Book Reviews

***Shades of Green: Visions of Nature in the Literature of American Slavery, 1770–1860*. By Ian Frederick Finseth. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. xi, 348 pp. 2009. $39.95.**

***Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery*. By Glenda R. Carpio. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2008. xi, 287 pp. Paper, $19.95.**

The two books under review offer new avenues into the understanding of racial formation in the United States. *Shades of Green* focuses on nature's role in defining race during the early national and antebellum periods, and *Laughing Fit to Kill* examines black humor's critique of racial stereotypes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Both books are excellent additions to the critical field of U.S. literary race studies.

Ian Finseth's *Shades of Green* investigates the complex entanglements of race, nature, and culture. Revealing how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century understandings of race spring from natural science and philosophy and are embedded in depictions of the natural world, Finseth argues for the foundational role of nature in the development of racial ideology. Through a wide-ranging analysis of cultural discourses (natural science, natural philosophy, geography, phenomenology, aesthetics, religion, politics, and economics), he convincingly demonstrates how understandings of nature animated and delineated discussions of racial identity and, by extension, slavery. Although Finseth shows how extensively this issue permeated U.S. literature and culture, he focuses most specifically on how representations of nature influenced antislavery thought. In deploying images of the natural world to mobilize public opinion for sociopolitical change, antislavery writers often conveyed a contradictory message that naturalized racial difference even as it accused slavery of violating natural liberty. Finseth's focus on antislavery discourse underscores the difficulty of translating cultural ideas into political action.

This study is as remarkable for its depth as for its breadth. The book is

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organized around paired chapters: the first offers an overview of the cultural discourses of the period, and the second provides a close reading of literary or visual texts in relation to those discourses. This structure allows Finseth to give equal focus to cultural and literary discourses and the intersections between them. He is as interested in the aesthetic traditions (the pastoral, the georgic, the picturesque) that inform representations of nature as he is in the scientific. His serious attention to visual images of race and the landscape tradition is especially useful. Finseth's insistence on reading European American and African American texts side by side (Olaudah Equiano and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur; David Walker, Martin Delany, and Ralph Waldo Emerson; Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe) also provides important insights into how racial position informed differing approaches to representations of nature and race. Most important, *Shades of Green* places the racial subject at the center of environmental literary study.

In *Laughing Fit to Kill*, Glenda Carpio documents the practices and purposes of African American cultural humor by tracing its long tradition from slavery to the post–Civil Rights era. Pairing violence with humor, Carpio's study argues that black humor articulates the tragic legacy of slavery and racial injustice. By laughing in the face of this history, African Americans perform a ritual of redress. Black humor serves both as a recognition of dispossession and as a critique of racism; it speaks of grief as well as grievance. As Carpio shows, black humor is more than a coping mechanism: it is a powerful form of social and political critique as well as a rich expression of creativity and pleasure.

By looking at a wide range of literary (Charles Chesnutt, William Wells Brown, Ishmael Reed, Suzan-Lori Parks), visual (Robert Colescott and Kara Walker), and performative (Richard Pryor and Dave Chappelle) representations of black humor, Carpio documents multiple strategies and varieties of black humor that have persisted over two centuries and in multiple artistic settings. Through nuanced close readings, she examines an array of comedic conjure from boasting and burlesque to satire and signifying. The book's central focus, however, is the ways in which black humor animates and defetishizes racial stereotypes. Again and again, as Carpio proves, black artists use laughter as a way to reveal the chilling absurdity of these stereotypes. By deftly negotiating the ethical and political implications of such signifying written in and through the body, she articulates black humor's risks and rewards. While she understands black humor to play in two different registers—one of catharsis and the other of tragedy—the book's success at delineating the tenacity of racial typecasting leaves the reader not with release but with a painful understanding of just how difficult it is to change the laugh track.

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***Sex Expression and American Women Writers, 1860–1940*. By Dale M. Bauer. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press. 2009. xi, 277 pp. Cloth, $55.00; paper, $21.95.**

***Uncommon Women: Gender and Representation in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Women's Writing*. By Laura Laffrado. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press. 2009. viii, 187 pp. $39.95.**

These days, one reason for studying literature is to grapple with the textures of normativity: its sturdiest, most closely woven central stretches and its tangled edges. The old idea that some dominant order was undermined whenever its precepts were not fully endorsed by a literary work has mainly given way to a sense that what looks from one perspective like disruption appears from another perspective to be part of the ordinary dynamism of normativity as a modern, adaptive form of power. It's not that changes in norms are illusory—not that we are taken in by the ruses of power if we believe we see improvements—but that many changes renew and extend the power of normativity in the course of adapting it. As a result, many critics are working out new ways to describe and assess literary texts' share in transforming the fabric of normativity. These two new studies contribute to this project, analyzing ways in which women authors and their characters navigate gendered expectations.

Dale Bauer's *Sex Expression and American Women Writers* makes a major contribution to the cultural history of sexuality, properly understood as part of the history of selfhood. Bauer's central question is broad but magnificently precise: "[H]ow did self-expression become fixated on sexuality as the prevailing, even defining quality of the self, the trait with the most potential for cultural change from the 1860s to the 1940s?" (29). This period she characterizes as "postsentimental" because the forms of public and private experience previously configured within sentimentalism came to be reconfigured in relation to sexuality, a newly privileged domain of intimacy and authenticity. Bauer focuses on women writers, perhaps in part because their writings participated so vividly in this reworking of sentimentalism. Women writers also had a special investment in the opportunities for social transformation associated with sexuality once it became imaginatively independent of reproduction. Bauer unfolds this new "sexual imaginary" developed between the Civil War and World War II, tracing relays between works of fiction and political, sociological, and psychological theories about sexuality (102). In this way, she defines and explores a profound change in the terms of normativity: an important transformation of the possibilities for human action, knowledge, and self-understanding.

"Sex expression" (Mary Austin's term from 1914) was both "material and rhetorical" (1), involving sexual feelings, capacities, practices, and meanings: public as well as private ways in which sexual norms operated. Bauer's history of sex expression is episodic and loosely chronological, taking up instruc-

tive fictional trends such as highly sexualized "ugly girls" in post–Civil War fiction and the changing representations of middle-aged women's sexuality at the turn of the century, when sexuality was becoming a property of youth. Along the way, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Edith Wharton, Anzia Yezierska, Jessie Fauset, Fannie Hurst, and a host of other women writers (plus some men) came into prominence for inventing terms and narrative strategies to capture the new promises, dangers, and burdens of sexuality.

Laura Laffrado's *Uncommon Women* focuses on a set of nonfiction writings by middle-class white women. Drawing on Leigh Gilmore's understanding of "autobiographics"—autobiographical portions or dimensions of writings in other genres—Laffrado analyzes "self-writing" in travel narratives and sketches as well as in more conventionally autobiographical texts (14, 3). *Uncommon Women* concentrates on women who had adventures—overt or covert—and wrote intriguing accounts of them. This study therefore assembles an unexpected array of women's writings and brings them into new significance. Sarah Kemble Knight's travels by herself in eighteenth-century North America and S. Emma E. Edmonds's cross-dressing espionage during the Civil War were obviously dangerous exploits, challenging normative femininity in ways that had to be soft-pedaled for publication. Laffrado also demonstrates that Fanny Fern's periodical writings and Louisa May Alcott's *Hospital Sketches* offer more controversial materials than most readers have recognized, such as young female nurses' experiences of being left alone in rooms full of men in beds. Laffrado rightly insists that gendered expectations suffuse these texts, emphasizing factors such as the risks faced by women traveling alone and the forms of public censure triggered by even minor acts of female insubordination. Especially interesting is the chapter on Civil War writings, which proposes that public awareness of women's wartime gender-bending contributed to the postwar sense that "prevailing assumptions regarding statehood, gender, and race appeared open to revision" (132).

Although *Uncommon Women* demonstrates that texts could engage prescriptions for female propriety in contradictory and uneven ways, Laffrado's treatment of normativity is somewhat simplistic. Her analysis mainly pits gestures of compliance (understood as the precondition for these narratives' public acceptance) against materials and analyses in these writings that disrupt or unsettle gender norms, which are in turn grounded in the ideology of "true womanhood." Laffrado initially proposes that a variety of "U.S. middle-class scripts of female behavior" were at work in the nineteenth century (6), but in practice there is not much variety encountered or much historical specificity to the norms identified: the implications of true womanhood seem static and isolated from other workings of power and privilege. The final chapter turns to Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in order to "test" the generalizations made about the study's focal texts by white, middle-class women (133). Jacobs's history certainly casts white privilege into relief. However, race and class could have been at work in the analysis from the beginning (as

they only intermittently were), calling attention to the ideological sleights of hand at work in the slippery categories of "white" and "middle-class" as they collaborated with the workings of gender.

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***Lost Bodies: Inhabiting the Borders of Life and Death*. By Laura E. Tanner. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press. 2006. xiii, 264 pp. Cloth, $57.50; paper, $19.95.**

***Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth-Century America*. By Jennifer Putzi. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2006. xi, 195 pp. $36.95.**

Both Laura Tanner's *Lost Bodies* and Jennifer Putzi's *Identifying Marks* explore the sociocultural implications of the human body once it is marked by disease, disability, illness, or death via the tattoo, the scar, or the brand. Each project is a major contribution to the field of cultural studies, theories of grief and mourning, AIDS scholarship, and popular culture.

In *Lost Bodies*, Tanner investigates spectators' attempts to renegotiate their sociocultural relationship to the disabled or "lost" body once it is displayed in the public sphere. She evaluates this phenomenon and concludes that "cultural distinctions [that] force bodies into simple binaries including youth and age, ability and disability, the healthy and the dying . . . erect cultural boundaries that enforce the illusion of stability by disrupting our identification with our own bodies as well as the bodies of others" (6). In the presence of death, spectators strain to imagine a "living" body to ease the grieving process. The sympathy card industry, Tanner observes, composes short lines of text that refuse "acknowledgment of the immediacy of grief and the irrecuperable dimensions of loss" (213).

Tanner utilizes photographs of AIDS patients, literature and poetry, space (the waiting room), and autobiography to interrogate the ways in which people understand and respond to bodily processes. She writes, "I chart the impact of social and representational forces that pull us out of our bodies to insist—even in the face of mortality—upon the subject's status as healthy, autonomous and whole" (2). Grief, loss, and confrontation with mortality through the lost body, according to Tanner, set off the observer's struggle for inoculation from the inevitable. The book is divided into two parts: *The Dying Body* and *The Body of Grief*. In part 1, Tanner looks at works such as Sharon Olds's *The Father* and photographer Nicholas Nixon's book *People with AIDS*. Here she challenges discourses on the gaze made popular by Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1978) and advances a revision of the scholarship of the act of seeing. She writes, "When the object of the gaze changes from an

attractive female form that the viewer objectifies or a screen protagonist with whom the viewer identifies to the wasting body of a terminally ill patient, the structures of looking that Mulvey locates within a dynamic of visual pleasure demand to be revised" (19–20).

Part 2 assesses the culture of grief. Tanner discovers that theories of mourning have failed to aid her in coming to terms with her feelings after the death of her father. To manage grief and mourning, she argues for a "corporeal theory of grief," which addresses the way "loss . . . shapes the feeling of loss." Psychoanalytic and cultural theories, she notes, "often marginalize or ignore the way in which *feeling* is both an emotional and a physical phenomenon" (84). Part 2 includes discussions of works such as Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*, and Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*; the postscript identifies episodes in popular culture such as the HBO series *Six Feet Under* and explores the manner of grieving the lost body post-9/11.

In a similar vein, Putzi interrogates nineteenth-century representations of and responses to the healthy tattooed or scarred body and the sociocultural and political consequences of its appearance in the public sphere in *Identifying Marks*. The study illustrates that "the tattooed or scarred body marks the precise location at which the cultural status quo (or the classical body) can be called into question." Putzi explains, "Physically and ideologically, the tattoo and the scar both sustain *and* disrupt the 'conquering gaze' of the classical male body" (2). As she probes this subject across literary genres and lines of race, Putzi discovers that these marks destabilize subject positions but allow for a reinscription of subjectivity and agency within sociocultural boundaries. She begins with a historical overview of the marked body and the degree to which it "always inspired a strange mixture of fascination and anxiety" (15), then proceeds with brilliant close readings of texts in subsequent chapters, including Herman Melville's *Typee* and Royal Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*; Maria Susanna Cummins's *The Lamplighter* and Harriett Prescott Spofford's "The Strathsays"; Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"; and Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South*. Each narrative "consider[s] the specifics of race, gender, and identity as well as the larger desire to mark and unmark as well as the commonalities between them" (19).

In her epilogue, "Tattooed Ladies," Putzi concludes that the book's focus on the nineteenth-century body can shed light on women and the body in today's world. She claims that "tattoo narratives" also "operate on the understanding that women's bodies are always already marked by the cultures in which they live, and that tattooing *can* allow women to assert their own agency and sense of ownership of their own bodies" (158). What is puzzling, though, is Putzi's omission of Carol Henderson's *Scarring the Black Body: Race and Representation in African American Literature* (2002), which is in intense conversation with Putzi's chapters on the "signifying power" of the scar in the nineteenth century as mapped onto the African American body (100). An inclusion of

Henderson's work would have augmented the spectrum of Putzi's otherwise broad scholarship, and apprised the reader of the rigorous discourses on this subject.

The most fascinating elements of both books, nevertheless, are the meticulous close readings. Each generates vivid insights that magnify the reader's own perceptions and fears of the human body. The research is ambitious, especially regarding the historical turns contextualizing the subject matter. *Lost Bodies* and *Identifying Marks* provide valuable historical and methodological foundations for a (re)consideration of the body as it operates within and without sociocultural and political prescriptions to maintain, if not encourage, a sense of what is normal.

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***Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. By John Rieder. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press. 2008. xii, 183 pp. Cloth, $70.00; paper, $24.95.**

***Black Frankenstein: The Making of an American Metaphor*. By Elizabeth Young. New York: New York Univ. Press. 2008. xii, 307 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $23.00.**

***Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America*. By Matthew J. Costello. New York: Continuum. 2009. viii, 293 pp. Cloth, $95.00; paper, $24.95.**

John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* arises out of a lacuna in standard theories of science fiction. Where Darko Suvin privileges "cognitive estrangement" as the genre's essential feature—the de- and refamiliarizing power of imagined alterities—and where Fredric Jameson privileges the radical retemporalization of our disordered present into the settled historical past of some possible future, Rieder refocuses our attention on the colonial gaze. He argues that because science fiction emerges alongside (and out of) imperialist expansion, as a genre it not only "exposes what colonialism imposes" but is also produced and bound by the horizon of colonialist ideology (15).

Following, but importantly altering, the approaches of Suvin and Jameson (as well as film theorist Laura Mulvey), Rieder centers his narrativization of the history of science fiction on the colonial catastrophe. First, he argues that the psychic fuel for sci-fi encounters with time travelers, aliens, robots, mutants, and other parahuman subjectivities can be found in the social anxieties of a humbled Europe, one which could no longer imagine itself at the center of history after having been dethroned by the Copernican denial of a geocentric cosmos and by colonial encounters with nonwhite, non-Christian,

noncapitalist Others. (Rieder's description of Europe suffering from identity crisis seems not unlike the epistemic panic surrounding postmodernism and cultural relativism today.) Second, science fiction is a key location for what Rieder calls "the reading public's vicarious enjoyment of colonial spoils" (27), important for the social reinforcement of imperialist ideology throughout the nineteenth century. Here Rieder discusses the ideological factors motivating "lost race" and "El Dorado" fantasies such as H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* or James De Mille's *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, as well as the assumptions about race and economic accumulation that are employed to justify the appropriation of wealth through colonial violence. Third, and perhaps most crucially, he demonstrates that colonialism's discourse of superior and inferior races—the colonial gaze—is a highly unstable positionality that is under constant threat of polar inversion, an instance of Hegelian master-slave dialectic whose fundamental precariousness is enacted and reenacted throughout the history of science fiction. In an alternate history, or in future days, the colonizer knows he could well be the colonized. In this way the genre sharply critiques the violence at the heart of European imperialist expansion by replicating it, over and over, in barely sublimated forms both for and against the colonizer. The exemplary science fiction novel becomes for Rieder not Thomas More's *Utopia* or H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* but Wells's inverted vision of an imperialized England in flames, *War of the Worlds*, which explicitly equates the Martian colonization of Earth with the British extermination of the native population of Tasmania. "Are we such apostles of mercy," Wells pointedly asks, "as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?" (1898; reprint, [New York: Bantam Books, 1988], 5).

Elizabeth Young's *Black Frankenstein* stands as an exemplary model for a study of science fiction infused with postcolonial awareness. Young traces the myth of Frankenstein's monster as a figure for both white panic and black resistance from Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831—the same year a revised edition of *Frankenstein*, the first credited to Mary Shelley, was published in Britain—through early film adaptations to the stand-up comedy of Dick Gregory and beyond. Although concerned primarily with U.S. literature and culture, the centrality of Shelley's original work marks *Black Frankenstein* as a distinctly transatlantic study; Young intriguingly finds an echo of the "Africanist presence" of Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1992) lurking in the British literary tradition as well. Young's study likewise enriches and complicates our understanding of what Paul Gilroy calls "the black Atlantic" by focusing on the black Atlantic's various uses of a novel from "the white Atlantic," one written by an abolitionist who grew up near an important seaport for the British slave trade and who drew on contemporaneous racial stereotypes about African physicality and miscegenary amalgamation to create her tragic-heroic "Monster"—demonstrating the complex appropriations and counterappropriations at work in this hybridized cultural space.

Naturally, the myth of Frankenstein's monster does not speak to us across the centuries with a single voice. For Fredrick Douglass, it is the institution of slavery that is "the pet monster of the American people" (19); for Gregory, it is the self-oppressing subjectivity of the colonized that becomes "the monster inside me" (217). The Boris Karloff–like shuffling of the zombies in George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*—the rebelling spiritual descendents of the enslaved Haitian *zombi*—becomes in Young's reading a reconceptualization of whiteness itself as self-created and self-reinforcing monstrousness, ultimately and needlessly destroying the film's black hero. Nor does this study, thorough though it is, exhaust the possibilities for rereadings of *Frankenstein* informed by cultural theory; Young's generous introduction is outright apologetic in its delimiting of the project to a specifically African American political context and the necessary bracketing of both Orientalist Frankensteins and Brides of Frankenstein for the purposes of this work.

Something like Rieder's colonial gaze is the theoretical lens at the heart of Matthew Costello's *Secret Identity Crisis*, transformed here to reflect the new valences of the colonial order during and after the Cold War. Costello's narrative history of Marvel Comics characters, especially Jack Kirby's Captain America and Stan Lee's Iron Man, is a worthy contribution to both American studies and the burgeoning field of comics theory. He ably charts the turning sour of America's self-aggrandizing fantasies of superheroism, starting in the 1970s as the nation's perception of its own cultural superiority began to invert. The nationalistic fervor of the so-called Golden Age of Comics—witness our eponymous superhero punching out Adolf Hitler on the cover of *Captain America* #1—and the contended postwar utopia of the Silver Age give way in the Bronze Age to hopeless political ambiguities and a fractured sense of national identity, organized around a chastened and corrupted nation whose rotten core is always at risk (as Costello's subtitle suggests) of public exposure. Captain America discovers a fascist conspiracy operating out of the Nixon White House and renounces the nation altogether, becoming Nomad, the man without a country. Iron Man—originally a symbol of U.S. technological and military superiority—turns his back on the business of war in the face of the Vietnam disaster and disbands the multinational defense contractor operated by his secret identity, billionaire industrialist Tony Stark, before descending into alcoholism and ultimately living on the streets. In the Bush years these two archetypically American Cold Warriors even find themselves battling not supervillains but each other, squabbling over a Patriot Act–style "Superhero Registration Act"; at the story's climax, Captain America is shot dead, and any last vestige of superheroic U.S. exceptionalism along with him. (But take heart, true believers! No one in comics stays dead for very long.)

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***Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form: Race, Class, and Reification*. By Marcial González. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press. 2009. viii, 270 pp. Paper, $29.95.**

***Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities*. By Laura Lomas. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 2008. xvii, 379 pp. Cloth, $89.95; paper, $24.95.**

With few exceptions, the question of form within Latina/o studies has been a vexed one. For the most part, scholars in this field have been fixated on thematic analysis, and specifically on how texts reveal the unequal operations of power at the level of expressed content. While certainly necessary, this approach neglects how the formal parameters of a text negotiate that very terrain of power in ways that both complement and complicate its manifest content. Redressing this issue, Marcial González and Laura Lomas offer vastly different corrective strategies.

For González, the question of form serves as a critique of the reified operations of identity politics, which facilitates oppositional solidarity at the expense of any figuration of social totality. In *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form*, González uses a discussion of form to advocate for the continued relevance of Marxian ideological analysis for the study of Chicano literature in an era when other modes of analysis, particularly feminism, queer studies, and diasporic transnationalism, have become prominent. Largely referencing the tradition of Western Marxism as theorized by Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno, and Fredric Jameson, González does not engage potential intersectionalities as this is not his purpose. Focusing on form enables him to analyze the textual contradictions that reveal the class processes structuring those experiences.

Hence, political liberalism becomes the central locus of textual contradiction for María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's 1885 novel *The Squatter and the Don*, whereas Chicano nationalism is identified as that site for Oscar Zeta Acosta's *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973). Although the discussions of these texts are informative, González's greatest contribution perhaps comes in the two chapters about novels rarely discussed within Chicano literary studies: Danny Santiago's *Famous All over Town* (1983) and Cecilia Pineda's *Face* (1985) and *Frieze* (1986). González scrutinizes the contradictions of cultural authenticity as they informed discussions of these texts during the 1980s. *Famous All over Town* became famously controversial when Santiago was revealed to be the pseudonym of Daniel James, a leftist Anglo-American and longtime resident of East Los Angeles. For González, the controversy over the authenticity of the author's background obscures the novel's deep engagement with the material conditions of Chicano communities; he claims that the novel "contributes to the broadening of our understanding of the specificity of Chicano novels" by critiquing the reification of identity itself under the sign of cultural authenticity (150). He then contrasts the marginalization of *Famous All over Town* with the neglect paid to the novels of Pineda, an "authentic"

Chicana. Neither *Face* nor *Frieze* depicts a "Chicano experience" as such, but both nonetheless encode that experience formally through the trials of a faceless Brazilian and the exploitation of a ninth-century sculptor, respectively. González persuasively argues that the way these novels critique the reification of cultural authenticity provides a useful lesson for literary criticism as well.

Lomas's *Translating Empire* also engages the politics of form but with a much different aim. For Lomas, the study of José Martí's extensive body of work beyond the now-obligatory essay "Nuestra América" (1891) enables a critique of his appropriation within a neoliberal Latin American intellectual tradition and a hemispheric-minded American studies. To the former's depiction of an exilic Martí enamored with the elite ideologies of the late-nineteenth-century United States, Lomas counters with an account of Martí's deep suspicion of a burgeoning U.S. imperialism in Latin America. To the latter's celebration of the writer as the epitome of Latin American anticolonialism, Lomas emphasizes Martí as a Latino migrant who also criticized the linguistic provincialism and racial hierarchies of the United States. Lomas's Martí is not the cosmopolitan exile posited by both conservative Latin American studies and anti-imperialist American studies but rather the migrant intellectual who developed a broad transnational critique of state practices after experiencing firsthand the violence of the modern state through imprisonment and deportation.

To this end, Lomas usefully reexamines Martí's relationship to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, vital figures of nineteenth-century U.S. intellectual and literary discourses often held to be major influences on Martí's thought. In two central chapters, Lomas instead argues that Martí, far from being the Latin American echo of U.S. originals, engaged these writers' works only to critique their core assumptions. In the case of Emerson, Martí refused transcendentalism's abstracted subject of knowledge (the "transparent eyeball") for a standpoint epistemology rooted in a migrant Latino working-class experience. In the case of Whitman, Martí admired the poet's kinetic originality but questioned his expansionist impulse, one that that would engulf Latin America in the name of spreading democratic freedom.

But Lomas's most valuable contribution in *Translating Empire* is the foregrounding of Martí's lesser-known works. Examining Marti's career as a journalist and translator during his fifteen-year stay in the United States, Lomas adds greatly to our understanding of a migrant Latino consciousness with roots deep in the nineteenth century. The process of translation—understood here as not simply a linguistic but also a geographical and cultural transculturation—becomes the key heuristic by which to comprehend Martí's trajectory. Hence, Lomas focuses on Martí's critical practices as editor of Spanish-language periodicals such as *La América: Revista de Agrícultura, Industria y Comercio* as well as his reportage. For Lomas, the Cuban writer's commentaries and translations fostered the creation of an alternative modernity that, in formal as well as thematic terms, contested the imperial contours of U.S.

modernity. She underscores the theoretical proposition that there is not a singular experience of modernity; rather, there are plural modernities that reveal the unequal distribution of social power across the nation and across the Americas.

While the specific emphasis of each study occasionally precludes the elaboration of theoretical intersectionalities (particularly sexuality), both are valuable correctives to the fetishization of thematic content in Latina/o studies.

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***Transcending the New Woman: Multiethnic Narratives in the Progressive Era*. By Charlotte J. Rich. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press. 2009. viii, 230 pp. $39.95.**

***Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita González, and the Poetics of Culture*. By María Eugenia Cotera. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press. 2008. xi, 286 pp. $60.00.**

The formative role of women of color in the production of literature and culture in the early twentieth century is the subject of two smart new studies. First, Charlotte Rich shatters any lingering critical complacency about the politics of the New Woman in America in *Transcending the New Woman*. Scholarly attention to the New Woman long ago moved beyond celebratory accounts of feminist concerns in the fiction of such canonical women writers as Edith Wharton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Kate Chopin; and the New Woman's status—and privilege—as a white, middle-class woman have been thoroughly parsed. Rich further deconstructs the "iconoclastic" New Woman by assessing the writings of multiethnic women writers who invoke this figure and elaborating on the celebration and critique of the New Woman contained therein. While not the first to interject race into the discussion of the New Woman, Rich persuasively argues that the writings of these multiethnic American women expose the New Woman and contemporary progressive feminist discourse as inherently underscoring hegemonic constructions of U.S. culture. Such authors as Native Americans S. Alice Callahan and Mourning Dove, African American Pauline Hopkins, Chinese American Sui Sin Far, Mexican American María Cristina Mena, and Jewish American Anzia Yezierska expose the fallacy of "the iconic New Woman's stereotypical preoccupation with empowering a universalized notion of 'woman'" that is blind to the limitations posed by race and socioeconomic status (22); and ultimately, these women offer empowering feminist alternatives that either eschew white, middle-class norms or move freely between white and ethnic traditions.

Rich's lucid and engaging prose results in a swift, satisfying read. Her introduction offers an admirably thorough account of the New Woman as a cultural

and historical figure with troubling ties to the darker elements of Progressive-Era ideology, such as the eugenics and nativist movements. The subsequent five chapters combine biographical information and close readings to offer compelling conclusions about the political motivations and rhetorical strategies of these authors. Rich's first chapter on Callahan and Mourning Dove clearly demonstrates how the familiar rhetoric of women's rights is insufficient in addressing the myriad limitations suffered by women of color, a point underscored in all subsequent chapters. A story by Mena leads to the book's most scathing critique of the New Woman as an ignorant and rapacious consumer of Mexican culture. The chapters on the more familiar figures of Hopkins, Far, and Yezierka position these women as astute critics of the New Woman and her Progressive ideologies, in addition to pursuing their own multiple political and aesthetic aspirations. Rich cogently argues that these multiethnic women must be read in order to fully understand the complicated figure of the New Woman in the United States.

The complex position of women of color in the academy in the early decades of the twentieth century is the focus of María Cotera's *Native Speakers*. Cotera strives to create a "multicultural feminist imaginary" by critically comparing these three anthropologists and fiction writers whose work demonstrates remarkable commonalities (2). Like Rich, Cotera finds fruitful the crossing of ethnic lines to demonstrate the shared gender, class, colonial, and imperial concerns expressed within the writings of these women of Native American, African American, and Tejana descent. In a bold move, she implements Paula Gunn Allen's metaphor of "las disappearadas" to describe Deloria, Hurston, and González as "mobile, border crossing subjects" who have been invisible "in anthropological, ethnic nationalist, and feminist literary canons" (14). Because their writings avoid strict categorization according to discipline, form, and audience, their work was marginalized during their lifetimes and recuperated decades later. Yet Cotera's examination demonstrates the similarities of these women to contemporary feminists of color regarding the merging of ideologies of nationalism and feminism, which she calls the "strategic political mobility" of U.S.–third world feminism (18). Ultimately, Cotera argues that U.S.–third world feminism may have its roots not in the post-1960s movements but in "the continuous historical contradictions of life at the crossroads between gender, race, and nation" in the early twentieth century (19).

Following the provocative introduction, Cotera's book is divided into two parts, the first delving into the anthropological writings of Deloria, Hurston, and González and the second engaging with their fiction. Part 1 adeptly illustrates the difficulties each experienced in her role of "informed native" anthropologist (28). While these writers implemented groundbreaking methodologies and were allowed greater access to critical ethnographic information because of their insider status, they also faced skepticism from their academic mentors about their presumed biases and reticence from the communities with whom they attempted to engage. Indeed, a particularly amusing anec-

dote has Hurston on an early research trip asking the townspeople of Eatonville, Florida, "Pardon me, but do you know of any folk-tales or folk-songs?" (80). Part 2, aptly titled "Re-Writing Culture: Storytelling and the Decolonial Imagination," explores the turn to fiction writing taken by the three as a revolutionary tool for creating new "decolonizing" narratives. Cotera argues that the novels by Deloria, Hurston, and González, which make central the experiences of women (in strict contrast to many contemporary ethnographies and novels), "simultaneously employ and subvert ethnographic discourse in an effort to call its descriptive power into question" (135). In juxtaposing these anthropological writings and fictions and demonstrating the limitations of the former for these three writers, Cotera's study challenges theories of history and culture that occlude women of color. Both *Transcending the New Woman* and *Native Speakers* are engaging and satisfying interventions in our understanding of early-twentieth-century American literature and culture.

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***Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form*. By Judith Brown. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press. 2009. xiv, 199 pp. $39.95.**

***Hollywood Ambitions: Celebrity in the Movie Age*. By Marsha Orgeron. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press. 2008. x, 260 pp. Cloth, $70.00; paper, $24.95.**

In "Churchgoing and the Modern Novel," Pericles Lewis contends that although modernism "turn[ed] away from institutional religion," it was also a period of "seek[ing] new forms of sacredness and possibilities of ritual in the profane world." Secular experiences "that would traditionally have been called 'religious'" emerged, thus "blurring the lines between the sacred and the profane" (*Modernism/modernity* 11 [November 2004]: 671). Neither of the books under review is about religion, but the extent to which both employ the rhetoric of religion to describe cosmopolitan culture is striking within the context of Lewis's claims. Certainly these texts can be construed to suggest that glamour and celebrity are profane translations of religious experiences. In Judith Brown's book, glamour repackages the sensation, usually associated with gods and saints, of transcending materiality through otherworldliness. In Marsha Orgeron's book, celebrity offers a godless form of salvation from the circumstances of biography and the limits of personality to anyone irradiated by the public gaze. In the secular mythology of the twentieth century, Hollywood replaces heaven as the arbiter of redemption, offering celebrity as a new context for spiritual rebirth.

In *Glamour in Six Dimensions*, Brown argues that glamour was the pervasive aesthetic of the early twentieth century, shaping high modernist experi-

ments as much as the entertainment industry and popular culture. She thus explains what "Chanel [and] champagne cocktails . . . have to do with the likes of Wallace Stevens and Virginia Woolf" (1). In each of six chapters, Brown identifies a particular characteristic of glamour that is emblematized in both an article of popular culture and high modernism. For instance, her first chapter shows how Chanel No. 5 popularized the discourse of scent, which permitted fluid "movement between material object and ethereal effect"—a transition with which Stevens's poetry was also concerned (23). In another chapter, the photograph is shown to have offered Woolf a grammar for exploring the enchantment of arrested moments. The properties of each object from popular culture help explicate the various dimensions of glamour, such as its valorization of deeply meaningful moments over the impermeability of historical reality.

For Brown, glamour is yet another form of modernism's assault against the tyranny of realism, a way of "dematerializing and rematerializing" the body (137), rejecting "the pressing realities of the flesh" in favor of a state of fascination by materiality's excess (12). Modernist "fantas[ies] of uplift without . . . politics" reflect a longing for apolitical modes of self- and social transfiguration (142). Insofar as religious desire can be understood as yearning for something more than what merely exists, as an acknowledgment of the limits of rational materialism, religious desire pervades the aesthetics of glamour, which "becomes a twentieth-century response to the loss of . . . spiritual belief," a way of "[maintaining] the qualities of ecstatic illumination" once institutionalized religion is dismantled (105). Glamour, etymologically linked to witchcraft, designates a perceived "mystical experience" (106), an "enchantment" (110), or a "refiguration of the world . . . from filth to resplendence" (10). Brown's diction denotes the pervasiveness in modernism of what would be called religious experiences were she describing features of a society less saturated in secularity than modernity is perceived to be. Even technology, the feature of the twentieth century perhaps most associated with its departure from pre-Enlightenment modes of thought and experience, is the vehicle not for grounding the modernists in rational experience but for delivering them beyond it. Glamour, that is, is transfiguration through technology; perfume or cameras are used to "[take] us to the edges of subjectivity," "[lift] us . . . out of ourselves" (43). Technology, like an encounter with God, is what "produces distance, an inhuman sheen" (23).

In *Hollywood Ambitions*, Orgeron too describes celebrity in the movie age as reflecting "belief" and "faith" in "the redemptive powers" of cinema and Hollywood mythmaking (34). She considers celebrity a secular means of "transformation" (30), a modern-day conversion narrative reflecting less the adoption of a new ideology than a moment of illumination by a combination of the projector's light and popular attention. Orgeron's chapters examine various figures who actively tried to mobilize Hollywood in order to achieve celebrity status. Each case study offers "insight into the ways that the very concept

of success—of, quite literally, 'making it'—was being altered in the new century" by an industry that "promised to 'make them' in ways that they simply could not 'make themselves'" (2). The quests for fame of Wyatt Earp, Jack London, Clara Bow, Gertrude Stein, and Ida Lupino take on epic proportions when we consider their striving for success as a pursuit of deliverance from the limits of flesh and circumstance as only Hollywood could bestow.

As Stein is the single recurring character (and "Four Saints in Three Acts" the only recurring text) in *Glamour in Six Dimensions* and *Hollywood Ambitions*, she emerges as the high priestess of cosmopolitan religious secularity. Orgeron attends to Stein's peculiar status, in her own time, as "an author famous for writing that which went largely unread" (164). She argues that Stein designed the popular rejection of her texts as works that were meant to be read; in fact, Stein can be seen as the originator of the new and increasingly popular genre of "optioned" texts: novels and screenplays written to be purchased by film studios and not read by the public. Stein's discipleship of Hollywood in the 1930s signified her understanding that it was not only arbitrating transcendence in her era but also redefining the terms of it. "[M]oney, leisure, [and] mass recognition" were all things that would circumvent actual texts in signifying literary genius, displacing genius to such effects as fame and wealth (141). Perhaps what Stein's case illustrates is the redistribution of religious experience within capitalism, which still manufactures transcendence under the moniker of "success." The ideological pervasiveness of capitalism would not then signify cosmopolitanism's triumph over but its saturation in religious experiences.

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***William Faulkner and the Southern Landscape*. By Charles S. Aiken. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2009. xiii, 283 pp. $34.95.**

***Global Faulkner*. Ed. Annette Trefzer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi. 2009. xvi, 194 pp. $55.00.**

While they share little else, both of these books remind me of Darl's ruminations early in *As I Lay Dying*: "Everything . . . hangs on too long. Like our rivers, our land: opaque, slow, violent; shaping and creating the life of man in its implacable and brooding image" (1930; reprint, [New York: Vintage, 1990], 45). William Faulkner's place—the inescapable positionality of Yoknapatawpha—continues to captivate his readers and critics. In even the most abstruse new projects in Faulkner studies, his imaginative place persists in the fascination and provocation it inspires, whether his readers' concerns are geographical or geopolitical.

If Faulkner imagined his cosmos as a postage stamp of native soil, Charles Aiken is interested chiefly in the dirt itself—the nitty-gritty geography of Yoknapatawpha. In *William Faulkner and the Southern Landscape*, Aiken (an academic geographer) takes up four main questions about the geography of northwest Mississippi and its relationship to the writer's imaginative county. Two of these questions have long occupied Faulkner scholarship: "How did Faulkner convert the local geography into a fictional one?" and "Did Faulkner create Yoknapatawpha as a microcosm of the American South?" Aiken seems only slightly aware of or interested in the history of these questions. Nevertheless, with regard to his remaining questions—"In what ways do the historical geographies of Oxford and Lafayette County emulate those of Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County?" and "What is Faulkner's geographical legacy?"—he has made a significant contribution to the field.

That this book is a product of many years' labor and reflection is obvious, chiefly in Aiken's forthright fondness for the landscape and literature at hand. The most fruitful parts of his study grow out of his keen eye for the geographical features of Yoknapatawpha mythology and its historical Lafayette County origins. The book is rich in original graphs, charts, maps, and photography that catalog and explain features of Lafayette County with new clarity. Aiken is at his best when he encounters and interprets northern Mississippi as a geographer. He explains clearly notable features of the landscape, the human forces that altered it, and Faulkner's faithfulness in presenting both in his stories. The picture that emerges of Faulkner is that of a Mississippi native who understood and largely grieved the geographical changes he witnessed in his time.

Aiken's failure to recognize his own best strengths in his approach to this material dilutes the force of his study, as does his scant attention to important work by literary critics and historians concerned with many of his same questions. The geographical and historical origins of Faulkner's work, as well as the symbolic significance of Yoknapatawpha as a reflection of the South at large, have been ably (if inconclusively) argued for decades. Recent important works by Don Doyle and Joel Williamson, for example, could have enriched Aiken's approach; instead, Aiken wades into this long-running conversation with very little sense of its history.

The published proceedings of the 2006 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, *Global Faulkner* continues the annual gathering's practice of approaching the writer's "implacable and brooding" world thematically. What emerges in the volume is not only a number of essays (of varying strength) about the global dimensions of Faulkner's work but also a fascinating snapshot of the global give and take in Faulkner studies. Indeed, *Global Faulkner* is perhaps most remarkable for the divide it reveals between U.S. scholars steeped in postcolonial theory and international scholars whose interest in theoretical approaches to Faulkner is markedly less pronounced.

Nearly all of the U.S. scholarship is animated by the language and ques-

tions that have occupied postcolonial studies in recent decades. John Matthews ably headlines this section of the book in an essay that reads the Snopes trilogy as a Cold War political fable. Matthews is prophetic and even apocalyptic in his indictment of American "global plutocracy" (18). A number of critics take up the connections in Faulkner's work between the U.S. South and the Caribbean. Most often beginning with Thomas Sutpen's errand to Haiti, these essays explore the Southern slavocracy and its postbellum aftermath as both emblem and harbinger of U.S. colonial forays into the Caribbean and elsewhere throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps the most insightful and lucid essay from a U.S. contributor is Elizabeth Steeby's treatment of Charles Bon as a "transnational queer figure" (151), in which she helpfully explicates this mythical cosmopolitan whom Faulkner has so provocatively imbued with an unsolvable alterity.

In stark contrast to their American colleagues, the international contributors to the collection pursue more seemingly straightforward questions. Italian critic and frequent translator of Faulkner, Mario Materassi, revives the 1926 novel *Mosquitoes*, arguing that this neglected work provides an important means of understanding Faulkner himself as a reader of global literature. Spaniard Manuel Broncano's essay is downright old-fashioned in its consideration of Faulkner's long-standing enthrallment with Miguel de Cervantes and other matters Spanish. Recalling Faulkner's claim that he made a habit of rereading Cervantes's *Don Quixote* every year ("like other people read the Bible" [100]), Broncano maps the quixotic motif in a number of Faulkner's novels as well his Republican sympathies in the Spanish Civil War. African novelist Tierno Monénembo approaches panegyric in his archetypal meditation on Faulkner. In Faulkner's novels, Monénembo claims, "people are not really born: they come into the world to atone for their sin" (182). Addressing the riddle of Faulkner's appeal to writers like himself, be they African or Caribbean, Monénembo incisively suggests that "it is because he tackles the two primordial questions of the literature of young nations: language and the relationship with history" (183).

Thus Faulkner's apocryphal landscape sustains the elemental queries of "young" international readers (not to mention those of a geographer from Tennessee) while providing substantial inducement for the earnest excavations of wizened U.S. theorists. Clearly, we have not yet depleted the opaque, slow, and violent soil of Yoknapatawpha.

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***Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel*. By Sean Kicummah Teuton. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 2008. xvii, 294 pp. Cloth, $84.95; paper, $23.95.**

***Seeing Red: Anger, Sentimentality, and American Indians*. By Cari M. Carpenter. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press. 2008. xiv, 177 pp. $39.95.**

In *Red Land, Red Power*, Sean Teuton moves deftly among theories of knowledge production, literary analysis, and recollections of personal experiences as a university professor, prison volunteer, and citizen of the Cherokee Nation to enact a method of literary interpretation based in what he calls "tribal realism." His first three chapters offer rich reinterpretations of three texts canonical in American Indian literature, including N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, James Welch's *Winter in the Blood*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*. Teuton has a keen ability to convey how tribal relationships that are based in kinship and that have endured long histories of colonial confrontations with the United States are essential to understanding these novels' characters and dramatic tensions. A fourth chapter poignantly broadens his scholarly insights by appreciating the political implications of poetry composed by imprisoned Native men with whom Teuton worked in New York State's Auburn Correctional Facility. A short conclusion adumbrates future studies in contemporary fiction that "explore neglected communities in Indian America" (198).

Inspired in part by the work of Satya Mohanty, Teuton's "tribal realism" embraces a "postpositivist realism" that evaluates socially constructed identities "according to their comparative ability to interpret our experiences" and to produce "reliable knowledge of the world" (31). Asserting a "tribal epistemology" as the basis for developing tribal realism, Teuton reads literature to appreciate "the political emergence of a new tribal national consciousness in Red Power" (33). He at times simplifies the many tribal epistemologies into a general tribal identity that is implicitly synonymous with Red Power and the American Indian Movement (AIM), movements which themselves changed significantly over the decades. In treating the work of Gerald Vizenor (Chippewa), he overlooks Vizenor's specific objections to some of the confrontational tactics and egos of AIM during the late 1960s. Instead, he portrays Vizenor's "trickster theories" as unproductively mired in language games that frustrate a tribally grounded process of protecting Native identity (171). At one point he characterizes Vizenor's novel *Bearheart* as "ahistorical" (172, 174). But, one might ask, why not read Vizenor's work against the federal government's imposition of blood quantum terminologies as a means of attempting to define and regulate Indian identity? For example, in *The Columbia Guide to American Indian Literatures of the United States since 1945* (2006), Eric Cheyfitz reads *Bearheart* in the context of federal Indian law so that Vizenor's term *crossblood* retains a historical and political significance that would seem to complement

Teuton's goal of "creating the social conditions for tribal cultures to flourish" (174).

In *Seeing Red*, Cari Carpenter takes a different tack in her readings of Sophia Alice Callahan (Creek), E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk), and Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins (Northern Paiute), writers who are "playing angry" and playing Indian to audiences that include philanthropically minded upper-class white women (for example, members of the Women's National Indian Association [WNIA]) who were the powerbrokers of dominant American philanthropy during the Allotment Era (30). Callahan's, Johnson's, and Hopkins's authorial tactics of "play" represent anger to affect the political landscape while manipulating stereotypes about Native identity in fictions that challenge the racially and culturally inflected gender conventions that govern the putatively proper feminine responses to injustice.

Carpenter does a fine job of opening up the discursive potential of anger and outrage to theories of sentiment. She convinces me that anger is indeed a tool with which Native women writers powerfully negotiate for more authority while manipulating their audiences' expectations. Whereas Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* figures as a central reference for Carpenter's elucidation of sentimental theory, one imagines a companion to this volume that would engage more centrally Lydia Maria Child, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, and Helen Hunt Jackson or that would develop the genre of captivity narrative or autobiography through Mary Jemison to chart an alternative constellation of sentimental anger.

Overall, the chapters' reworkings of sentimental theories tend to homogenize Native peoples in Carpenter's "quest to make this anger matter in indigenous terms" (11). In her introduction, Carpenter herself notes the risk of projecting anger on various cultural systems and she admonishes that the definition, significance, and implication of anger ought to be carefully weighed in particular historical contexts (8–9). Teuton's paradigm of tribal realism would help extend Carpenter's analysis to be more specific with varying cultural constructions of anger and to define more clearly what she means by "nation"—a term that becomes vague. At one point, for instance, Carpenter gauges Johnson's potential "nationalist" affect and effect by noting that Margaret Atwood included the poem "Ojistoh" in an anthology of Canadian literature (71–72).

In her fascinating chapter on Winnemucca, Carpenter brings the ambiguity between Native authorship and tribal communal identity into a rich contemporary tension. Reading Winnemucca as someone who "affirm[s] her nationhood through sentimental anger," she acknowledges the irony that Winnemucca's "toughest audience" was (and is) "her own people" (86). Carpenter explains that many in the Northern Paiute community distrusted Winnemucca's role as an "interpreter for the military and the white agents who ran the reservations" and considered treasonous her advocacy of land reforms in the 1887 General Allotment Act, which sought to assimilate Indians into a mold of

Western property-based identity that devastated communal land holdings (88). She counters this view by reading Winnemucca's *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883) as "a sustained sentimental critique of colonialism" (105). In claiming that Winnemucca uses "sentimentality to assert her indigenous nation" (16), Carpenter raises a host of provocative questions, including: To what extent is this "indigenous nation" synonymous with Northern Paiute understandings of land and kinship? In any case, Carpenter lays out a compelling dilemma for Winnemucca's task of translating the property-centered ideology of the Allotment Era through a form of sentimental protest that potentially sustained Native identity at a time when many philanthropists considered communal systems of Native kinship pathetically uncivilized.

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***Millennial Literatures of the Americas, 1492–2002*. By Thomas O. Beebee. Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press. 2009. xi, 248 pp. $65.00.**

***Apocalyptic Patterns in Twentieth-Century Fiction*. By David J. Leigh. Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press. 2008. xvi, 256 pp. Paper, $28.00.**

Eschatological narratives had existed in the Americas long before Christopher Columbus arrived equipped with a Christian repertoire of millennial tropes—and they have been thriving there ever since. At certain historical moments, fantasies of the end of time arose with particular urgency. So it was in the late nineteenth century, when millennial dreams sparked violent incidents across the Americas, from the Red River Resistance in Manitoba to the War of Canudos in Bahia. So it was, most recently, in reaction to the turn of the millennium and the 9/11 attacks. But, even at calmer times, the stream of apocalyptic narratives seems never to subside. (As I am writing this, movie previews are featuring the apocalyptic extravaganza *2012*, an adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's postcatastrophe novel *The Road*, and, for a younger audience, the wasteland-ish animation film *9*.) Questions surrounding these narratives persist as well: Is there anything particularly American about this obsession with the end of time? How do apocalyptical narratives function within existing structures of power? Why is it that secular modernity, rather than weakening millennialist thinking, seems to fuel it? And what characterizes the relation of culture—particularly of literature—to apocalyptic worldviews?

An impressive achievement of *Millennial Literatures of the Americas* is that it suggests answers to all these questions, and several others. Thomas Beebee's ambitious study spans five centuries and two continents, covering writers as diverse as Ernesto Cardenal, Herman Melville, Mario Vargas Llosa, Margaret Atwood, and Bob Dylan. This wide archive is linked by three main arguments. First, the book claims that a certain form of apocalyptic imagina-

tion is particular to the Americas. Because European colonialists relied on the erasure of indigenous societies and histories, they turned to narratives of the end time to fill the absence. "Americans in particular," writes Beebee, "tend to understand their origins by narrating their end" (4). Shaped by the colonial encounter, American eschatologies gradually gained a hybrid form, for instance when the missionaries' Christian trope of "The New Jerusalem" blended with native myths of "The Land without Evil." An interesting chapter is devoted to the "hybrid Messiah"—Beebee's term for such figures as Captain Ahab, Nat Turner, Wovoka, Louis Riel, and Jim Jones, who translate knowledge from the dominant culture to the language of the native in order to deliver their apocalyptic messages. The hybrid messiah's position is precarious: his followers see him as savior while the mainstream regards him as antichrist. As the book shows, this multivalence of American millennialism renders it an auspicious tool in the hands of both dominant sectors and opposition groups.

The heyday of "oppositional" millennialism was during the second half of the nineteenth century, when, in reaction to the destructiveness of capitalism, expansionism, and industrialization, indigenous movements such as the Ghost Dancers in the United States, the Canudos settlement in Brazil, and Louis Riel's Métis movement in Canada adopted eschatological narratives for self-preservation and renewal. A second main argument of the book is that capitalism and scientific rationalism do not typically replace eschatological worldviews but nourish them in several paradoxical ways. Beebee terms this phenomenon "eschatechnology"—the blend of the scientific and the spiritual, of God and technology, so prevalent in the cultures of America, from the letters of Columbus to Cold War–era UFOlogy.

Beebee's third argument is that literature holds a complex relation to millennialism, and he suggests that literary works can be located on a continuum that runs from the "prophetic" to the "reflectively dissonant" (8). Some works of literature, that is, are full participants in eschatechnological ideologies and movements (novels such as Andrew MacDonald's *The Turner Diaries* or Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins's *Left Behind* series); others treat them with criticism (Melville's *Moby-Dick*) or outright parody (Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*). *Millennial Literatures* thus layers its account of missionaries, messiahs, and utopian communities with analyses of dozens of radically diverse literary works to form a rich and valuable cultural history.

David Leigh's *Apocalyptic Patterns in Twentieth-Century Fiction* is less interested in the interface of history and culture than *Millennial Literatures*. Leigh's rather traditional literary study analyzes the presence of eschatological themes, plots, and symbols in the works of seventeen twentieth-century authors (mostly British and American) in order to display the range of literary methods and philosophical questions raised by modern rewritings of the apocalypse. Leigh relies on two theoretical frameworks to shape his readings: literary critics such as Frank Kermode and Northrop Frye, who theorized

the crucial function of narrative endings in conferring meaning and value to the whole, and, more importantly, theologians and philosophers such as John Davenport, Zachary Hayes, and Jürgen Moltmann, who developed taxonomies of eschatological traditions and concerns.

Leigh divides the study into several themes, such as "the quest for transcendence," "the cosmic battle," "the ultimate union," and "death and transition." Under these headings, he explores both "critical" and "participatory" literary works (to return to Beebee's distinction), a method that produces interesting juxtapositions: Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo, for instance, are grouped with the Catholic-inspired Walker Percy, and John Updike is read alongside supernaturalist writer Charles Williams. While Leigh's sympathies often seem to lean toward the affirmative Christian sensibilities of Percy, Williams, and C. S. Lewis, some of his most interesting insights emerge from the analyses of secular writers and genres. Behind the irony of postmodernist classics such as Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and DeLillo's *White Noise*, he finds "signs of transcendence in a late twentieth-century world of indeterminacy and pessimism" (226); he discovers in secular works of science fiction "insights into Incarnation and Resurrection that are quite compatible with . . . theological speculation" (150). Perhaps this is one point where the two books under review meet: both expose the deep and abiding influence of the ancient language of ultimacy and revelation undergirding even the most avant-garde of cultural expressions.

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***Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery*. By Helen Vendler. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press. 2005. 95 pp. Cloth, $32.95; paper, $14.95.**

***The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After*. By Charles Altieri. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell. 2006. xi, 245 pp. Cloth, $89.95; paper, $39.95.**

***From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century*. By Jennifer Ashton. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press. 2006. x, 201 pp. Cloth, $85.00; paper, $30.99.**

***A Transnational Poetics*. By Jahan Ramazani. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. 2009. xvii, 221 pp. $29.00.**

Contemporary American poetry is a field so broad it defies definition or classification, and these recent volumes demonstrate how various the academic

study of that poetry has become, juxtaposing old-fashioned close reading of individual poems with a closer attention to historical context, more subtle considerations of periodization, and a heightened awareness of the international context in which post-1900 poetry has been produced.

Helen Vendler's *Invisible Listeners*, based on a Princeton University lecture series, examines poems in which poets address "someone they do not know and cannot set eyes on, their invisible listener" (1). For George Herbert, this addressee is a deity rendered distant by conventional theology and liturgy; for Walt Whitman, a "comrade-reader in futurity" who can become the object of the homoerotic empathy nineteenth-century mores will not allow Whitman to extend to his actual contemporaries (4); for John Ashbery, the Mannerist painter Francesco Parmigianino, whose *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* furnishes the title of Ashbery's 1972 poem.

Vendler would defend the single-voiced lyric from "socially oriented critics" concerned only with "the clash of classes, the domestic and political mediations of sexuality, the fabric of community," for whom "nothing of social value can be articulated" in the solitary lyric (5–6). (Such monsters of politically correct insensitivity are probably a good deal rarer than Vendler implies.) On the contrary, she asserts, "lyrics of hypothetical colloquy are an ideal staging-place for ethical questions"; in such poems "we find a kind of lyric Utopia, in which possible models of human relations are produced, revised, and consolidated" (79–80).

Vendler's close readings are always deft; she is especially good on Herbert's manipulations of traditional meters and forms. But her overall "ethical" frame is unlikely to move readers interested in how these three very disparate poets construct their "invisible" addressees within radically different social contexts and from radically different positions within poetic tradition, which Vendler tends to reduce to a more or less unitary "law of art" (69). She is most persuasive in reading Ashbery's colloquy with Parmigianino as an event in the discourse of mid-twentieth-century art history. Her readings of Whitman, which assume his homosexuality without considering precisely what that would have implied for a nineteenth-century American, are rather familiar. And her interpretations of Herbert surprisingly elide the fact that most of the poems she discusses under the rubric of "direct address" are either short narratives or outright dramatic dialogues. In the end, the brevity of *Invisible Listeners* constrains Vendler from persuasively unfolding her rather large argument.

Charles Altieri's *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* is one of Blackwell's "Introductions to Literature," and the volume fits strangely into a series intended for "general readers" and "non-specialists" (ii). Nodding to the comprehensiveness of Christopher MacGowan's *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004), Altieri disclaims coverage, aiming rather to describe some of the most important issues of subjectivity with which the modernists grappled and the subsequent fortunes of the techniques they elaborated. *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* feels like an elaboration and extension

of Altieri's *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry* (1989), which similarly delineates how the modernists, in dialogue with postimpressionist painting, elaborated new models of subjective agency by which to deal with the crisis of modernity.

Altieri's first chapters show how Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, responding to the innovations of contemporary science, Henri Bergson, and Paul Cézanne, elaborated "new realisms" of consciousness and sensation, and how T. S. Eliot, Mina Loy, and Marianne Moore pursued a poetics of "impersonality" in reaction to the rhetorical expectations of late-nineteenth-century culture. In the political and cultural crises of the 1930s, George Oppen and Langston Hughes attempted to write poems that addressed social problems without recourse to public rhetorics, rhetorics which Wallace Stevens and W. H. Auden would revive, though in significantly altered forms. Finally, Altieri surveys a diverse quartet of poets—Robert Lowell, Adrienne Rich, Robert Creeley, and Ashbery—who "in different ways developed the possibility that modernist attitudes toward sensation could be extended to include how we appear to ourselves" (163).

Altieri's interpretations, which aside from an injection of Lacanian theory remain essentially congruent with those of *Painterly Abstraction*, are of almost Jamesian subtlety. He writes about poets on whom he has meditated for decades, striving once again to untangle the most precise shades of subjective stance and address. At times, as in his readings of Hughes and Rich, the poem itself seems to crumble under his imposing hermeneutic machinery. Altieri's readings can be very illuminating, once one has patiently teased out the densities of his overwhelmingly conceptual prose, but whether they are of much use to the "general reader"—or indeed to any reader beneath the advanced graduate school level—is questionable.

Jennifer Ashton's *From Modernism to Postmodernism* is at least superficially a response to Marjorie Perloff's *Twenty-First-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (2002). Perloff argues that the poetic revolution of modernism was not superseded by postmodernism so much as it was arrested by the First World War, the Great Depression, and World War II; only in the past few decades have the projects of the high modernists been reinvented and brought to maturity by such avant-gardists as the Language poets, whose work might more accurately be named "late modernist" than "postmodernist."

Ashton argues precisely the opposite: that postmodernist American poetry, characterized by indeterminacy and a Barthesian invitation to the reader to participate in constructing the text's meaning, is indeed very different from modernist poetry; and furthermore, that postmodernist poets, in citing Gertrude Stein and Laura (Riding) Jackson as precursors, have flatly misunderstood those modernists' projects. Stein and (Riding) Jackson have no truck with the Language poets' celebration of indeterminacy and the materiality of the signifier but are instead committed to models of poetic meaning precisely dependent on authorial intention. The true precursors of postmod-

ernism in poetry, argues Ashton, are the New Critics, whose "doctrines of the heresy of paraphrase and the fallacy of intention" are the practical equivalent of "language poetry's commitments to the material form of the text and readerly participation in it" (27).

Ashton's argument revolves around a distinction between the text's meaning (dependent on authorial intention) and its effect on a reader, a distinction which, Ashton shows, gets repeatedly confused over the history of twentieth-century poetic theory. There is a sorting-out in her final chapter, where cognitive theory (along with the poetry of Jorie Graham) demonstrates that "meaning and effect, intention and attention, logic and phenomenology, are simultaneous and not only *not* indistinguishable, but categorically distinct" (176). Her thesis is provocative and counterintuitive in the best sense, though her book ultimately says less about twentieth-century poetry than about its theorizations; more close and careful examinations of the poems of (Riding) Jackson and the Language writers might have made Ashton's clear-cut divide between modernism and postmodernism rather less distinct.

Having edited the most recent edition of the *Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, Jahan Ramazani brings an encyclopedic knowledge of the field to the task of retheorizing the relationship of poetry to nationality and ethnicity in the age of globalization. The fundamental thesis of *A Transnational Poetics* is rather simple: categorizing poets by nationality, a principle still largely unchallenged in the American academy, is woefully inadequate for addressing twentieth- and twenty-first-century Anglophone poetry. English, rather than the language of the British or U.S. imperiums, is "a world language for poets, or at least a semiglobal conduit through which poets encounter, advance, and redirect cross-cultural flows of tropes and words, ideas and images" (20).

"American" poetry as such plays a supporting role in Ramazani's study, which ranges through travel poetry, elegy, and the relationship of "high" modernist forms to postcolonial hybridity, decolonization, and contemporary Afro-British poetry. Ramazani emphasizes the transnationality of the Americans he does address: the expatriate Pound, deriving his modernist poetics from Renaissance Italian and Chinese models; Eliot, the St. Louis–born New Englander who would refashion himself as more English than the English, peppering *The Waste Land* with evidences of his own classical and Sanskrit education; the English-born New Yorker Auden, elegizing the Anglo-Irish W. B. Yeats and "putting the Irishman's poetry in the service of cosmopolitanism" (82).

Ramazani's is a rich book, full of methodological insights and dazzlingly eclectic in the range of poets it presents, from all quarters of the Anglophone world. Indeed, it covers so much territory that it resembles a critical manifesto more than a work of criticism, a Baedeker to Anglophone poetries rather than a more focused *Rough Guide*. Ramazani triumphantly demonstrates how poetries from Kashmir to Chicago, Lagos to London, and Barbados to Brixton

fit into various transnational models. One wishes, however, that his treatments of individual poets and poems were not so often fleeting and illustrative.

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***Machine-Age Comedy*. By Michael North. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2009. viii, 222 pp. Paper, $27.95.**

***Ex-foliations: Reading Machines and the Upgrade Path*. By Terry Harpold. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2009. 351 pp. Cloth, $75.00; paper, $25.00.**

Perhaps as a corrective to the utopian optimism that characterized the mid-1990s, current scholarship in media studies tends to offer a more tempered critical engagement. Rather than making heady projections about posthuman futures enabled via digitization, many scholars are now instead taking stock, looking back, and attempting to provide historical context for the field in its current form. Two recent books follow this trend.

Michael North's *Machine-Age Comedy* reconsiders the comedic mode in relation to the technology of modernity. While dominant interpretations of mechanization in relation to comedy view comedic works as critical of technology, North offers a convincing counterthesis: What if in works of comedy technology functioned not as a mere object of scorn but as a source of creative inspiration? North provides a lucid survey of theoretical accounts of comedy in his introduction—touching on Aristophanes, Friedrich Schiller, Hegel, and Thomas Hobbes—in order to create a vector for his own approach, which is to analyze machine-age comedy against the grain. Specifically, he contrasts his analysis to that of Henri Bergson, for whom "laugher is an expression of the natural hostility of organic life to the machine" (4).

Across six chapters, North tests his thesis against a variety of sources, including Rube Goldberg's fiendish machines, the paintings of Wyndham Lewis, the films of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, the art of Marcel Duchamp, and the writing of David Foster Wallace. His discussion of early Disney animations in chapter 2, "Mickey's Mechanical Man," is particularly illustrative. Understood to be prime examples of the culture industry run rampant, Disney films in general and Mickey Mouse in particular were initially endorsed by Walter Benjamin and Sergei Eisenstein. North calls the reader's attention to an early draft of Benjamin's "Work of Art" essay, which describes how Disney films offer a "therapeutic release of unconscious energies" (58). Although this section was redacted after input from Theodor Adorno, it reveals an early sympathy that was not uncommon among left-leaning critics. It was only after the studio's decision to favor an organic aesthetic in its films—meant to obscure the very technology that produced them—that Disney fell out of critical favor.

The tightly coupled relation North traces between early Disney cartoons and their reception makes for a successful analysis, and his overall attention to critical and historical context is a major strength of the study.

Along these lines, North's discussion of Wallace's *Infinite Jest* in the final chapter is slightly less convincing than the other sections. North offers a careful reading of this novel in light of the features he has spent the previous chapters developing, but he does not situate Wallace's novel within its own historical milieu. Published in 1996, at the height of the dot-com era, *Infinite Jest* seems discontinuous with the other examples North provides, which are informed by predigital technologies. Although this section would have benefitted from the historical contextualization that undergirds the rest the study, this is a minor criticism. *Machine-Age Comedy* is an excellent book, one that lends fresh insight to historical assumptions about modern comedy.

Terry Harpold's *Ex-foliations* similarly considers technology in a historical context. All seven chapters of this detailed study explore reading technologies that have both anticipated and been made obsolete by contemporary interfaces. By tracing the emergence of digitally born narratives from these prior forms, Harpold points to shifting expectations about what such works should express and how they should operate. Central to his study are the concepts of obsolescence, "historiation," which he defines as "a form of recollection activated by visible traits of the reading surface" (8), and "*ex-foliation*, meaning a loosely grouped set of procedures for provisionally separating the layers of the text's surfaces . . . with the aim of understanding their expressive concurrencies" (10).

In the first two chapters, Harpold describes how two pioneering examples in the history of reading technologies—Vannevar Bush's Memex and Ted Nelson's "Xanadu"—complicate distinctions between interior and exterior spaces of memory and writing. Chapter 3, "Revenge of the Word," reviews early claims about hypertext fiction's privileging of the word over the image and offers several instances of works that enact this "revenge." One of the most compelling examples he provides is digital artist Giselle Beiguelman's *//**Code_UP* (2004), a "web-based re-envisioning" of Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 film *Blow-Up* (107). In this work, Beiguelman digitizes moments from the film and expresses them in waving patterns of code, such that filmic images yield to numbers, letters, and other written signs. The fourth chapter offers examples of experimental book technologies and the problem of obsolescence, including, most notably, William Gibson's *Agrippa (A Book of the Dead)*.

A more problematic moment occurs in chapter 5, when Harpold disapproves of the word "lexia" to describe chunks of text in hypertext fiction because it has been appropriated from Roland Barthes without maintaining Barthes's emphasis on the reader's participation in constructing the "unit of meaning." While Harpold's objections are clearly articulated, his urging that the term "be dropped from the vocabulary of new media studies or else redefined in keep-

ing with Barthes' original use" seems excessively prescriptive (144). A more subtle insight comes in the next chapter, when Harpold counters N. Katherine Hayles's characterization of early electronic literature's "brave beginning" and Robert Coover's criticisms about the "disorderly sprawl" of the net and its fictions by saying that such attention to quality "obscure[s] intractable but basic problems of the historical currency of much about the new media" (177, 176, 178). The final chapter, "Reading Machines," provides a fascinating history of reading technologies—from Agostino Ramelli's book wheel to the command-line interface (CLI)—and suggests how each new technology both emerges and departs from previous innovations.

Ex-foliations is a rich compendium that situates current reading practices within a long historical continuum. It reveals how expectations about emerging technologies are informed by prior forms, as well as how new technology has the ability to subvert such expectations.

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