

## Book Reviews

***The Erotics of Sovereignty: Queer Native Writing in the Era of Self-Determination.***  
By Mark Rifkin. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2012. viii, 337 pp.

***Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization.***  
By Scott Lauria Morgensen. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2011. xvi, 292 pp.

***Beyond the Nation: Diasporic Filipino Literature and Queer Reading.*** By Martin Joseph Ponce. New York: New York Univ. Press. 2012. ix, 289 pp.

These three texts contribute to a move within American studies more broadly to situate cultural production within the legal and political discourses of US imperial conquest. Rifkin and Morgensen focus on Native literary and activist works, while Ponce's text surveys diasporic Filipino literature. All three queer this critical undertaking in divergent yet generative ways.

Mark Rifkin's focus on the erotic emerges from a compelling and nuanced discussion of the role of metaphor in relation to self-determination. Discourses of authenticity, he points out, shape what he calls "the effective reality—the actually existing options for and stakes of identification, articulation, and action—available to persons and groups" (13). Official discourses do so by constructing a version of reality as a naturalized fact, disavowing representations' status as figurative. Metaphor, then, might be read both as what the "real" disavows, and, as Rifkin demonstrates, as that which exceeds or is not recognizable by such a dominant "real." The writers that concern Rifkin use metaphor in this latter sense to articulate structures of feeling that are "rejected as a basis of legally cognizable Native identity" but which nonetheless posit Indigenous continuity, in the form of connection to Native peoples, lands, and ancestors (24). Such continuity, he argues, is represented as "both residue and potential, as embodied feelings" (24).

Thus, while expressly not rejecting the legal and political struggles for Native sovereignty, the authors Rifkin analyzes recognize that such struggles work within the terms of settler colonialism, and turn instead in their poetry and fiction to what cannot be accounted for in these terms: metaphor. Rifkin offers a powerful reading of this poetry and fiction as theorizing an erotic broadly cast as not merely sexual pleasure but also a form of contact and “a sense of embodiment and emotional wholeness” (27). Defining the erotic as constituted by networks of impressions and contacts among individuals, families, lands, and ancestors, Rifkin contends that what is inadmissible to or in excess of official evidence of Indian identity is actually “indispensable as a way of registering and imagining Indigenous being” (36). In brilliant analyses of haunting in the work of Qwo-Li Driskill, land in Deborah Miranda’s *The Zen of La Llorona* (2005), generational ties and/as vulnerability in Greg Sarris’s *Watermelon Nights* (1998), and labor in Chrystos’s poetry, Rifkin explores the various ways these Native writers theorize sovereignty through the body, as both embodied and affective and, as such, as resistant to their effacement by the legal discourses of settler governance.

Where Rifkin’s work brings a queer focus to Indigenous issues, Scott Morgensen’s anthropological text brings an awareness of settler colonialism to queer studies. Morgensen asserts that “queer studies must examine settler colonialism as a condition of its own work,” an injunction that his book takes up (26). Grounded in the trope of conversation, *Spaces between Us* offers both a historical analysis and an ethnographic study of Native and non-Native queer activism. Like many Indigenous and/or feminist critics, Morgensen offers a critique of queer as “a location constituted by white-supremacist settler colonialism” (25), while simultaneously joining other queer scholars’ critique of the colonial underpinnings of the field of anthropology. An ambitious undertaking, Morgensen’s analysis traces “the genealogies of settler colonialism that produce non-Native and Native queer modernities in relationship” (15). The first part of the book provides a historical analysis of contemporary anthropology’s colonialist uses of *berdache* to represent “the acceptance of gender-transitive male and same-sex desire in primitive societies” as well as the Indigenous critique of these usages and the subsequent claiming of the term *Two-Spirit* (47). Morgensen reads this disciplinary-specific phenomenon as part of a broader settler mechanism by which settlers supplant Indigenous populations while also viewing them as both disappeared and a source of cultural authenticity. Against this backdrop, Morgensen turns to a contemporary non-Native queer investment in the Native American as a figure of cultural authenticity available for appropriation, a connection to a utopian past in which queer forebears confirm contemporary queers’ right to inhabit the continent. Morgensen shows how Two-Spirit activism demonstrated that Native challenges to settler colonialism were not located solely in the past, and that such activism embodies a transnationalism that displaced the image of the generic Indian.

The second part of the book offers an ethnographic account of contemporary Native and non-Native queer activism in the late twentieth century. Morgensen's account of the white gay men's group the Radical Faeries, as well as to other sites of non-Native gay male organizing, reveals the extent to which such groups continued to turn to fantasies of Indigenous sexuality in order to secure a sense of contemporary queer non-Native identity grounded in "authentic culture, ancient roots, and a global purview" (87). In his final chapter, in contrast, Morgensen analyzes transnational Native queer AIDS organizing, in a nuanced reading that situates this organizing within a broader context of Native health activism that simultaneously advocated health sovereignty and opened the possibility of organizing across differences.

Martin Joseph Ponce's *Beyond the Nation* brings diaspora into this discussion of imperialism, nationalist/sovereignty movements, and sexuality. Like Rifkin, Ponce attends to literary texts, grounding his reading of Anglophone Filipino literature in a queer diasporic history of US colonialism in the Philippines. Ponce uses *queer* in a more figurative sense than either Rifkin or Morgensen, analyzing the structural queerness of Filipinos to the United States, and characterizing the literature as a "dispersed, coreless tradition whose relation to conventional political and social histories has invariably been oblique and ex-centric to the latter's normalizing dictates" (2). He focuses on the multiple audiences this literature addresses, an approach that enables him to read multiple modes of address as "articulating race, nation, and ethnicity to gender, sexuality, and eroticism" (22). Ponce notes that his methodology seeks "not so much 'queer' identities as alternative relationalities, intimacies, and solidarities forged outside of state-sanctioned heterosexuality and its ideological enforcement through familial discipline" (25); this interest in that which is in excess of dominant epistemologies is analogous to Rifkin's approach, although Ponce's stance remains more implicit. In a series of readings of authors from both the colonial and the postcolonial periods, Ponce provides compelling readings of a range of narrative strategies, from Maximo Kalaw's representation of the heteroerotics of Philippine nationalism to a group of novels that represent queer male sexuality in the martial-law period. Ultimately arguing that corelessness is constitutive of diasporic Filipino literature, Ponce contends that this corelessness signals not simply internal differences but outward connections. He thus ends by arguing that a queer diasporic reading is "a practice of connectivity, of seeking out relationalities that form beyond the strictures of normative social boundaries" (232), an undertaking achieved by all three books discussed here.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2647036

***Chang and Eng Reconnected: The Original Siamese Twins in American Culture.*** By Cynthia Wu. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press. 2012. xiii, 203 pp. Cloth, \$84.50; paper, \$28.95; e-book, \$28.95.

***Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the Nineteenth Century.*** By Kyla Wazana Tompkins. New York: New York Univ. Press. 2012. xiii, 275 pp. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$24.00; e-book available.

***Imperfect Unions: Staging Miscegenation in US Drama and Fiction.*** By Diana Rebekkah Paulin. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2012. xxviii, 315 pp. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$25.00.

The three books under review emerge from the now-familiar challenge to the concept of the “free” Liberal self. This challenge has called attention to thinking, instead, about relation and vulnerability as the foundations of political association. Wu, Tompkins, and Paulin work out of this critique in order to reimagine the imbrication of political, social, and biological ideologies in the United States and the anxieties about national unity and racial differences those ideologies produced. Wu examines the “racialized conjunction” of Chang and Eng Bunker, the “Original Siamese Twins,” in relation to the notions of personhood intrinsic to US nation building. Tompkins reads eighteenth- and nineteenth-century US material and visual culture to examine how what she terms “eating culture” produced racial difference that privileged whiteness also within a discourse of national unity. Paulin examines representations of miscegenation in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary and dramatic texts that grappled with a black-white binary that eclipsed a racially diverse population.

*Chang and Eng Reconnected* considers the fascinating and categorically elusive figures of Chang and Eng Bunker in both their historical and fictional manifestations, and through which the book addresses the “dislocation between personhood and corporeality” (3). Wu is interested in the conjoined twins’ attempts to individuate themselves according to the imperatives of national citizenship. One might easily understand the Bunkers’ having established themselves as individuated property owners and their marriage to middle-class white sisters as exceptional in the historical moment—the Chinese Exclusion Act, the emancipation of slaves, and the arrival of European immigrants in the North further restricted the terms in which the Asian immigrant was to function in the social and economic order. Yet Wu urges her reader not to think of the Bunkers as merely exceptional. Rather, she argues, “their historical existence and the cultural production surrounding them begs a reconsideration of easy divisions between privilege and oppression that accompany the global circulation of Asian bodies” (9). Beginning with the premise that the racially marked body was (and is) perceived as always already disabled, Wu bridges disability studies with Asian American studies to examine how

the racial category of *Asian* muddied racial boundaries so as to “both question and preserve social order under segregation” (23). Her cultural-studies approach, a departure from the materialist focus on labor that has dominated Asian American studies, incorporates the social sciences, literary criticism, and ethnography as she continually adapts her methodology to an inclusive object of study. The first section of her book performs a close reading of the medical archives surrounding the Bunkers. Wu argues that the medicalization of difference only teased out its contradictions further. Likewise, difference, she argues, only reveals the continuities between art and medicine. Wu’s study then opens onto a reading of conjunction in literary and visual texts as a metaphor of national unity and progress for nineteenth-century Anglo-American writers, of racial alterity and skepticism about national belonging for late-twentieth-century Asian American authors, and as an interrogation of heteronormative models of kinship (harkening back to the Bunkers’ own attempts to maintain separate households). The final section of Wu’s book employs ethnography in order to throw into relief the fluid model of kinship practiced by the Bunkers’ descendants. *Chang and Eng*, in terms of both the material it assembles and the methods shaped according to those materials, is itself categorically elusive and resists the generic expectations of a strictly defined and isolate field of study.

*Racial Indigestion*, a study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century material and print culture in the United States, is similarly interested in the tenuous boundaries between “seemingly dichotomous social groups” (51) as signified by the porosity of bodies themselves. It is especially the mouth that threatens the divisions between the ruling class and subaltern bodies, between nation and empire, and between whiteness and the racialized Other. Eating, Tompkins argues, is a site of racial anxiety and a trope of racial formation; the mouth is a site for what she terms “queer alimentarity,” “a form of sensuality” that has “the power to disrupt both the individual body and the social order” (69). This disruption characterizes what the title of the book refers to as “indigestion,” the mode in which black bodies refuse to be consumed into a capitalist logic of racism and in which blackness upsets the white body politic (92). Tompkins’s biopolitically informed conception of indigestion as disruptive of the national dietetic project to consolidate whiteness in the face of US expansion, however, passes up the occasion to engage more deeply with queer theory and its ally, counterpublic theory, toward which her terminology gestures but which she does not unburden. Otherwise, Tompkins attends to these texts—which include novels, chapbooks, poetry, cookbooks, and trading cards—scrupulously, entrenching her close readings of the material within the locally and historically specific contexts in which they emerged. Her work stems from and is a response to the field of food studies, ambitious in its compensation for where that field may have foundered. Challenging the “unconscious investments in the commodity itself” (2) that has typified this

field, Tompkins's study inaugurates "critical eating studies," which seeks to foreground the essential vulnerability of bodies to each other.

*Staging Miscegenation* takes up this same threat of uncontained bodies to white propertied law and order, beginning with the "domestic consolidation" (xviii) of the Civil War and concluding with the nation's entrance onto the global stage in World War I. The influx of European immigrants and the emancipation of slaves, as well as US imperial desires, all contributed to an increasingly variegated whiteness. The discourse of miscegenation during this period, Paulin argues, produced a binarization of race that functioned to police the nonwhite population by eliding racial diversity (returning us to Wu's observations about the function of the racial category of Asian). *Imperfect Unions* examines how American drama and fiction intervened in such attempts to "recenter whiteness" (55). Paulin reads these texts for what she calls "surrogacy," that is, the "multiple levels of substitution and reformulation in culture that unsettle identities, subjects, and events that these levels (re) present, as well as those they invoke indirectly" (3). Her terminology here is meant to encapsulate the synthesis of drama and fiction in the texts that interest her, and of performance studies and literary history that marks her comparative approach. Like Wu, Paulin understands the representation of the performance and permeability of racial boundaries as constituting its own aesthetic, but she explores this question primarily on the level of plot rather than language. Of the three texts reviewed here, *Staging Miscegenation* seems to clear way for new territory the least. The book, which asks to be read in part as a literary history, is most absorbing when it takes up legal history as well. Indeed, the authors about which Paulin writes, including Louisa May Alcott, William Dean Howells, Charles Chesnut, and Pauline Hopkins, all employed racial performance "vigorously as they debated its vital role in the defining and legislation of equality, freedom, and citizenship on the national and global scale" (165). Her reading of the literature within these legal histories seems short on friction, however; though it is not central to her stated project, further intervention in the ongoing conversation on the relationship between the legal and literary genres might have been fertile ground in light of her primary interest in generic cross-pollination.

An understanding of the nuances with which various attempts to consolidate whiteness were made must, these studies remind us, be at the center of any discussion of the racialized threat to the atomized body nation. But what is also at stake in these publications is the field imaginary. Energizing the now-established critique of possessive individualism, these texts suggest that scholarship that takes up the corporate body must also be committed to multidisciplinary.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2647045

***“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851–1911.*** By Barbara Hochman. 2011. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press. xv, 377 pp. \$28.95.

***Word by Word: Emancipation and the Act of Writing.*** By Christopher Hager. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press. 2013. 311 pp. \$39.95.

***Fever Reading: Affect and Reading Badly in the Early American Public Sphere.*** By Michael Millner. Durham: Univ. of New Hampshire Press. 2012. xxii, 188 pp. Cloth, \$85.00; paper, \$35.00; e-book, \$29.99.

***Bodies and Books: Reading and the Fantasy of Communion in Nineteenth-Century America.*** By Gillian Silverman. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press. 2012. xiii, 226 pp. \$55.00.

Nineteenth-century Americans’ anxieties about literacy often coalesced around the idea that reading and writing could turn subjects inward to a dangerous degree. Cultural authorities worried about readers losing themselves in novels, and many whites saw African American literacy—and the interiority it posited—as a threat to national stability and social cohesion. Critics, meanwhile, decried the extremes of introspective egoism they saw in writers like Herman Melville. But even in its most absorptive varieties, nineteenth-century reading and writing carried significantly centrifugal force. Four new books explore literacy’s capacity to propel readers and writers outward in sometimes revolutionary ways. Uncovering hidden archives and opening new points of access into familiar texts, these fascinating studies reveal private and public engagements with the written word that shape ideologies and identities, forge affiliations, offer alternative possibilities for intimacy, and help constitute a public sphere.

In *“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and the Reading Revolution*, Barbara Hochman tracks the reception of Stowe’s novel over a half century to expose shifts in reading practices and associated transformations in the novel’s cultural meaning. The first part of the study focuses on the 1850s, when Stowe’s representations of reading at once encouraged acceptance of slave literacy (and subjectivity) and legitimized fiction as a source of shared values. Hochman demonstrates that both the novel and a children’s adaptation that immediately followed it challenged interpretative norms, enabling white readers to move beyond sympathy to identify with those on the other side of the color line. The study then turns to the 1880s and 90s, when *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was repackaged as a lifeless historical object that promoted white readers’ detachment and nostalgia for the Old South, a process that transformed it into “a virulently racist book” (20). To construct this interesting chronicle of the novel and its afterlife, Hochman draws on a wealth of paratextual materials that includes illustrations, advertisements, and children’s editions, as well as responses from editors, illustrators, critics, and everyday readers. Among the most



compelling of the latter are items in a scrapbook compiled in the last decades of the century by African American artist and book collector William H. Dorsey. Unfortunately, this artifact provides only a glimpse of the ways African Americans experienced *Uncle Tom's Cabin* through the dramatic transformations Hochman traces, though an epilogue addresses African American readers in the twentieth century. This limitation of the archive does nothing, however, to diminish Hochman's compelling central revelation: reading practices and racial ideologies are not only interconnected, but mutually reinforcing.

African American literacy is the focus of *Word by Word*, a rich and exciting investigation of the ways writing by marginally literate slaves and the newly freed reflects the complex experiences of emancipation. Christopher Hager interrogates notions of literacy and freedom for African American writers, dispensing with the overly simplistic "literacy-as-liberation thesis" to emphasize "the multiplicities of literacy itself—reading and writing, not to mention innumerable degrees of proficiency and acquisition—as well as the complexities of how liberation occurred for most enslaved Americans" (20). His expansion of African American literature to embrace the unpublished and unpolished opens a treasure chest of extraordinary materials: diaries, private letters, and petitions to white authorities; poems etched on clay pots; transcriptions, with commentary, of official documents like the Constitution; and life narratives, including the successive works of John M. Washington, the only known autobiographical writing produced by an individual both while enslaved and after emancipation. In powerful ways, these texts reflect African Americans' struggles not just to define themselves as free people but to enter into new communities and forge new political affiliations in freedom. Some of these materials have been cited elsewhere as documentary evidence, and Hager's deep research into the conditions that produce them will be valuable to historians. But where this book sings is in its often thrilling literary analyses. Hager finds meaning in the very limitations of the texts he examines, in their gaps and omissions, their idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies, their adoption and adaptation of white writing protocols, even their monotony. He beautifully demonstrates how the materials gathered in his book, unmediated by editors, "harbor a significance beyond the words they struggle to represent," to use his description of Washington's narratives (105).

In different ways, Michael Millner and Gillian Silverman brilliantly illuminate how the absorptive production or consumption of texts structures human interactions. Millner makes the striking claim that "bad reading"—reading deemed corrupting in its promotion of affective and bodily response rather than critical reflection—actually shaped the kinds of relations to texts and other individuals that were essential to the operations of the nineteenth-century public sphere. The opening chapter of *Fever Reading* scaffolds this argument by proposing, via Michael Warner and others, a public sphere rooted in embodied, attached, affective reading rather than in the critical detachment prescribed by Jürgen Habermas. Yet Millner goes beyond the recent affective



turn in public-sphere theory by presenting a conceptual framework based on cognitive science, using William H. Reddy's notion of evaluative and navigatory verbalized emotion as a touchstone. He also considers the public implications of emotional responses overlooked in cultural studies of affect, such as boredom, disgust, and delirium. The counterintuitive argument here is that such responses, constitutive of the public sensorium, can generate the reflection and criticality required of modern democracy. After offering a history of ideas about normative and pathological reading in relation to the early American public sphere, Millner makes his case by looking into the reading of three different kinds of nineteenth-century texts: obscene newspapers and novel-ettes, scandal publications, and religious tracts and novels. With each case study, he uses a combination of historical contextualization and close reading to uncover surprising and occasionally self-conscious acts of participation in the public sphere made possible by "fever reading." Ambitious in its theoretical interventions, this highly readable study lays bare the inner workings of "the affective-critical public sphere" in ways that will encourage new thinking on the politics of emotion (144).

A more intimate engagement through text is posited in Silverman's *Bodies and Books*. Silverman identifies a common experience of communion in nineteenth-century reading and writing, one that produces "a sense of wholeness based not in autonomy and terminal existence but in accretion, correspondence, and extensivity" (7). Silverman's methodology is partly psychoanalytic, but that does not mean she sees this communion as merely symbolic or abstract. Like Millner, she turns to cognitive science, citing experiments in embodied language and the neurophysical qualities of cognition to suggest a psychophysiological unity between a reader and a book, a fellow reader, a character, or an author. In these cases the book becomes "a technology of intimacy, able to affirm the ideal of oneness for a large cross-section of nineteenth-century subjects" (19). The first chapter describes competing models for reading in the period: on the one hand, reading was something to be regulated and directed toward productivity; on the other, it could be valued as an atemporal, "wayward" experience that might collapse the distance in time and space between two people (23). Such reading can make possible, Silverman contends in her second chapter, a "mutual ensoulment" of readers with the dead, including the deceased producer of the text (an assertion that productively challenges contemporary consensus on "the death of the author") (54). Subsequent chapters discover a fantasy of extranormative consubstantiality with the living and dead running through three prominent books. In *Pierre*, Herman Melville mobilizes "textual sentimentalism"—a means for the author to merge sympathetically with a select audience through writing—to feed a hunger for interpersonal attachment and homoerotic intercorporeity (85). Frederick Douglass attempts a cross-racial textual communion in his *Narrative*, while Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* produces instances of fusion with others through female subjugation on the written page. These sometimes

speculative but nonetheless powerful close readings are complexly crafted, and a summary such as this does not do them justice. Elegantly written and provocative, Silverman's interpretations are sure to change our approach to these and other familiar texts.

In epilogues, both Millner and Silverman address the worries that attend literacy in the digital age. Revisiting nineteenth-century fears, we now wonder if reading e-books and blogs or writing texts and tweets undermines our ability to engage with the written word and one another in meaningful ways. These four books, themselves often utterly absorbing reads, should provide some reassurance in their discoveries of the potential for vital human engagement in all kinds of reading and writing practices.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2647054

***Novel Bondage: Slavery, Marriage, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century America.* By Tess Chakkalal. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press. 2011. 145 pp. \$40.00.**

***Righteous Violence: Revolution, Slavery, and the American Renaissance.* By Larry J. Reynolds. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2011. xvi, 256 pp. Cloth, \$59.95; paper, \$24.95.**

These books underline how utterly foundational the existence of slavery was to both the material and the imaginative worlds inhabited by everyone living in the United States at the middle of the nineteenth century. This is not a new idea, but it perhaps will never be emphasized enough—and both of these scholars have chosen novel approaches to illumine how slavery provided an inescapable creative and conceptual baseline for the great period of literary nationalism that preceded the Civil War.

In her slender study, Tess Chakkalal explores how mid-century novelists imagined and represented what she calls “slave-marriage”—a wedding of enslaved persons that had no legal standing. Her aim in revisiting classic works of nineteenth-century antislavery and African American fiction with this focus is twofold. On the one hand, Chakkalal sees her project as recuperative, compensating for a dearth of recorded accounts of the intimate affective lives of enslaved persons. Indeed, the jacket copy of the book promises to “[fill] a long-standing gap in our knowledge about slave-marriage,” situating *Novel Bondage* alongside important efforts, such as Frances Smith Foster’s *Til Death or Distance Do Us Part* (2009), to cull such information from the archive of recorded testimony about personal experiences of slavery. Because she confines her sources to fiction, though, what Chakkalal is actually able to delineate is not the affective lives of enslaved people, but rather how those lives were able to be imagined and depicted in the 1850s (Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, William Wells Brown, Frank Webb) and in the 1890s

(Charles Chesnutt) by authors working from positions of great privilege relative to the characters they portrayed. In other words, the book produces a literary-historical rather than a social-historical argument, and Chakkalakal's muddling of the two in her claims is exemplified in her occasional confusion of fiction with autobiography, as when she writes of Harriet Jacobs's "slave narrative of a fictional slave-marriage" in the introduction (8). As a literary history, *Novel Bondage* is at its best when Chakkalakal explores possible relays between the marital biographies of Wells Brown and Webb and the novels they wrote; a short chapter on the arc of Frances E. W. Harper's career also usefully integrates biographical and interpretive insights, while spanning the Civil War and tracing Harper's evolving portrayals of marriage from her magazine fiction and public addresses to her novel *Iola Leroy*.

A second trajectory of Chakkalakal's book takes "the fictional slave-marriage" as, predominantly, a metaphor. For nineteenth-century writers refiguring the portrayal of marriage more broadly, it provided "a romantic and literary ideal . . . that supposedly transcended the law" (14). In this vein of *Novel Bondage*, Chakkalakal seeks to modulate the mid-century women's rights critique of restrictive marriage laws, particularly laws of coverture, as a form of enslavement for women. Against the women's rights critique that could see marriage only as oppressive to the individual, Chakkalakal reminds us that writers taking *actual* slave law into account conceived of marriage as empowering: a legal protection, a marker of personhood and citizenship, a natural human right. (Although she does not elaborate on the connection, this dimension of her argument is surely relevant to ongoing marriage rights debates today.) It is somewhat puzzling that, although she cites major scholarship on the legal and cultural transformation of marriage in America across the nineteenth century, Chakkalakal never puts her account of the rhetorical usefulness of "slave-marriage" as a romantic ideal into the larger Anglo-American context of the rise of the ideal of companionate marriage or marriage for love; this evolution surely influenced the parameters of the fictions of slavery she reads, even as those fictions of slavery surely contributed to the larger shift in conventions and understandings of marriage at the time.

*Righteous Violence* begins with a compelling problematic. A patriot in a Revolutionary War historical romance—begun by Nathaniel Hawthorne during the Civil War and never finished—watches a retreating redcoat struck down by guerilla fire, an act presumably of US liberation that nevertheless "was so like murder that he really could not tell the difference." "The same could be said of almost all political violence resulting in death," Larry Reynolds continues, "and the epistemological challenge to 'tell the difference' lies at the heart of . . . the American Renaissance" (ix). What follows is an ethical and interpretive investigation that is throughout a pleasure to read, streamlined yet substantial. Reynolds's seven author-focused chapters appear to offer a survey of classic American literature—Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, Hawthorne,

Herman Melville—even as his text selections are often surprising: for Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*; for Hawthorne, the last romances; for Alcott, *Moods*.

Given Reynolds's topic, his putatively sectional formulation of “the American Renaissance” causes me to regret losing the complexity that might have emerged if he had accounted for a major figure such as Edgar Allan Poe—who has plenty to say about violence and righteousness—or if he had at least considered Douglass's status as a geographic outlier in this largely Boston-centric group. Surely it is time to stop replicating F. O. Matthiessen's now seventy-year-old canonical exclusions on the basis of geography. Reynolds has done better on the matter of gender, and I find particularly exciting his origination of *Righteous Violence* in Fuller's 1840s dispatches from revolutionary Europe, which he suggests helped radicalize antislavery thought on violent revolution. Taking Fuller as the “revolutionary example” for New England provides an unexpected genealogy for this strain of antislavery thought—in terms of transnationalism and periodization as well as gender—rather than focusing narrowly on responses to John Brown's raid. And although the study proceeds teleologically toward the righteous bloodletting of the Civil War, Reynolds concludes with a chapter on *Billy Budd* and the “labor unrest” of the 1880s, signaling that potentially violent, potentially righteous struggles go on—that revolution might outlive both slavery and the American Renaissance.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646919

***Race for Citizenship: Black Orientalism and Asian Uplift from Pre-Emancipation to Neoliberal America.* By Helen Heran Jun. New York: New York Univ. Press. 2011. x, 198 pp. Paper, \$22.00.**

***Modeling Citizenship: Jewish and Asian American Writing.* By Cathy J. Schlund-Vials. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press. 2011. xix, 224 pp. Paper, \$24.95.**

***The White Negress: Literature, Minstrelsy, and the Black Jewish Imaginary.* By Lori Harrison-Kahan. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press. 2011. 229 pp. Paper, \$24.95.**

In the 1890s, the prominent black feminist intellectual and activist Anna Julia Cooper advocated for the inclusion of African American women in American modernity over and against the contrasting image of the subjugated Oriental woman. In the 1910s, the popular Jewish vaudeville performer Sophie Tucker rose to fame as a blackface innovator of “coon shouting,” incorporating Yiddish into her acts while also contributing to the development of the blues. In the 1990s, celebrated Asian American novelist Gish Jen published *Mona in the Promised Land*, a novel about a second-generation Chinese American girl who converts to Judaism in an effort to become American, an ethnoreligious

conversion from one “model minority” to another with mixed results. These instances point to a history of interracial and ethnic encounter, exchange, and appropriation often neglected in critical studies of race.

An excellent cluster of books explores the intricate meanings of these borrowings. Helen Heran Jun’s *Race for Citizenship*, Cathy J. Schlund-Vials’s *Modeling Citizenship*, and Lori Harrison-Kahan’s *The White Negress*, offer innovative approaches for understanding the shifting logics of citizenship and racial formation across the twentieth century through the work of culture. These books examine the ways particular writers, activists, intellectuals, and filmmakers hailing from minoritized communities produce gendered narratives of inclusion and exclusion, affiliation and difference, while working within the limitations of liberal and neoliberal discourse.

Jun’s *Race For Citizenship* brilliantly analyzes how, within the history of US citizenship, Asian Americans and African Americans have been “racially defined in relation to one another,” a process that has both shaped and differentiated each group’s quest for national belonging since the mid-nineteenth century. One group’s “race for citizenship” has often been mediated through the other group’s representation as an excluded racial Other, leading to what Jun calls “black orientalism” and “Asian uplift.” Exploring three historical periods in which the question of African American and Asian American citizenship exists in heightened relational crisis, Jun’s readings move from the nineteenth-century black press and Anna Julia Cooper’s writings within the context of the Anti-Chinese movement, the push for African American enfranchisement, and the rise of US imperialism; to mid-century Asian American novels by John Okada and Ronyoung Kim within the context of World War II’s conjoined racial and international realignments; and, finally, to recent African American and Asian American films within the context of post-Civil Rights discourses of neoliberal multiculturalism and globalization. Jun demonstrates how these cultural texts intercede within a long history of tandem yet asymmetrical racialization. She resists the drive within much comparative ethnic studies work to romanticize moments of multiracial solidarity, to explain away moments of hostility as interracial prejudice or to assess a text’s “hegemonic or counter-hegemonic impulses” based on a notion of proper ethics. Ever attuned to the inevitability of contradiction within culture, Jun shows “how historically specific contradictions inherent in the institution of citizenship take shape and are negotiated in Asian American and African American cultural production” (5). Such an unflinching approach allows her to account for the repressed histories of US slavery, imperialism, war, and dispossession that emerge within specific articulations of black orientalism and Asian uplift and also tease out the complex gendered dimensions of these representations.

In *Modeling Citizenship*, Schlund-Vials deftly moves between readings of twentieth-century Jewish and Asian American literature and the shifting protocols of naturalization policy and immigration law. She explores the connected literature of two “kindred” immigrant groups who have been

categorized, policed, and regulated as model minorities and perpetual foreigners, tracing “parallel trajectories of alienation as well as divergent historic paths to U.S. naturalization” having to do with race (5). From the short stories of Edith Maude Eaton and Abraham Cahan at the end of the nineteenth century to recent novels such as Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* and Eva Hoffman’s *Lost in Translation*, Schlund-Vials’s analysis focuses on the ways these texts enact and deconstruct changing frames of citizenship and their affective performances. She closely attends to the legal and historical contexts for these enactments, specifically late nineteenth-century nativism, “cold war model minoritization and twenty-first century immigration amnesty and reform” (10). Rejecting the word *assimilation*, Schlund-Vials pursues the many meanings of *naturalization*, particularly its suggestion of a process that is both transnational and national, “equal part repudiation and declaration, affective and legislative, wherein the country of origin is dismissed in favor of the country of settlement” (xvii). She persuasively argues that naturalization is a fluid literary trope with its own affective and performative dimensions, a way of reading, identifying and performing citizenship. This emphasis allows her to trace the limits of the model-minority analogy, demonstrating how Jewish and Asian American literary imaginaries open up modes of denaturalization, nation state affiliation, displacement, and statelessness and the production of good and bad subjects.

Harrison-Kahan’s *The White Negress* pushes the “love and theft” paradigm into new terrain: she focuses on Jewish and black women performers and writers who engage with a black-Jewish imaginary. Much of the work in critical blackface studies and whiteness studies conforms to a binary of black and white, insufficiently addresses gender beyond masculinity, and gives short shrift to the performativity and fluidity of whiteness. Harrison-Kahan’s riveting book takes up this challenge by focusing on women and complicating unidirectional accounts of appropriation. She argues that the interwar period is a rich if understudied time for black-Jewish relations, when Jewish immigrants and African American migrants converged in urban spaces in the realm of labor, popular culture, and political activism spurred by Jim Crow segregation and anti-Semitism. She demonstrates how the black-Jewish cultural imaginaries that emerge within the work of Sophie Tucker, Edna Ferber, Fannie Hurst, and Zora Neale Hurston refashion variations of the modern woman and gesture toward “pluralistic” models of American identity that destabilize notions of white racial purity. Attending to the ambiguities of blackface and Jewface in each text, she shows how these performances offer “a multilayered critique of racial appropriations and interminority identifications” (145). She thus departs from dominant frameworks of Jewish minstrelsy, such as Irving Howe’s conception of minstrelsy as representative of Jewish identification with black oppression, a proximal expression of Jewishness by way of blackness, or Michael Rogin’s counter-conception of minstrelsy as a performance of the Jewish disavowal of blackness in the bid for assimilation to whiteness. Harri-

son-Kahan produces a more dynamic rendering of cross-racial exchange that accounts for unequal power relations while avoiding overly deterministic readings that disregard the possibility of collaboration or a black-Jewish feminist critique of whiteness.

Jun and Schlund-Vials write overtly about citizenship, naturalization, and the impact of changing racial regimes on cultural narratives of national incorporation and identity. Yet Harrison-Kahan's more narrowly focused frame shares with Jun's an emphasis on the forms of racial othering that emerge within these bids for inclusion. If Jun questions the adequacy of identification as catchall model for interracial encounter, Harrison-Kahan and Schlund-Vials underscore the ambivalence and ambiguity of such encounters in their work, noting valences of disidentification as well. Eschewing ossified narratives of solidarity and conflict, each work boldly accounts for the contradictions that appear within these encounters and the cultural texts that perform them. These books put pressure on dominant conceptions of comparative racial formation, calling attention to the larger discourses from whence our analytic frameworks come, namely racial liberalism and neoliberalism. They make the case for alternative conceptual metaphors of contiguity that stress the relational and divergent, the connective and differential, the contradictory and the asymmetrical. Just as provocatively, they constitute a powerful argument for the work of culture—its dense genres, discourses, and imaginaries—in suturing and unstitching gendered and racialized conceptions of nation, citizenship, and belonging.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646928

***Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640–1868.* By Courtney Weikle-Mills. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 2013. x, 265 pp. \$55.00.**

***Disciplining Girls: Understanding the Origins of the Classic Orphan Girl Story.* By Joe Sutliff Sanders. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 2011. xi, 225 pp. \$60.00.**

***Freud in Oz: At the Intersections of Psychoanalysis and Children's Literature.* By Kenneth B. Kidd. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press. 2011. xxvii, 297 pp. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$25.00.**

***Girls and Their Comics: Finding a Female Voice in Comic Book Narrative.* By Jacqueline Danziger-Russell. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press. 2013. viii, 247 pp. \$60.00.**

With the 2013 publication of *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press), the relevance and importance of childhood and youth studies can no longer be easily dismissed. Historically



marginalized within the disciplines, the study of childhood and children's culture has emerged as a vital field that is not only shaped by innovative interdisciplinary approaches but is also actively shaping them. Four new monographs contribute to this project by bringing a range of interdisciplinary strategies to bear on various subgenres of literature aimed at young readers from the seventeenth century to the present.

Situated at the crossroads of childhood studies, educational theory, political philosophy, law, and literature, Courtney Weikle-Mills's *Imaginary Citizens* analyzes how early Americans conceptualized childhood in relationship to citizenship both in literature and in political thought. Despite the subtitle, the book is not a study of actual child readers; instead Weikle-Mills focuses on the way children and their reading were imagined in a wide variety of texts from the colonial period through Reconstruction. As the introduction explains, the term *imaginary citizens* refers to "individuals who could not exercise civic rights but who figured heavily in literary depictions of citizenship and were often invited to view themselves as citizens despite their limited political franchise" (4). For Weikle-Mills, the distinction between legal and literary versions of citizenship creates a space in which to examine the ways children were imagined as participants in civic life in relation to the limits imposed on them in the political sphere. As Weikle-Mills sums up, *Imaginary Citizens* examines "how children's imaginary citizenship [encompassing representations of children's citizenship as well as metaphors of citizens as children] functioned in early America to underwrite and supplement the concepts of rational, participatory, and consenting citizenship that often excluded them by creating imaginary narratives of equality, free birth, natural citizenship, and affectionate subjection" (30). Grounding her analysis in contemporaneous political and educational theory, Weikle-Mills offers close readings of texts (mostly fiction) by William Wells Brown, Hannah Webster Foster, Tabitha Tenney, Sarah Fielding, Susanna Rowson, Washington Irving, Frederick Douglass, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and others. Along the way, the study incorporates a vast assortment of genres, including Puritan conversion narratives, factory-girl miscellanies, and natural history books. Although the manner in which Weikle-Mills articulates the concept of imaginary citizenship is slippery at times and the prose dense, her analysis is rich and insightful, simultaneously extending, complicating, and filling in gaps left by field-defining texts such as Cathy Davidson's 1986 *Revolution and the Word*. Concluding with a provocative discussion of the Fourteenth Amendment in light of current debates over immigration, citizenship, and children's rights, *Imaginary Citizens* challenges past and present conceptions of childhood, citizenship, and the interrelationships between the two.

Picking up chronologically where *Imaginary Citizens* leaves off, Joe Sutliff Sanders's *Disciplining Girls* is also concerned with children's rights, invoking educational theory, legislative action, and the tensions between individualism

and community, desire and moral obligation. A nuanced history of a genre, *Disciplining Girls* examines the transition of orphan-girl stories from the sentimental domestic fiction of the mid-nineteenth century to turn-of-the-century novels aimed at young girls. Driving the analysis is Sanders's observation that "this genre narrates a long, changing history in the relationship among gender, power, and discipline from the height of the sentimental novel to the granting of women's suffrage" (132). Through readings of novels by Susan Warner, E. D. E. N. Southworth, Louisa May Alcott, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Frances Hodgson Burnett, L. M. Montgomery, Eleanor H. Porter, and Susan Coolidge, Sanders demonstrates how orphan-girl stories established a testing ground for shifting conceptions of female agency, individuality, and power. Simultaneously, he traces a shift in the history of disciplinary practices, reflected in popular women's and girls' fiction, from physical correction to "discipline by interiority," enabling an exploration of the way the genre gradually came to redefine the terms of sympathy and motherhood. *Disciplining Girls* is not focused narrowly on the rise of affective discipline, however; in conjunction with this crucial development, Sanders considers Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* in the context of the rise of girls' consumer culture, investigates the implicit critique of mothering in Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, and locates Porter's *Pollyanna* within the history of American domestic architecture. Building on the work of feminist literary historians such as Nina Baym and Ann Douglas while incorporating research into reading practices from book historians such as Christine Pawley and Ronald Zboray, *Disciplining Girls* offers an illuminating, highly readable analysis that looks outward to the cultural history of discipline, individuality, and privacy while taking account of the role of real readers in the development of girls' fiction.

With a similar grounding in theories of child development, Kenneth Kidd's *Freud in Oz* investigates the "entanglement and exchange" (xxvii) between psychoanalysis and literature for children. Like Weikle-Mills and Sanders, Kidd takes a historicist approach, merging literary and cultural history with the institutional histories of the two disciplines that form the axes of his research. With chapters devoted to fairy tales; A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, its parodies, and its "aftertexts"; the foundational triumvirate of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, and L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*; "picturebook psychology" (concentrating on the work of Maurice Sendak); adolescent novels; and the children's literature of atrocity, Kidd convincingly argues that psychoanalysis, children's literature, and the criticism devoted to children's literature developed in tandem and, more crucially, have been mutually constitutive. Rather than advancing his own psychoanalytic readings of key texts, Kidd brilliantly synthesizes a metacritical survey of his intersecting fields, integrating psychoanalysts' uses of children's texts in their theoretical writings, clinical practices that incorporate childhood memories along with writing and drawing by children, the psychoanalytic

affiliations and narrative strategies of key authors of children's books, and the psychological work performed by an array of children's books, spanning a gamut from classic fairy tales and Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* to J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and picture books about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The result is an enlightening, highly engaging "big picture" representing the creative energies, intellectual strategies, and therapeutic orientations mutually animating these disparate but overlapping fields.

Geared toward an audience of general readers and interested professionals (in particular, librarians, booksellers, and teachers), Jacqueline Danziger-Russell's *Girls and Their Comics* explores a dimension of girlhood studies closely aligned with visual culture: literary comics and graphic novels featuring strong female characters and feminist perspectives. Tapping into a wealth of secondary sources, *Girls and Their Comics* sketches a history of comics from the genre's origins to the present, concluding with a chapter on digital media and webcomics. For the uninitiated, Danziger-Russell's second and third chapters form an instructive primer on how to read graphic narrative, adapting reader-response theory and critical approaches associated with picture books to reveal the genre's "complexity as an intricate system of symbols" (32). Danziger-Russell stresses the value of comics as a medium that promotes visual literacy while providing a rare window into the interiority of marginalized figures and voiceless subjects. At times polemical, *Girls and Their Comics* denounces both the male bias that historically has tended to discourage female readers from participation in the world of comics, as producers as well as consumers, and narrow conceptions of literature, founded on class bias and cultural hierarchies, that traditionally precluded this medium from consideration as a literary art form. Guiding readers through a medley of girl-centered comics, including Ted Naifeh's *Courtney Crumrin* series, Trina Robbins's and Anne Timmons's *Go Girl!*, and Marjane Sartrapi's *Persepolis*, *Girls and Their Comics* explodes the gender stereotypes typically associated with comic books and graphic novels. Although not all of the readings effectively bolster her defense of the genre's literariness, Danziger-Russell delivers an informative survey of female-centered comics to readers who may be new to the field.

In *The Children's Table*, editor Anna Mae Duane makes a compelling case for "adding conceptions of childhood to [the] critical trinity" of class, race, and gender (7). Collectively addressing all of these categories through an extensive array of texts aimed at young readers, the four books reviewed here provide further support for the "cumulative thesis" advanced by Duane and her co-contributors that "at this key moment in the state of the humanities, rethinking the child is both necessary and revolutionary" (8).

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646937

***Racial Imperatives: Discipline, Performativity, and Struggles against Subjection.*** By Nadine Ehlers. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press. 2012. x, 185 pp. Cloth, \$70.00; paper, \$25.00.

***American Poetry in Performance: From Walt Whitman to Hip Hop.*** By Tyler Hoffman. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press. 2011. 271 pp. \$45.00.

***Empty Houses: Theatrical Failure and the Novel.*** By David Kurnick. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press. 2011. x, 254 pp. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$32.50.

***Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier.*** By Matthew Reburn. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 2012. x, 207 pp. \$65.00.

This quartet of books offers a series of critical interventions to think through how performance and performativity might matter in American studies and other cognate fields. Each takes a slightly different tack in navigating the extratextual insofar as each deals primarily with a different genre: Ehlers with critical theory and law (If I may be reductively schematic here), Hoffman with lyric poetry, Kurnick with the ostensibly psychological novel, and Reburn with theater and public entertainments. As a collection, they will assist literary scholars in thinking about questions of embodiment, historiography, orality, normativity, and sociality. If each study offers a series of useful readings, perhaps what is most generative about these works as a group is that they call attention to the conditions that enable articulation, pace Stuart Hall.

*Racial Imperatives* brings together the work of Judith Butler (primarily the earlier volumes on performativity and gender) with that of Michel Foucault to think about race. Admittedly such a conjunction, when presented as *sui generis* in Ehlers's text, is rather perplexing to me, given the work of scholars such as Dorinne Kondo, Fred Moten, José Muñoz, Karen Shimakawa, and many others. I would argue that Butler and Foucault have long provided a certain ground from which several interventions into processes of racialization have taken place. Ehlers's work perhaps sustains an analysis of this critical pairing, whereas for other scholars, the writings of Butler and Foucault provide nodal points in arguments that move in different directions. Nevertheless, as an explication of how her chosen trio of "race, Foucault, Butler" might matter, Ehlers's study offers a lucid reading. Her analysis of the 1925 Rhinelander case is particularly suggestive in rendering race the product of a certain affect. The full implications of that assertion have yet to be elaborated. Suffice it to say in this brief review that Ehlers's text might be well situated within a group of scholarly monographs (for example, Susan Koshy's *Sexual Naturalization*) to think about the logics, limits, and possibilities of race as a kind of passing: an iteration of norms over time.

Ehlers's discursive emphasis ultimately does not highlight questions about modes of production in relation to representation. Her focus yields a more macro-level analysis, although it also loses sight of the particularities of form.

In this vein, her concluding example about Eddie Murphy on *Saturday Night Live* requires more elaboration. The other three books might be said to move in the opposite direction. Their concerns often turn to formal analysis, sometimes to the exclusion of interdisciplinary inquiries that might well serve their chosen subjects.

*American Poetry in Performance* moves across a long historical arc from individual poets Walt Whitman, Vachel Lindsay, and Langston Hughes (accompanied by James Weldon Johnson) through artistic movements that involve poets including the Beats (particularly Allen Ginsberg), the Black Arts movement, and poetry slams. As Hoffman reveals, this trajectory is justified if we work backward through the citational practices of the various artists discussed in the book. This reverse movement in time provides the book with a philological charge, which Hoffman often amplifies in his detailed close readings of individual poems. Ultimately, Hoffman's primary interest lies in the vocalization of words and, to a lesser extent, their reception. He achieves this analysis through archival analysis of poetic recitation (a prosodic concern) as well as through a sustained engagement with issues such as typography. He extends these questions about vocal performances and print approximations of the same to ask how lyric poetry in its various American incarnations might produce a public sphere.

Given this analysis, Hoffman's volume might be usefully contextualized with a number of studies from various disciplines. From performance studies, W. B. Worthen's work on print and performance as well as Jennifer Devere Brody's book on punctuation would have been useful interlocutory texts. But Hoffman's ambitious scope might also have delved more substantively into various rhetorical traditions, both sacred and secular, that might impinge on the embodied practice of recitation at various historical moments. These concerns might be areas for future research to illuminate.

The scope of *Empty Houses* is, in some ways, much more delimited than that of Hoffman's book, but the erudition evident within this more circumscribed investigation is impressive, as is the prose. This book theorizes the novel primarily by examining the work of William Thackeray, George Eliot, Henry James, James Joyce, and James Baldwin. From one perspective, this study purports to answer a modest question: what does the fact that each of these authors experimented in the theater tell us about the novel? In each case, through a reading of a remarkable amount of primary and secondary material, Kurnick demonstrates that certain novels exhibit ambivalence toward what he calls "the inward gaze of narrative fiction" (4). Kurnick finds that the works of interest to him use narrative devices often associated with the psychological novel in order to conjure and play with exteriorities, publics, and collectivities. Acknowledging this push toward some sort of collective being queers both the genre and normative reading practices associated with it. While Kurnick provides stimulating analyses of often-interpreted literary texts, his attention to both how we read and the implications of reading

is what is most exciting here. The encoding of the novel's failure to produce the "theatrical" (understood repeatedly, perhaps single-mindedly, as a collective) provokes the individual reader to imagine relationally. This study of narrative theory and its potential social dimensions finally wishes to reimagine how novels think.

The concern with the structure of narrative and its broad impact on social life animates in a different manner Rebhorn's study. *Pioneer Performances* moves from the Age of Jackson to the World's Columbian Exposition in order to rethink established frontier narratives by New Western Historians and scholars of American theater. In pursuit of this goal, the book offers engaging stories about performances that complicate and contest ideologies of manifest destiny. Such spectacles include that of the Native American actress Gowongo Mohawk alongside revisionist interpretations of such canonical shows as *Metamora* starring Edwin Forrest, whose work Rebhorn contextualizes with an on-site Penobscot performance. The focus on the frontier and its performance facilitates critical reassessments of T. D. Rice's blackface and several frontier dramas from Paulding's *The Lion of the West* through Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon* to Joaquin Miller's *The Danites*. Rebhorn's provocations link, for example, racial amalgamation in *The Octoroon* to the live performances of P. T. Barnum's museum. Any reader will find some of these analyses more compelling than others. What may cause more trouble for some scholars is the narrowing of the analytical frame to such a specific construction of the frontier. The spatial imagination of the frontier is well established in my own reading as one of ideological contestation; moreover, what became the western United States has been established in scholarly literature as a material site in which disparate notions of governmentality, kinship, and modernity competed with one another. To contextualize the frontier in this manner is to think not only through its uptake in the United States, but the ways in which such a regional imaginary resonates across, intersects, or contradicts, for example, Chicano/a and Mexicano/a histories; the transnational commerce of Chinese junks across the Pacific; and the negotiation of sacred traditions via groups ranging from the Navajo to the Church of the Latter-Day Saints. Notwithstanding such criticisms, Rebhorn returns the reader to often-neglected fields of cultural production from the nineteenth century that continue to reverberate in our own time. Witness Rebhorn's own turn to illustrate this fact through his analysis of Ang Lee's 2005 film *Brokeback Mountain*.

All four of these books look to various kinds of performance to achieve different ends. They suggest that one disciplinary lens is inadequate to evaluate the richness of any given object. As an ensemble they reveal how the study of performance and performativity is indispensable to all facets of American literature to interrogate the field's and its objects' intermediality.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646946



***The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932–1950.* By Robert Bone and Richard A. Courage. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press. 2011. xx, 302 pp. Paper, \$29.66.**

***Visionary Women Writers of Chicago's Black Arts Movement.* By Carmen L. Phelps. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi. 2013. 188 pp. \$49.50.**

Chicago is on our mind. Studies of the Black Chicago Renaissance are now in vogue. But new studies of the regional Black Arts movements are as tremendous as this new wave of Chicago Renaissance scholarship. After Daniel Widener's pivotal 2010 *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles*, we now have Carmen Phelps's *Visionary Women Writers of Chicago's Black Arts Movement*. In order to know the lower frequencies of Chicago's black cultural movements, we need to put Phelps's text in conversation with Robert Bone and Richard Courage's *The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932–1950*.

The Black Chicago Renaissance begins to gain momentum in the 1930s, after the cultural renaissance in Harlem, at its height in the 1920s. Why has this period between the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts movement only recently received more attention? Does a greater focus on Chicago pave the way for unsettling the normative arc that too quickly maps twentieth-century African American cultural movements with the signposts "Harlem Renaissance" and "Black Arts movement"?

The focus on Chicago troubles the notion that the New Negro movement ended in the 1930s, and the focus on Chicago also troubles the contrast of the white patronage of the Harlem Renaissance and the move to black self-determination in the 1960s and 70s Black Arts movement. The relative black autonomy of the 1930s Chicago Renaissance differed from the interracial exchanges that overdetermined some Harlem Renaissance cultural productions. Bone and Courage, unlike Darlene Clark Hine and John McCluskey in *The Black Chicago Renaissance* (2012), do not give enough attention to the greater autonomy that shaped the Chicago Renaissance. They do, however, unveil the important differences between the black respectability and critique of black respectability that shapes the Harlem Renaissance and the lack of any real investment in this issue in the less-elite Chicago Renaissance.

Bone and Courage's interpretation of the significance of the privileging, by 1950, of form over politics, as artists such as Gwendolyn Brooks gained "high-brow" acclaim and recognition, frames the issue of form in a manner that erases the nuances of Brooks's own recognition that formalists need not be assimilationists. Bone and Courage cite Tolson's resonant response to J. Saunders Redding's critique of Tolson's poem *Libretto for the Republic of Liberia*: "Mr. Redding has a fetishism for 'simple lines.' . . . Away with the simple Negro" (227). As Bone and Courage revel in Tolson's and other writers' insistence on the privileging of craft over content, they fail to understand the real achievement of Brooks in *Annie Allen* (1949). They celebrate this poetry vol-



ume as her achievement of art for art's sake, but *Annie Allen* is Brooks's paving of the way for the Black Arts poets she mentors years later. In *Annie Allen*, Brooks finds the difficult space to "first fight then fiddle." As she "civilizes a space," she does not assimilate. Tolson exclaims, "At long last, it seems, a black man has broken into the ranks of T. S. Eliot and Tate! We have been completely ignored heretofore" (227). Brooks does not, like Tolson, perform the joy of being included in a white-determined aesthetic.

Bone and Courage's analysis of Brooks (and the larger Black Chicago Renaissance achievement of form her work embodies) privileges that which Houston Baker calls the "mastery of form," but they fail to understand that which he names "the deformation of mastery" (*Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* [Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987]). Their reading of *Annie Allen* erases the deformation performed by Brooks as she makes the "children of the poor" her muse and begins the journey to her deep involvement in the Black Arts movement, foreshadowed by the eloquence of her own "simple lines" in "We Real Cool."

Examinations of the race and gender politics of the Black Arts and Black Power movements have exposed core tensions between the two. Phelps takes this work to the next level (the level of greater specificity and complication) as she zooms in on Johari Amini, Carolyn Rodgers, and Angela Jackson. She shows that Black Arts movement women's poetry is the foundation for many of the complicated rhetorical maneuvers in later African American women's poetry and black feminism. Carolyn Rodgers's Black Arts movement poetry, for example, often shapes black women's skepticism about Black Power into a "Black Power feminism" that theorizes about intersectionality a decade before the writings that have now been canonized as the "double jeopardy" analyses.

Phelps argues that the Black Arts movement is a complex collaboration. "Collaboration" may initially convey a sense of harmonious cocreation, but Phelps allows this word to contain the weight of paradox and the open-endedness of performance. This use of collaboration as a way of rethinking the relation between women poets and the dominant black male discourse of the Black Arts movement can also offer a new way of thinking about the flow between the Harlem Renaissance, the Chicago Renaissance, the many regional Black Arts movements, and the larger national and international Black Arts movement. In the encyclopedic scope of *The Muse in Bronzeville*, the most eye-opening accounts are the stories about the movement of writers and visual artists across the spatial boundaries of Chicago and Harlem and the involvement of certain writers and visual artists in both the Harlem Renaissance and the Chicago Renaissance.

When we bring these two long overdue texts together, the signifying difference between the Chicago Renaissance and the Black Arts movement is more subtle than any pronounced aesthetic or ideological difference. Bone and Courage's stunning archival work leads us to these more nuanced shades of difference that make the two movements seem like waves in a larger movement of

black aesthetics unbound. Consider, for example, Bone and Courage's use of Archibald Motley's reference, in an interview, to the color that is "terribly black" (71). In the Black Arts movement, this terribleness remains, but the word and image interplays in Amiri Baraka's *In Our Terribleness* (1970) literally makes us move into this terribleness and discover the power of the black gaze.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646955

***A Web of Words: The Great Dialogue of Southern Literature.* By Richard Gray. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2007. xii, 283 pp. \$34.95.**

***Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912–2002.* By Melanie Benson. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press. 2008. xiv, 263 pp. Cloth, \$71.95; paper, \$25.95.**

***Romances of the White Man's Burden: Race, Empire, and the Plantation in American Literature, 1880–1936.* By Jeremy Wells. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt Univ. Press. 2011. x, 238 pp. \$55.00.**

The past ten years have seen a great deal of ink spilled over the "New Southern Studies"—a diffuse and dynamic critical trend that has spawned several special issues, at least three major book series, and some of the most exciting recent scholarship on the US South. Indeed, the New Southern studies is now old enough that it is getting harder and harder to remember what the old Southern studies looked like. (NB: It wasn't always pretty.) Yet what distinguishes these three titles is their *longue durée* approach to literary history. While there is much here that is novel, all three authors show an admirable willingness to engage older critical conversations and texts. Their books each give a fascinating account of where Southern literary studies might be headed in the coming decade.

Richard Gray has spent a lifetime thinking about the South, and *A Web of Words* speaks resoundingly to his erudition and passionate engagement with an impossibly broad set of literary texts. Moving from the precontact and colonial South all the way up to the present day, this insistently humanistic book identifies at the heart of Southern literature a "history of creative, dialogic conflict—argument" (3). Gray is not interested in mere influence or allusion here; instead he tracks "ripples," "echoes," and "resonances" that play out over "deep time." One representative page finds him referencing some thirteen writers from nine different decades (242). Elsewhere, Gray links Pierre Macherey, Malcolm X, and Wendell Berry—in a single paragraph, no less.

Across three long, at times breathless chapters, Gray chases several conversational hares: the representation of disaster in Southern writing—particularly with regard to the Vietnam War; agrarianism and the vexed Southern pastoral tradition; and the "border territory" created when Southern texts and writers

speak to texts and writers from outside the South (xi). At every turn, Gray plays up the multiplicity and diversity of Southern writing, amplifying its cacophonous nature. He also helps us to think outside the “bipolar, biracial model of the region” (149). This is particularly true in the book’s final pages, as Gray considers how immigrants’ experiences of the South have “immeasurably enriched” Southern writing (220). Indeed, the book’s most arresting readings are of Wayne Karlin, Robert Olen Butler, Mary Gardner, and Lan Cao, writers who write about or are connected to the Vietnamese community in the South.

Throughout, Gray’s prose is graceful and engaging. He also has a light touch with theorists like Mikhail Bakhtin, Benedict Anderson, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. (Such admirable accessibility may betray the project’s origins as the 50th Lamar Lectures at Mercer University.) Although the book lacks a unifying, strongly argumentative claim, it is nonetheless a pleasure to eavesdrop on the conversation that Gray orchestrates. Yet, for all of his dazzling range, Gray is at his best when he offers sustained readings of writers like Bobbie Ann Mason, Yusef Komunyakaa, Wendell Berry, Hannah Crafts, Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, and Toni Morrison. Amid the din of all their telling about the South, Gray discerns an uncommon dialogue.

If Gray’s book suggests a word-drunk South, then Melanie Benson’s *Disturbing Calculations* offers us a numbers-crazed region. By Benson’s count, modern Southerners share nothing so much as a tendency to “measure, divide, and value themselves and the Others against whom they find balance” (1). Drawing on a rich and diverse archive, she convincingly shows how numerical figures, the ledger trope, and discourses of calculation came to dominate a wide swath of twentieth-century Southern literature. According to Benson, the “agonized and ambivalent transition” from slavery to capitalism cast Southerners in a narcissistic drama of desire and repudiation of “material wealth and psychological solvency” (203, 6). Uncomfortable in a new socioeconomic order, many modern Southerners found themselves strangely drawn to the old order and its macabre calculations of human value.

As with *A Web of Words*, the great strength of this book lies in its capacious and idiosyncratic definition of Southern writing. While the familiar figures are all here—Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Anne Porter—Benson is at her best when she treats less known or less explicitly “Southern” writers like William Attaway, Frances Newman, Anita Loos, Louis Owens, and Marilou Awiakta. To this end, it is the book’s final two chapters, with their accounting of contemporary multiethnic writing, that set this book apart. Drawing together Native American, African American, and Asian American writers, Benson identifies the tragic legacies of the “fetish of number.”

As this summary suggests, *Disturbing Calculations* is a much more difficult and dense book than Gray’s. Benson works confidently and convincingly with psychoanalytic, Marxist, and postcolonial vocabularies of narcissism and fetishism; she also knows well her Freud, Fanon, and Bhabha. Readers may

find such theoretical sophistication daunting. The same goes for Benson's ambitious attempts to get more writers on her own ledgers. (The final chapter, "Re-membering the Missing," treats six different writers in just under forty pages.) As a result, her brilliant and lovely readings often feel a bit rushed. Nonetheless, Benson, who has already published a second book on the Native South, is clearly emerging as one of the leading lights of the New Southern studies.

Jeremy Wells's *Romances of the White Man's Burden* is the most modest of these three titles, but it, too, announces a significant critical talent. In accounting for why visions of the old plantation came to dominate post-Reconstruction US print culture—both North and South—Wells shows how a nostalgic vision of the regional past helped imagine a national future. Once a figure of significant disruption and threat to the national order, the plantation came to represent, Wells argues, "a new way forward for the entire nation" in the years 1880 to 1936 (5).

Reading a literature that most critics have assiduously avoided, Wells reintroduces problematic texts by Thomas Nelson Page, Henry W. Grady, and Thomas Dixon, before bringing them to bear on Faulkner's more canonical representation of the "White Man's Burden." In doing so, Wells makes a compelling case for the plantation as a space in which "regional distinctiveness, national centrality, and imperial expansiveness are being imagined simultaneously" (21). He also gives us a much better sense for how Rudyard Kipling's infamous 1899 poem was translated to a Southern context. (For this reason, the book is a ready complement to Gretchen Murphy's recent *Shadowing the White Man's Burden* [2010].) White Southern writers saw themselves as uniquely qualified to both bear their purported "burden" and solve the problems of the modern world. To Wells's mind, Kipling's poem inaugurated a vision of the region as "coextensive with the world and a model for its domination" (18).

In charting the resulting region-nation-world nexus, Wells again and again shows the interdependence of regional writing, racism, and US imperialism. He also brilliantly upends the myth of Southern exceptionalism, arguing instead for "southern similitude, southern synecdoche—in short, the idea that the plantation South *meant* 'America'" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (180). Throughout, Wells is a witty writer and a perspicacious reader of print culture. He is particularly good on W. E. B. DuBois's vehement responses to "The White Man's Burden," as well as on the national and international reception of Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus Tales*. Thus, despite a slight tendency to undersell its key claims, *Romances of the White Man's Burden* is an important and utterly timely book.

Taken together, Gray's, Benson's, and Wells's studies speak to the fundamental dynamism and diversity of Southern literary studies in the twenty-first century.

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DOI 10.1215/00029831-2646964