mesoamerica, narrative approaches are surveyed through the disastrous politics that germinate from the varied representations and negotiations of environmental disasters. His genealogy of "iconic" crises ranges from the Dominican Republic's 1930 Cyclone San Zenón (chapter 1) and great droughts in Brazil's *sertão*, that country's arid northeastern area (chapter 2), to Central American volcanic eruptions (chapter 3) and Mexico City's 1985 earthquake (chapter 4). Anderson's discursive

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Latin American "anthropocene"—a geological age, in this instance, entangled with the state's political and explanatory power in the coherent imagining of nation—casts light on the structural violence around moments of vulnerability and how "naturally" marginalized groups are disproportionately reinscribed, yet again, in quotidian life. Take, as a case in point, nineteenth-century imagery of the *sertão*'s "otherness" and its representations as a "*terra ignota*" (61) with "moral maladies"—or, simply, a place with "moral drought" (74). These representations, as Anderson has it, preserve Brazil's patriarchal and economic structures. One might speculate how the politics of environmental discourse may enlarge Anderson's premise: could environmental citizenships—rather than traditional national models—generate different insights into possibilities of cultural being as well as contribute to an ethical quality of life?

The construction of coherent national identities in modern democracies and their hereditary futures, interpretations of humanity and dehumanization, nuclear anxieties, and political rhetoric and power also propel the conceit of Williams's thesis. *Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War* devotes keen attention to the hierarchical and "political utility of whiteness and blackness" (13) in representations of superweapons—via the reading, viewing, and listening experiences of novels, films, speeches, short stories, poems, and popular culture—from 1945 to 2001. Key terms of European imperialism and nation-building projects—*civilization*, *race*, and *nation* (2)—surface as white supremacist master narratives. Nuclear technology epitomizes "the achievements, atrocities, and attitudes of European and American modernity" (15). Of great interest is Williams's second chapter, wherein US speculative narratives are scrutinized. In these pages, North America's white settlement has shrunk and white Americans struggle for political recognition (59), or the "common dream" of America (78). Williams posits that a vulnerable United States needs world assistance in these fictional iterations. Certain ethnoracial populations disappear. And national coherence is achieved by default whiteness. Equally useful is the trope of the "soft place," the polar opposite of civilization that is "resistant to cartographic inscription" and therefore "unclaimed in European eyes" (86–87). The projected future of non-Anglo bodies and spaces, simply put, remains white. Nuclear weapons, Williams underscores, must be read "for the 'heart of whiteness' at their core" (246).

Anderson and Williams take thoughtful notice of the national and environmental legacies readers inherit, especially post–Cold War. Their literary analyses may indeed function as critically declassified documents that have been rendered visible by two interlocutors who relentlessly grapple with the historical trajectories and profound symbolism that, culturally speaking, cannot be exterminated.

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Sentimental Readers: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of a Disparaged Rhetoric. **By Faye Halpern. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press. 2013. xxii, 215 pp. $45.00.**

Twentieth-Century Sentimentalism: Narrative Appropriation in American Literature. **By Jennifer A. Williamson. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press. 2014. 232 pp. Cloth, $80.00; paper, $26.95; web PDF, $26.95.**

The Glass Slipper: Women and Love Stories. **By Susan Ostrov Weisser. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press. 2013. xiii, 235 pp. Cloth, $80.00; paper, $26.95; web PDF, $26.95.**

Scholars continue to reckon, in ways both large and small, with the legacy and persistence of popular sentimental fiction. Denigrated in its heyday (which some say never ended) and alternately celebrated and denounced by feminist critics seeking to recover female literary traditions, its power to elicit strong emotions nonetheless persists. And that is not necessarily a bad thing, according to the three books under review. Faye Halpern offers a new rhetorical context for the emergence of sentimental fiction in the nineteenth century and urges us to reconsider our assumptions about how emotional identification works for readers of fiction. Jennifer Williamson shows that twentieth-century novelists adapted sentimental strategies long after literary modernists had dismissed the genre as artificial and aesthetically deficient. Susan Ostrov Weisser documents a different but related line of influence in her study of gender and love stories, focusing specifically on the heterosexual romance narrative as it evolved in Victorian England and as it functions in American culture today.

In *Sentimental Readers*, Halpern argues that popular sentimental novels of the nineteenth century were responding, at least in part, to a professional conundrum that dogged the powerful male-dominated culture of oratory: the inconvenient reality that persuasive rhetoric might well be used to make audiences believe in untruths. The sentimental rhetoric of novels like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* substituted embodiment, presence, and even inarticulateness for rhetorically perfect speech. Sentimentality's most eloquent orators, Halpern observes, actually speak relatively little, and they tend to be women, enslaved people, and children who are represented as having uneducated speech, and as being driven more by their hearts than their heads. In her attempt to avoid the layers and complications of the written word, Harriet Beecher Stowe "aspires to orality" (109). While it remains uncertain whether sentimental novelists were significantly moved by the fear that morally upstanding rhetoricians might be revealed as charlatans of the first order, Halpern's reading of sentimental rhetoric through the lens of rhetoric and composition studies is precise and original. Throughout, Halpern's authorial voice is more wise than clever, and she winds her readers carefully along a well-trod critical path to reach some unexpectedly rewarding insights. She analyzes famous preacher Henry Ward Beecher's 1875 trial for adultery to illustrate how the paradoxes of sentimental rhetoric could collapse on themselves—and why sentimental

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fiction inspired more skepticism as the century wore on. Readers intrigued by Halpern's historically nuanced argument may also want to read Barbara Hochman's recent study of how racist readings of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* evolved in the late nineteenth century (*Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution* [Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2011]). In a lively comparison of Herman Melville's ironic *Benito Cereno* (1855) with Stowe's earnest *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Halpern mounts a defense of *un*critical reading and makes a welcome gesture toward the historicizing of critical reading practices. She concludes by suggesting that sentimental fiction forces us to grapple with the complexity of our own identities as readers.

In *Twentieth-Century Sentimentalism*, Williamson sets out to prove that despite its many critics, nineteenth-century sentimentalism has continued to influence twentieth-century American fiction. She succeeds, but perhaps the better question is, why would literary historians ever think otherwise? Williamson examines sentimental strategies in three proletarian novels—Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* (1932), Josephine Johnson's *Now in November* (1932), and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)—and three neoslave narratives—Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Her linking of sentimentality in proletarian fiction and neoslave narratives is provocative, and it helps her make the case that twentieth-century novelists have adapted sentimental modes to reach readers outside the white middle class. Yet at times the book feels unsatisfyingly split between its two genres and historical moments; three chapters focus on class conflict, and three chapters focus on racial conflict, but this reader wished for more explicit analysis of the intersection of race and class in the evolution of the sentimental tradition in the twentieth century. Williamson does provide some such analysis in the conclusion, when she critiques Kathryn Stockett's bestselling novel *The Help* (2009); according to Williamson, Stockett's sentimentalism reinforces the race and class barriers that proletarian fiction and neoslave narratives seek to dismantle.

Weisser's *The Glass Slipper* examines how Victorian ideas about women and romantic love are being retold in contemporary American culture. Instead of unpacking the complex dynamics of emotional identification, Weisser explores the paradoxes of enduring assumptions about monogamous heterosexual unions. Informed by feminist scholarship but aimed at a wide audience, Weisser's study asks why the dream of Prince Charming remains so robust, even after generations of change in opportunities and expectations for women. Weisser does not address the sentimental tradition that figures so prominently in Halpern's and Williamson's books, but other scholars have. In *The Female Complaint* (Duke Univ. Press, 2008), Lauren Berlant answers Weisser's question in the context of sentimental fiction; analyzing the American sentimental tradition beginning with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Berlant argues that the patriarchal fantasy of female fulfillment through heterosexual intimacy generated a white middle-class women's culture anchored by "self-contained, per-

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formative modes of complaint" (253). As a Victorianist, however, Weisser seeks her answers first in Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, and nineteenth-century Anglo-American women's magazines, then turns to American popular culture of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Throughout, Weisser exposes the contradictions of the "Glass Slipper" trope: the notion that it is every woman's wish (and destiny) to be chosen as "the One" and rewarded with an intimate union that guarantees her happiness and security. Her lively case studies include fairy tales, Hollywood films, television series such as *Sex in the City*, and African American romance imprints, along with an analysis of the race-segregated nature of Harlequin romances. She explores the emergence of what she calls the modern romance, which downplays the realities of oppression, stresses heroic rescues, and tames female rebellion. Yet Weisser repeatedly defends the pleasures of romance narratives and cautions against dismissing those pleasures as inherently wrong. Rather, she argues that even if the irresolvable contradictions of love stories perpetuate impossible expectations that contemporary women struggle to meet, they also minister to an authentic desire for recognition and intimacy. Ultimately, however, Weisser indicts the genre as dishonest; "its mixed messages for women are too often cleverly disguised" (212).

These studies suggest the rich possibilities that the study of "women's fiction" still offers; Halpern's work is particularly important in its call for a more supple approach to reading practices. Much work remains to be done. Surely affect theory—which is not invoked by these authors but has posed many relevant questions about the origin, limits, and power of feeling—has more to tell us about literary sentimentality.

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***Radical Sensations: World Movements, Violence, and Visual Culture*. By Shelley Streeby. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press. 2013. xxii, 328 pp. Cloth, $94.95; paper, $25.95; e-book, $25.95.**

***Humanitarian Violence: The US Deployment of Diversity*. By Neda Atanasoski. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2013. 260 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $25.00; e-book, $25.00.**

American studies has so decisively taken a transnational turn that we may want to stop referring to it as a break from the interdiscipline's main path. Shelley Streeby's *Radical Sensations* and Neda Atanasoski's *Humanitarian Violence*, two books on global cultural studies and US empire, offer us deep and ample evidence of how far transnational methodology has come in the field, and how far-reaching it can be, not (just) in terms of geographic spread,

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but in the innovative intellectual lines it can help us draw across previously unconnected subjects and objects of study. For Streeby, the turn to empire allows a history of the early twentieth-century Left and labor political movements that exceeds the boundaries of nation-states—indeed, that would be occluded by thinking only through those frames. For Atanasoski, the transnational leaves room for Eastern Europe as a significant site in the ideological narratives of US notions of "diversity" in the post–Civil Rights era. Perhaps most importantly, the transnational "turn" in these books is one that maps a complexity of cultural production and reception that cannot be traced with national boundaries alone, and certainly not by making the US its only or primary referent. Culture, then, is key to both the why and the how of transnational methodology for both books—and, we might extrapolate, to the field of American studies.

Radical Sensations works in the register of deep historical time, extending Streeby's amazing nineteenth-century work on genre and nationalism into the story of radical movements based mostly in the Americas. In her foregrounding of the Haymarket Riot and subsequent representations and reverberations of the executions of labor leaders and writers that followed through to 1927, Streeby nuances and then shifts our story of the US Left at the turn of the century. The new narrative she presents is both internationally minded and constituted, not just in the citizenship of some its lesser-known leaders—Lucy Parsons, Enrique Flores Magón and Ricardo Flores Magón, Hubert H. Harrison, and others—but in the radical press and especially in the visual culture included in those often dual-language, transnationally circulated papers. It is an incredibly detailed cultural history, working hard to thread the significance of the visual and sensation into its already compelling renarrativization of what Streeby calls global movements. If the book doesn't always pull this off seamlessly or evenly, neither does the history itself, which is full of funding, imprisonment, informational, political, and deportation gaps that Streeby tracks through the archives as diligently as she presents and reads the beautiful and scathing posters, illustrations, and cartoons reproduced in the book. Streeby leaves us wanting yet a third volume to her work on sensation, one that would perhaps trace more of the "sensational counter-sensationalisms" she documents in the end of part II of her book, where she briefly forays into the anthropologist-collected narrative of a Yaqui woman, Chepa Moreno, in Mexico. *Radical Sensations* is a work of astonishing complexity, a cultural history that gives us a portrait into a bridge period of Hemispheric eras, one that must piece together nineteenth-century physical expansion to later twentieth-century articulations of what Streeby names the "cultural nationalisms and the ethnic Americanisms" that follow (268). Thus, the book "call[s] into question the inevitability of the nation as the horizon for utopian hopes for justice, freedom, and revolution" (19) through its careful analysis of events and their culturally mediated afterlives that were produced for and circulated beyond purely national audiences.

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Atanasoski similarly works to recast the historical period of the Cold War, examining post–Civil Rights American ideologies of diversity and multiculturalism as also postsocialist. Her strongest argument is about expanding our vision of US empire to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (with a brief investigation of Vietnam) "as a neglected but constitutive region in the American (trans)-national imaginary" (3). The language of supposedly unchanging ancient/tribal/ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and even Africa casts the United States as transcendent, Atanasoski convincingly argues, making itself into the ur-location of race and religious tolerance, with any contrary events cast as exceptions that prove or even help produce the ruling narrative. Although *Humanitarian Violence* retreads some key human-rights and transnational-feminist-studies critiques in noting the US narratives of humanitarian exceptionalism to justify military intervention, its move to consider the deployment of racialization both of the United States as diverse and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as dangerously homogenous is new and welcome as an original comparative analysis of the post–Civil Rights period in American studies. Atanasoski's chapter on the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s, in particular, and the concept of what she cleverly terms "visual transparency in US notions of humanitarianism" (105) will resonate for those of us teaching the context for the "war on terror" that followed at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Both texts offer new geographic and cultural chronologies for American studies that should expand our perceived scopes in the classroom but also in easy assumptions about who might be for or against radical action in key political moments and movements, about the location of racialized discourse in Left politics, and about who, what, and where are cast as the Other to the United States' exceptionalism. Streeby and Atanasoski tenaciously map the ways that not just state power but cultural power—and its opposition—have fueled these ingenious representations of imperialism and US empire. *Humanitarian Violence* and *Radical Sensations* chart alternative transnationalisms through mass-cultural movements for the hearts and minds of both the mainstream and lesser-visited streams of dissent and critique. In this, their ideological, intellectual, and cultural histories set the bar high for the transnational turns yet to come in American studies.

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