

relying on them as he did to cook and buy provisions, garden seeds, and supplies.

Although this book deals with white authors' elision of the knowledge and labor of enslaved people, Klein's conclusion is optimistic. These "unsettling absences," she suggests, allow for the emergence of "the most expansive version of the archive of the early United States" (163). In order to use this archive, Klein urges interaction between archivists, texts, and technologies to expose and reckon with the limits of knowledge. *An Archive of Taste* makes a persuasive case for heeding this call.

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*Agrotopias: An American Literary History of Sustainability*. By Abby L. Goode. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022. Pp. 294. \$34.95 paperback. \$27.00 e-book.)

In her compelling and astute reconsideration of the development of early American agricultural thought, Abby L. Goode pays special attention to the ways that racist, nativist, eugenic, and expansionist rhetoric influenced the evolution of the concept of sustainability across America's long nineteenth century and beyond. The book begins with a helpful roadmap to demonstrate how the texts explored in *Agrotopias* challenge accepted views of how Thomas Jefferson's agricultural ideas informed early concepts of sustainability. Chapter 1, "No Rural Bowl of Milk: Unsustainability and the Demographic Agrarian Ideal," examines Herman Melville's 1852 novel, *Pierre*, along with some of his lesser-known agricultural essays. Goode argues that in *Pierre*, Melville highlights the anxieties of certain mid-nineteenth-century labor and agricultural reformers who advocated for the formation of small, demographically diverse farming communities that would embody what they saw as a sustainable agricultural ideal. *Pierre*, however, disrupts this ideal to present, as Goode writes, "the reproductive subtext of

this rhetoric: the idea that sexual disorder and racial intermingling enfeeble population fertility and agricultural productivity” (22).

Further exploring the nuances of reproductive anxiety in agricultural rhetoric, Goode’s second chapter, “Gothic Fertility and Other Tropical Nightmares: Jefferson, Crèvecoeur, Sansay,” reveals how these three writers portray the tropics as simultaneously a land of agricultural richness as well of decadence and decay, particularly in terms of racial mixing. According to Goode, “racial and reproductive discourses defined the tropics just as much as climate and economy, enmeshing ideals of free labor and independent farming with those of racial purity” (58). In the third chapter, “African Agrotopias: Sustaining Black Nationalism beyond U.S. Borders,” *Agrotopias* further illuminates the roles of race and fertility in the formation of America’s early rhetoric of sustainability. Focusing on Martin Delaney’s 1852 volume *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, and Sutton Griggs’s 1899 novel, *Imperium in Imperio*, Goode contends that these writers are key, if underappreciated, voices in agricultural thought who imagined fertile agrotopias defined by Black agrarian independence that, as Goode writes, “converged with postbellum reproductive agendas of racial improvement” (90–91).

Chapter 4, “Sustainable Sprawl: Whitman’s Eugenic Agrarianism,” examines Walt Whitman’s poetry as well as his posthumously published tract, “The Eighteenth Presidency!” as promoting a vision of agricultural community marked by the ascendance of the white working class. It is a male agrotopia that imagines “breeding a fertile, laboring race that cultivates an equally fertile soil” (120). In making this argument, Goode examines Whitman’s at times disturbing linkages to phrenology and the eugenics movement. In the final chapter, “Asexual Sustainability in *Herland*,” Goode focuses on Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s 1915 novel and its sequel, *With Her in Ourland* (1916), as sophisticated agricultural fantasies that simultaneously criticize the patriarchy while presenting the hopeful

alternative of a cooperative agrarian community in which men and women work together toward sustainability. In considering Gilman's novels, Goode continues the book's focus of the trope of fertility in a compelling way, arguing that the sequel imagines "an unadulterated space protected from demographic disaster, where human reproduction is carefully controlled and balanced with the land's fertility" (155). Her epilogue notes that some of the woefully misguided sustainability rhetoric of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reemerges in more recent works on sustainability, specifically addressing Sierra Club executive director David Brower's 1960 work, *This Is the American Earth*, and Michelle Obama's *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America* (2012).

With *Agrotopias*, Goode provides a well-written, deftly argued, and much needed reconsideration of the development of nineteenth-century American agricultural and environmental imagination. Contributing meaningfully to the body of scholarship on the evolution and history of the concept of sustainable agriculture, Goode's book offers an instructive and engaging examination of how America's early rhetoric of sustainability was shaped by racism, sexism, eugenics, and a decidedly unsustainable understanding of the human relationship to the land. Goode delves into a variety of understudied areas of the American environmental tradition, examining a selection of rarely appreciated literary figures and texts that ultimately offer a more nuanced rhetoric of environmental sustainability. "Presented as solutions to sustainability crises," writes Goode, "agrotopias are fantasies of starting over elsewhere and escaping the threat of agricultural decline, unruly fertility, or ecological collapse" (182). Goode's scholarship not only illuminates the early American texts that serve as its focus, it invites us to consider how echoes of these agrotopias resound in current debates over the sustainability crises we face today.

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