

Reviews

Why America Failed: The Roots of Imperial Decline, by Morris Berman. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012. 256 pages. \$25.95, hardcover.

Cultural historian Morris Berman delivers a scathing examination of the American experience in his latest book. He opens by referring to an early commercial orientation, along with a questing for affluence and technological progress, but also to a longstanding spiritual sensibility and a “classical ‘republican’ tradition.” He emphasizes the ruthless, deceptive, and self-indulgent nature of the “creative destruction” characterizing American development. Colonial and early republican endeavors in British North America were noteworthy for both their “enlightened material restraint and public service,” Berman writes. A readiness existed to put the interests of the commonwealth over one’s vested, self-interest in a society that was stable, “unhurried,” and intertwined. However, so did classical liberal and materialistic determinations, extolling individualism, ambition, and economic advancement. By the advent of the mid-1760s’ clashes with Mother England, Lockean notions were in vogue, calling for the establishment of a state propelled by “naked self-interest,” antedating Adam Smith’s capitalistic tenets. The questing for wealth had already shattered traditional threads, while the Revolution further idealized property holdings, especially land, and the ideal of upward mobility. To Berman, this amounted to “hustling,” a practice never to be discarded by the American people.

Berman blames the early American populace, not the Founders, whom he depicts as more civic-minded and less avaricious than the progressive historian Charles Beard believed. Their mistake, as the intellectual historian John Diggins has argued, was in failing to establish a strong central government rooted in a moral vision. That proved tragic, as the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville and English novelist Charles Dickens both recognized, for Americans soon proved anxious and troubled, while propelled by business notions. Other keen observers, from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau to Henry Adams, worried about their own society lacking a “sacred center...[a] soul.” The seeking of an outward empire resulted, purportedly to provide a safety valve, but proved unsuccessful, amounting to just “more hustling,” while diminishing a sense of community and wreaking havoc elsewhere. American life became still more commercialized thanks to mass production and consumption. Critics of the commercial life existed, ranging from participants in an American crafts movement to certain members of the progressives, and those like Lewis Mumford, who warned of the need for a radical alteration of values, favoring instead “a morally disciplined, nonacquisitive life.” Even the economic calamity that was the Great Depression failed to recast American

practices, which proved more pronounced as affluence returned during the postwar era. The possibility of real change briefly opened up with the 1960s era counterculture and the environmental movement, but those were effectively overwhelmed by Reaganesque developments and neoliberal economics in vogue from the late 1970s onward.

Berman's analysis of neoliberalism is sweeping, encompassing figures from Reagan to talk show host Oprah Winfrey. Berman highlights the intensified maldistribution of income and wealth that followed, the "scam" of supply-side economics, the nastier tenor enveloping the nation, and the "market" fixation, which ultimately occurred under both Republican and Democratic administrations. To Berman, Americans became so dedicated to private gain that they failed to imagine what others "take for granted," including quality, universal medical care. He worries, too, that Americans exude "empathy deficit disorder," while proving remarkably unhappy and experiencing the disintegration of institutions, culture, and infrastructure. Nevertheless, Americans believe that still more "progress" is inevitable—particularly that spurred by technology—and all the while, "hustling" continues. Meanwhile, a *Brave New World*-type existence beckons, replete of creativity, imagination, and the self. A more positive approach, Berman suggests, would have been to have followed the lead of Southerners outside the racial realm, in opposing the North's "frenetic activity, selfishness, and greed." By contrast, and in a very non-politically correct fashion, Berman contends that the adoption of Islam would hardly amount to an improvement: "if that's the remedy, we are probably better off with the disease." He predicts that American decline is inevitable, and that national collapse might allow for the kind of alternative tradition offered by Emerson, Thoreau, Mumford, Vance Packard, and the American South, minus slavery.

Remarkably provocative, *Why America Failed* would prove a difficult sell in many communities, and would probably go over best at colleges and universities. Even there, some of Berman's pronouncements would be controversial, but they certainly could spur discussion and student engagement. Graduate students and faculty might benefit from an exploration of Berman's probing analyses, whether they would agree with them or not. His generally favorable dissection of the American South alone would undoubtedly engender comments, charges, and counter-charges, which should please those determined to pique critical thinking.

California State University, Chico

Robert C. Cottrell

The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party, by Michael Bowen. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 272 pages. \$45.00, hardcover.

Conservatives are the *new* black. Chic yet classic, the history of American conservatism is now most definitively fashionable. This, however, was not always the case. In past generations, political historians mostly ignored the right. Instead, they studied, some might say over-chronicled, the American left. From the Wobblies to the Weathermen and all points in between, specialists feverishly recorded their every machination.

Meanwhile, the scholarship on the American right, such as it was, went largely unnoticed. Frustrated by historians' obliviousness, Leo Ribuffo penned his 1994 jeremiad, "Why is There so Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything about It." Pleading for specialists to mainstream the history of conservatism, Ribuffo urged a sea change.

A new generation of political historians heeded Ribuffo's call. Indeed, Michael Bowen's *The Roots of Modern Conservatism* is part of a comparative avalanche of recent work on the American right. So much so, a standard narrative has taken root; postwar conservative intellectuals toiled in the political wilderness, alone. Consequently, modern conservatism did not emerge until the civil rights movement, Vietnam, and Barry Goldwater.

Conservative historiography is now so robust it requires revisionists: enter Michael Bowen. Challenging orthodoxy, the author claims *The Roots of Modern Conservatism* lie in the immediate postwar era, not just in the 1960s. To Bowen, Goldwater's genesis is found in the battles between New York Governor Tom Dewey and Ohio Senator Robert Taft. Their pragmatic struggle for power eventually led to an ideological war, which decided the GOP's conservative path. In this way, Bowen finds a coherent conservative movement pushing its way to power—a generation prior to that of the standard narrative.

The postwar GOP lived on the edge of irrelevancy. Denied the White House and a congressional majority since 1932, Republicans feared political oblivion. Searching for significance, party elites gravitated either toward Dewey or Taft. With Dewey calling for the acceptance of the New Deal, Taft led the "Old Guard" who opposed Roosevelt's entire program. While expressing some differences, the early Taft-Dewey divide largely reflected rhetorical and tactical differences. This divergence, Bowen argues, eventually morphed into a stark ideological separation.

Hardly breaking any new ground, Bowen claims Taft, more than any early postwar figure, defined modern conservatism. Emphasizing limited government, federalism, and a more unilateral foreign policy, the Ohio Senator was conservative before conservatism was cool. In the same way, Dewey embodied liberal Republicanism. Hailing from the Northeast, the governor might have agreed with Taft on some principles, but he embraced the New Deal out of perceived political necessity.

Where Bowen makes a significant contribution is his focus on the non-ideological dimensions of the Taft-Dewey divide. What began as individuals vying for power later became an ideological struggle. Rather than see Taftites as mini-Goldwater clones, he establishes the context for their emergent worldview. Thus, conservatism is not a result of anti-civil rights racism. Instead, a conservative majority coalition is a byproduct of a white backlash. A distinction with a difference, the author blunts critics who cynically paint the entire GOP with the broad brush of anti-civil rights bigotry.

Though Dewey and the moderates controlled the GOP throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the party's rank-and-file became more conservative. Indeed, the New York governor's 1948 defeat coupled with an evolving conservative intelligentsia combined to energize Taft's presidential hopes. As the candidate of the GOP's eastern (Dewey) wing, Eisenhower's nomination merely antagonized an already embittered conservative wing. Once they lost their lodestar, Taft's sudden death in 1953, conservatives appeared lost.

During the Eisenhower years, the moderates tightened their hold over the party. According to Bowen, losing power and lacking a leader enabled conservatives to regroup. Organizing themselves along ideas, as opposed to "self interest and patronage," they battled against the president's "Modern Republicanism" (pp. 173, 200). By the dawn of the 1960s, the once factional Dewey-Taft struggle came to define the liberal and conservative Republican divide.

The Roots of Modern Conservatism is a solid book that makes a definite contribution to the field. Be warned, the internecine struggles of party elites does not make for a quick or smooth read. Not suitable for undergraduates, this book's narrative, however

intellectually fashionable, plods. Nevertheless, in teaching the political history of post-1945 America, this work, like the veritable little black dress, is a must for any academic wardrobe.

Gannon University

Jeff Bloodworth

Beyond Blackface: African Americans and the Creation of American Popular Culture, 1890-1930, edited by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 392 pages. \$65.00, hardcover. \$27.50, paper.

The historic contribution of African American arts and entertainment to the national culture has been a subject of scholarly focus in recent years. One of the latest studies is *Beyond Blackface*, a collection of thirteen essays on race and U.S. popular culture between 1890 and 1930. Editor W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Professor of History at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, writes that “the most profound development of the participation of blacks in the creation of the nation’s mass culture was that the face of American culture was permanently transformed.”

Beyond Blackface promises to investigate the importance of this period of cultural production; unfortunately, it falls short in carrying out the mission. While some of the essays are valuable additions to the literature, the collection on the whole fails to show the transformative aspects of popular culture during these decades. In fact, some of the subjects examined in the collection veer wide of the mark of the 1890s to 1930s.

In part, *Beyond Blackface* is hamstrung by the constraints imposed by the limited topic selection. For example, an undue number of the articles explore the same subject of 19th-century minstrelsy. This history, of course, has been well-studied in works such as Eric Lott’s *Love and Theft* and Robert Cantwell’s *When We Were Good*. The essays in this collection do little to advance the earlier studies, even though nearly a third of them touch on the subject. As a result of the redundancy, the book misses an opportunity to explore lesser known practices relevant to the modern period, such as urban folklore, decorative arts, farm labor songs, movies, recorded music, and radio programs.

Aside from the emphasis on minstrelsy, the book includes an eyebrow raising chapter on the aviator Herbert Julian. A performer of aerial spectacles in 1920s Harlem, Julian clearly was an entertaining figure, but of questionable scholarly value when one considers the subjects overlooked. Moreover, this writer finds it difficult to accept that the essay merits the credit of four co-authors!

Despite the problems, *Beyond Blackface* contains a number of essays that are worthy in their own right. Among these is Susan Dunson’s “Black Misrepresentation in Nineteenth-Century Sheet Music Illustration.” Dunson, director of writing programs at Williams College, studies the illustrations on the covers of minstrel sheet music as a window on the psychology of white middle-class audiences. Dunson writes that “the erasure of black identity as a historical fact, perhaps even a psychological necessity, is a precondition for the American tradition of blackface minstrelsy.”

Another wonderful essay is John Stauffer’s “Creating an Image in Black: The Power of Abolition Pictures.” Stauffer, Professor of English and African and African American Studies at Harvard University, probes the politics of imagery in abolitionist media. He considers the differing interpretations of iconic illustrations such as the slave kneeling in prayer with chains hanging from clasped hands, the slave whipping post masthead of *The Liberator* newspaper, and the dignified “carte de visite” of Sojourner Truth.

The success of these chapters, however, only further underscores the disappointment of the book. It is unclear how either of these pieces related to the importance of the years between 1890 and 1930. In fact, one can argue that Stauffer's essay is thematically misplaced; at the same time, his chapter is one of the best pieces in the collection.

In conclusion, *Beyond Blackface* falls short as a study of race and nation culture in the modern age. One can find value in essays such as the ones by Dunson and Stauffer, however, and in a few others such as Clare Corbould's "At the Feet of Dessalines: Performing Haiti's Revolution during the New Negro Renaissance." Corbould, a research fellow and lecturer at Monash University, examines the contested interpretation of the Haitian revolutionary and the U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 in the works of 1920s writers. As stand alone pieces, such essays can supplement materials for undergraduate lectures in U.S. history, and for seminar courses in American Studies and African American history.

Emerson College

Roger House

Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Movement, by Roger Bruns. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2011. 186 pages. \$35.00, hardcover.

Roger Bruns' newly published book, *Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Movement*, is the latest installment in a series entitled *Landmarks of the American Mosaic* published for use by secondary teachers and students. Bruns' narrative provides an excellent recounting of events leading to Cesar Chavez's rise as a charismatic and successful advocate for farm workers' rights. Chavez's efforts to ensure better wages and safer working conditions for a predominately Latino population enjoyed several small victories in the 1950s and 1960s. The high point of Chavez's activism came with the passage of the 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. This important piece of legislation signed by Governor Jerry Brown gave farm workers the much coveted right to unionize and boycott employers. The law also afforded protection against company violations and ensured the practice of secret ballots during union elections. In recounting the difficulties encountered by Chavez while struggling against both partisan politics and agribusiness, Bruns' book becomes a tale of remarkable courage and heroism. It is an account of a grassroots labor union organized to combat exploitation and mistreatment of workers. Above all, it is the story of commitment to a cause and the determination of one man to make a difference.

As Bruns' book unfolds, a timeline sequencing major events serves as a prologue. The first chapter begins with a brief childhood sketch of Chavez's life and young adulthood. The heart of Bruns' work starts when he introduces Fred Ross, a successful social activist helping African Americans and Mexican Americans fight against segregation. Ross became a co-founder of a Latino civil rights group called the Community Service Organization (CSO). Designed primarily to assist in Mexican American voter registration drives, the CSO enlisted Latinos to hold house meetings so they could get their message to the people in a safe environment. Cesar Chavez became one of Ross's most effective recruits and ultimately a full-time employee of the CSO. In 1962, Chavez and another of Ross's protégés, Dolores Huerta, resigned from the CSO and formed the National Farm Workers Association, later the United Farm Workers union. Chavez and Huerta became a formidable duo, working tirelessly for *La Causa* and the betterment of farm workers. The common thread connecting the pair remained unbroken through years of

boycotts, strikes, marches, and political maneuverings and only ended when Chavez died in 1993. Bruns provides a thoughtful analysis of the political complexities the pair's advocacy efforts experienced.

Roger Bruns' text takes the reader from Chavez's early years to his last court battle in Arizona against the use of pesticides. Bruns' writing style, combined with an awareness of his audience's reading and comprehension skill level, make this book excellent historical reading for adolescents. Short chapters, quick pacing, and building tensions throughout the book keep the biography fresh and inviting to teenagers. Frequent comparisons to the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King remind high school students that human rights issues are complex problems that cross many boundaries.

This book provides a good example of historical research and documentation skills that many secondary students are not often exposed to in the classroom. Bruns uses parenthetical citations for quotations he sprinkled throughout the text while limiting the references noted at the end of each chapter to a few sources. Teachers wishing to assign supplemental projects will find the books, magazine articles, and websites readily available and appropriate for classroom use. For an added bonus, Bruns includes forty-one pages of primary source documents, ranging from Chavez's letters and speeches to fellow activists' diary entries. A short glossary defining acronyms and common Spanish phrases used in Chavez's activist efforts completes the excellent collection of material used by Bruns.

The book makes a superb choice to introduce scholarly texts to secondary students. The bibliography reflects both modern technology and current scholarship. Since today's students often rely extensively on Internet research, the easy access to online sources will appeal to them as they continue to investigate *La Causa* and Chavez's work. Clearly written, *Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Movement* makes a fine addition to any collection of twentieth-century American history, especially for those interested in labor issues and the Latino population in the United States.

West Memphis High School

Marjorie Hunter

Fear and Progress: Ordinary Lives in Franco's Spain, 1939-1975, by Antonio Cazorla Sánchez. Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 304 pages. \$99.95, hardcover.

In this expansive social history of post-Civil War Spain, Cazorla focuses on the lived experiences of ordinary Spaniards under decades of Francoist rule. Cazorla's Spain is neither that of the war-torn Republic nor the purported "economic miracle" of the post-war years. Rather, his is a nation of Civil War survivors, men and women who, during the period of 1939 to 1975, sought merely to survive the privations visited upon them by Franco's regime. Placing documentary evidence alongside personal accounts and oral histories, Cazorla provides a window into this typically overlooked corner of post-war Western Europe. We see how and to what consequences Franco ruled with terror and violence, usually but not exclusively directed against former Republican supporters, soldiers, and their families. We see the regime's stubborn adherence to a policy of autarky, even once it should have been obvious that this policy was failing miserably. Wide-spread hunger, human-made famine, and high levels of unemployment remained the hallmark of Franco's Spain. Against the oft-heard claims that "Spain was an oasis of peace during the 40 years of Franco's rule" (p. 57), Cazorla argues that the end of

the Spanish Civil War in 1939 set in motion a new and more far-reaching conflict. In essence, Franco and his ruling elite waged war against the Spanish people.

Not surprisingly, in this environment, ordinary people—no matter where they stood during the wartime years of 1936-1939—retreated from the political sphere. Spaniards of all political orientations now found that professing an opinion or working towards reform was simply too dangerous and too distracting from the immediate task at hand, namely, sheer survival. This is not to say that *Fear and Progress* ignores the political dimension entirely. Because Cazorla juxtaposes official government records with popular accounts, he allows readers to gain a more nuanced understanding of Francoist policies and practices. Contrary to those who would consider Franco the benign counterpart to the more famous and malevolent Hitler and Mussolini, Cazorla portrays Franco as both inept and cruel, the architect of failed policies that visited untold—and unnecessary—suffering on a people still reeling from the tremendous destruction of the 1936-1939 war. On occasion, government and union officials on the ground called attention to the regime's failings, and in 1959, Spain shifted course and adopted a more orthodox capitalistic policy. However, this came too late to improve the lot of the nation's working and unemployed masses, and, as Cazorla demonstrates, new capitalistic enterprises displayed the same type of rampant corruption evident in previous years. Consequently, material conditions in Spain remained much the same as before the 1959 reform, and well into the purported boon years of the 1960s and 1970s, Spanish workers continued to migrate throughout the country and Europe in search of steady, well-paying employment and reliable forms of sustenance. All this being said, the condemnatory tone that pervades Cazorla's work seems superfluous; his vivid portrayal of life in Franco's Spain speaks for itself.

In sum, *Fear and Progress* complements the many political histories foregrounding the Spanish Civil War, and it should constitute required reading for those teaching Spanish and Iberian history. It also deserves a place in courses examining twentieth-century European history more broadly. After the collapse of the Republic in 1939, and especially with limited Spanish involvement in World War Two, the Spanish situation fades from the purview of most courses on Western Europe, courses that rightfully emphasize such developments as post-war economic growth, the creation of modern welfare states, and the global tensions caused by the Cold War. At the same time, Cazorla's study might prove challenging for students unfamiliar with the larger themes and developments in modern Spanish history, and the thematic approach largely employed in *Fear and Progress* does not always provide necessary context for the uninitiated. Further, although not concerned with the Spanish Civil War per se, this book presumes a solid understanding of the events of 1936-1939. Those who assign this book—especially in undergraduate courses—should plan accordingly.

Purdue University

Jennifer L. Foray

Bartolomé de las Casas and the Conquest of the Americas, by Lawrence A. Clayton. Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 208 pages. \$23.95, paper.

In *Bartolomé de las Casas and the Conquest of the Americas*, Lawrence A. Clayton has written a biographical study of one of the most important actors of the sixteenth century who created a perception of Spain and Spanish America that endured for centuries.

Clayton presents Bartolomé de las Casas as a powerful courtier, friar, prophet, protector of Indians, and a member of several royal councils. This approach on Las Casas allows Clayton to explore the age of discovery and conquest. Clayton complements the latter with an examination of traditional and modern interpretations of Las Casas and the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish Empire. In doing so, he successfully links the biographical study of Las Casas with historiography of Las Casas and the Spanish Empire. This historical and instructional approach is an intriguing feature in this study of Las Casas.

Clayton's historical and instructional approach creates a correlative relationship between his own biographical study of Las Casas and decades of scholarship on the Spanish Empire and Las Casas. Through meticulous research and careful analysis of traditional and modern scholarship, Clayton reconstructs Las Casas' lifespan in the Atlantic world context. For example, in Chapter 1, "The Era of Columbus and the 'Discoverers,'" Clayton examines how Spain's Reconquista, the rise of the merchant class, the expansion of the world and the reformist millenarian spirit of Catholicism were influential in forming Las Casas' character and career trajectory. Clayton's interpretation of Las Casas' character and career trajectory is both an informative and engaging narrative that captures the excitement of the age of discovery, the violence of the conquest, and the intellectual debates about the nature of humankind. Clayton additionally examines complicated historiographical issues, such as the Black Legend. Rather than a rigorous discussion of the Black Legend, Clayton simply explains historiographical problems of the Black Legend with a question: "were the Spanish indeed uniquely cruel and barbaric in their encounter and conquest of Amerindians, or were they simply behaving in a norm that reflected current values and practices across the European world of the epoch?" (p. 23). He then compares the Black Legend with the White Legend, a theory that "tends to whitewash the Spanish behavior as nothing more than people acting within the norms and principles of the time" (p. 23). Although he attempts to deconstruct the agendas that lay behind the Black Legend and the White Legend, he is unsuccessful at analyzing the historiographical consequences. As one historian has noted, the Black Legend is an exclusionary force that contributes to historiographical barricades in early modern Atlantic history. These barricades have socialized historians into constructs that assign non-Western attributes to Latin America. Despite this concern, this book excels in both examining the historiography and in its coverage of Las Casas' character and career.

Clayton has also managed to acknowledge the role of European expansion in creating the Americas without allowing the historical experiences of Europeans to become the normative standard. In doing so, he demonstrates that Las Casas' works were not a Eurocentric view of the Americas, Conquistadors, and Indians. Instead, he characterizes Las Casas' works as a dialogue in which both Las Casas and the Indian experience produced a new sense of identity in the early modern Atlantic World. This cultural fluidity and adaptability exhibited in Las Casas' works demonstrates how the Indian experience shaped the early modern Atlantic world. Las Casas, Clayton explains, was "the one who probed deeply into the 'other'" (p.153). This attempt to recognize non-European voices demonstrated a sense of an American identity. Arguably, Las Casas was one the first Americanists who single-handedly created political and cultural changes in both the Spanish Empire and the rest of Europe. Las Casas' willingness to incorporate ethnic outsiders had different results. When, for example, Las Casas managed to change the legal treatment of Indians, these laws brought rebellion in the Americas (p. 127). In time, however, these laws along with Las Casas' works developed a sense of identity for the Indian. This fluid state of cultural change Clayton describes is the genesis of the American civilization.

Clayton demonstrates the importance of considering the historiographical, biographical dimensions of the early modern Atlantic world in explaining the character and career of Bartolomé de las Casas. This approach allows Clayton to create a historical narrative that acknowledges the role of the Indian experience and European expansion in creating the Americas. In doing so, he has produced a book for instructors and students. Both instructors and students will find Clayton's bibliographic essay a useful tool for research and instruction. This bibliographic essay provides useful information, such as recent published biographies of Las Casas and primary sources. Overall, this book will broaden any history teacher and student knowledge of Las Casas, for Clayton demonstrates the fundamental relationship between historiography and biography in creating any narrative of historical actors.

California State University, Long Beach

Jose Mendez

The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media, by Brooke Gladstone, with illustrations by Josh Neufeld. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. 170 pages. \$23.95, cloth.

Brooke Gladstone, award-winning journalist and co-host of National Public Radio's *On the Media*, uses the graphic novel format in this clear and provocative history of changes in mass media and communications. Although she incorporates examples from other times and places, including Mayan writings and seventeenth-century English newspapers, she mainly focuses on benchmarks in American history that elucidate her belief that the idea of a conspiratorial media machine is a delusion. She offers, instead, her thesis that the media is "a mirror: an exalting, degrading, tedious, and transcendent funhouse mirror of America" (p. xxi). By the end of the book—in which she argues for a free and transparent press and shows how the battle for such a press is often historically a measure of two steps forward, one step backward—she offers her ambiguous conclusion: "We get the media we deserve" (p. 156).

In her effort to put responsibility for the role of the media on the consumer rather than the producer, she presents several strong chapters, with titles such as "Bias," "War," "Objectivity," and "Disclosure," that are well-supported with historical examples. She is especially good at analyzing the particular kinds of biases the media are prone to, such as commercial bias, bad news bias, status quo bias, access bias, visual bias, narrative bias, and fairness bias. She includes discussions of, among other things, Jefferson and Washington and the press, periodic American government attempts at censorship, Supreme Court cases, Watergate, and the Iraq War. Gladstone also cites numerous polls and psychological studies that challenge commonly held beliefs about human rationality; yet, she nonetheless is hopeful that media consumers can take an active role in filtering the massive amounts of data that are part of modern-day reality.

Gladstone quotes thinkers as diverse as Nobel Prize-winning writer and journalist Albert Camus, who argues for responsibility; psychologist Abraham Maslow, who suggests the possibility for human self-actualization; and futurist Ray Kurzweil, who predicts the concept of singularity, when the real world and the virtual world merge. Rather than rejecting future technology, Gladstone argues that humans have "co-evolved" with their technological tools (p. 143), and that the potential of the Internet, like the printing press before it, offers ways for humans to understand their world. She acknowledges the impossibility of objectivity; yet believes good journalism can still

prevail amid the plethora of information, if media consumers understand the difference between facts and values, the importance of disclosure, and the need for independent assessment.

These issues, of course, are important to history teachers in their attempts to help students understand historical sources, detect bias in evidence, and form opinions. *The Influencing Machine* presents extensive footnotes. The illustrations by Josh Neufeld, author of *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*, are highly relevant and strengthen the argument. This book should be of interest to both history teachers and students from high school on up.

California State University, Long Beach

Linda Kelly Alkana

A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, by M. Şükrü Hanioglu. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. 241 pages. \$42.00, hardcover. \$24.95, paper.

In his latest book, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, M. Şükrü Hanioglu closely examines the Ottoman Empire from the late eighteenth century to the Empire's collapse following the First World War. The book's chapters are arranged chronologically, including coverage of the Ottoman Empire before the nineteenth century, Selim III and the Ottoman state's initial response to modernity, the age of reform, the Tanzimat, the Hamidian regime, and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the First World War. The author outlines his approach in the introduction, stating he "privileges trends and analyses over facts and figures," looking at four interrelated principal dimensions: "the persistent imperial ambition to centralize, the shifting socioeconomic context, the key challenge of forming an Ottoman response to modernity, and the need to integrate Ottoman history into world history" (pp. 1, 3). Hanioglu then embarks on a two-hundred-page political, social, economic, diplomatic, and cultural study of the late Ottoman Empire, connecting his four principal dimensions throughout the book.

Hanioglu makes several persuasive arguments. Regarding the hotly debated topic of the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire, Hanioglu argues that the driving force of Ottoman history was "the oppressive weight of circumstances, which inhibited the freedom of realistic policy makers who sought to innovate," rather than ideology (p. 2). Hanioglu notes that Ottoman leaders faced a plethora of difficult challenges, including increasing Western encroachment, as well as the growing need to centralize the Empire in order to govern and defend it, both of which coincided with and were affected by increasing modernization. The author stresses the stark contrast between the huge importance of an Ottoman, materialist, Westernist ideology in the early Turkish Republic and "its far less salient role as an engine of historical change" during the late Ottoman Empire (p. 210).

Hanioglu also strongly opposes the Turkish nationalist narrative that explicates the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire as the victory of progress—i.e., Westernization, nationalism, and secularization spearheaded by the Young Ottomans—over religious conservative obscurantism. Hanioglu is also careful to note that he is not proposing a historicist approach and claiming that the development of Ottoman history was predetermined. But he does urge scholars to recognize that "the set of realistic choices that lay before the Ottoman leaders was not unlimited" (p. 210). At a time when European ideas and institutions were becoming extremely powerful, the Ottoman government

increasingly looked towards Europe in the nineteenth century because a change from the old order was becoming necessary for the Ottoman Empire to survive. Thus, Hanioglu surmises that the following transformation of the Ottoman state and society developed out of pragmatism, not ideology.

In the conclusion, Hanioglu analyzes the impact of the overlapping and often contradictory challenges the Ottoman Empire faced, namely, the struggle between the center and the periphery, the attempt to respond to the immense challenges of modernity, and the changing relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers. The author surmises that these processes led to profound changes throughout the Empire, including the transformation of numerous social, economic, financial, administrative, and military institutions from operating on medieval modes to constituting relatively modern mechanisms. As such, when compared to the nineteenth-century history of Europe and Europe's more advanced social, economic, and political institutions predating the French Revolution, the accomplishments of the late Ottoman Empire appear quite remarkable.

A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire is particularly valuable because it is both a textbook and an argument-based monograph. The book contains an abundance of historical data and explanations for teachers to pull from to build lectures and discussion questions pertaining to key issues of Ottoman and world history. The book also includes a section of further readings in several European languages. Moreover, Hanioglu employs many archival sources, treatises, and monographs on specialized subjects of Ottoman history to support his arguments. His book is an ideal starting text for graduate students of Ottoman history and advanced undergraduate students; his study does assume a general understanding of Ottoman and European history, and is probably not an ideal text for beginners of the subject. In sum, Hanioglu has accomplished something very difficult in historical scholarship—he has written an engaging, persuasive, argument-based synthesis that outlines both major historiographical trends and provides a solid basis for further research and debate. His book is a valuable contribution to Ottoman and world history.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jacob L. Hamric

Environmentalism Since 1945, by Gary Haq and Alistair Paul. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2012. 124 pages. \$27.95, paper.

Environmentalism Since 1945, co-authored by Gary Haq and Alistair Paul, is a succinct history of the environmental movement during the period after the Second World War. Despite the sound of its wide-ranging title, the book is not intended to be an exhaustive study of modern environmentalism. The work focuses almost exclusively on developments in the United States and Great Britain and, as part of *The Making of the Contemporary World* series, it is designed expressly as a primer for students who are new to the study of environmentalism. The authors have no pretensions about breaking any new interpretative or methodological ground and instead seek only to expose students to a handful of selective features of environmentalism in the post-war period.

The book begins with a short introductory chapter which lays out the structure of the text and more importantly defines the subject of the study—environmentalism—as a perspective that is concerned with how human society operates within natural systems and which is committed to protecting these systems. In each of the next five chapters,

the authors explore a distinct aspect of environmentalism, beginning with a superb discussion of how environmental advocacy groups have evolved both organizationally and tactically over the last sixty years. The book then examines in turn the emergence of global environmental governance, the role of science within the environmental movement, the relationship between environmentalism and the field of economics, and the complex interplay between popular consumer culture and environmental attitudes. In the book's seventh and final chapter, the authors muse about the future of environmentalism, calling attention to the challenges it faces and offering a set of proposals to reinvigorate the movement and broaden its base of support.

Instructors in the fields of history, political science, and environmental studies will find much of value in this text. Its comparative analysis of the development of environmentalism in Great Britain and the United States is one of the best concise accounts currently available in print. The authors argue that in both nations, environmentalism was an outgrowth of the desires of elites to protect wild and scenic places close to home, but beginning in the 1960s, the movement transformed into a larger and more inclusive social movement whose interests went far beyond land conservation. And while the movements on both sides of the Atlantic continued to develop along common lines in some respects, including an increasing attentiveness to environmental justice issues, important differences also emerged. British environmentalists, for instance, began to rely on professional advocacy and local activism as a means of advancing their policy agenda, whereas American environmental groups tended to pursue their goals through adversarial legalism. Given these salient tactical differences, one wishes that Haq and Paul had offered an assessment of the efficacy of each approach.

Environmentalism Since 1945 also does an admirable job of exploring environmentalism's uneasy and, at times, beleaguered position within contemporary politics and culture. The movement is riven from within by disagreement regarding the appropriate place of science and technology in environmental thought and it is also deeply conflicted about the trend toward green consumerism. But environmentalism, as the authors demonstrate, is also buffeted by powerful outside forces, including well-heeled anti-environmental groups and most importantly by the global ascendancy of neo-liberalism and its vision of limitless economic growth. Despite the constellation of challenges faced by environmentalism, the authors believe that green localism offers a compelling model which could be used to renovate the environmental movement in the years ahead.

Although the book has many virtues, it suffers from one significant defect. While the authors acknowledge that modern environmentalism is a diverse social and intellectual movement, encompassing views ranging from deep ecology to resource conservation, they unfortunately do not provide readers with a sketch or outline of each of these major strains of environmental thought. This is problematic in light of the fact that the text is aimed at readers who are unfamiliar with the contours of environmentalism. It is critical for students to understand how the major subsets within the environmental movement comprehend the nature and scale of ecological degradation as well as how each proposes to deal with this crisis. Hence, it is recommended that teachers who use this book pair it with a classic work like John Dryzek's *The Politics of the Earth* or Andrew Dobson's *Green Political Thought*.

Environmentalism Since 1945 provides teachers with a practical, well-organized, and clearly written survey of the modern environmental movement. Its inclusion of a timeline of the major events of post-war environmentalism and its brief suggestion for further reading on the topic should both be useful research tools for students.

Instructors who teach an entry level course in environmental history or environmental studies would be well served by assigning this book as a complement to their classroom lectures and discussions.

Burke Mountain Academy

David M. Chamberlain

Voices of Revolutionary America: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life, edited by Carol Sue Humphrey. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio/Greenwood Press, 2011. 270 pages. \$75.00, hardcover.

This attractively designed text by a knowledgeable editor offers students insight into aspects of everyday life during the American Revolution—birth, marriage, divorce, death, slavery, religion, and employment, to name a few—through thematically arranged sets of primary sources. But while the book explores a compelling topic through many interesting documents and thoughtful supporting text, it also suffers from weaknesses in conceptualization and structure that limit its usefulness for the classroom.

Voices begins with a very brief introduction that explains the organization of the book, the major events of the American Revolution, and how to read primary sources. This terse section could do more to set the stage for an engaged reading of the documents in the book. For example, a brief, non-technical introduction to the historiography of social history would make the rationale for a book on everyday life more persuasive. The publisher also needs to explain the age group this book targets. The sources seem too challenging for most middle school students, but the font, layout, and inclusion of a glossary all hint that college students are not the primary audience. Only process of elimination leads one to conclude that the publishers probably designed the book for high school students. Both the idea of social history and the target audience could be explained in an introduction to the larger series, *Voices of an Era*. As it is, one has to search the publisher website to find an introduction to this series and its goal of bringing together “dozens of extraordinary, revelatory documents that bring a particular era of history to life.”

The main text is organized into eight major subjects: Disruption and Continuation of Daily Life, Economics and Employment, Fun and Games, Health and Medicine, Love, Marriage and Family, Religion, Slavery, War and Local Conflict. These topics are all potentially engaging to students, reminding them, as the editor points out, that even in the turmoil of revolution, people “continued to engage in normal day-to-day activities” that are still largely familiar to students. While the subjects themselves are interesting, their organization is sometimes problematic. Some subjects feel much too long at nine sections, others seem undeveloped at three, and some sections could easily be relocated to other areas. “Newspaper Accounts of Weddings,” for example, arguably belongs with “Love, Marriage, and Family.” Finally, it might make sense if the book had been organized by type of document, which would have allowed the editor to provide introductory comments about how to read that type of source. One particular type of source already predominates in many of the individual subjects, whether newspaper articles, diaries, or personal letters, so it would not have been difficult to organize subjects that way consistently. Presently, the text provides no introduction for the major subjects, thus missing the opportunity to build coherence within individual topics such as health, religion, slavery, etc.

The book does provide several helps to make the primary sources more accessible to students. Each section within the eight subjects has a brief introduction and a few points to keep in mind that would not be known to most students. For example, before reading a physician's diary, students are informed that "medical training occurred primarily through working on the job with a physician." At the end of each section, a segment entitled "Ask Yourself" moves beyond factual recall questions to analyze why particular social patterns existed. "Topics and Activities to Consider" follows, offering suggestions for additional research beyond the documents. Finally, the "Further Reading" section lists a very impressive bibliography, but, judging by the titles and the academic presses represented, it is one aimed at teachers rather than their students.

The biggest question about this book relates to its potential market. Most secondary teachers have limited instructional time to devote to the American Revolution. California standards for eleventh grade, for example, restrict coverage of the Revolution to "analyz[ing] the ideological origins of the American Revolution." These teachers would never use more than a fraction of the 250 pages of documents included in the book. Picking and choosing among these documents might not be a problem were it not for the book's \$75.00 price tag. Few districts will pay that much for a class set of supplemental texts on one narrow subject within the larger curriculum, particularly in this grim era of economic belt-tightening. So *Voices of Revolutionary America* will probably appeal to a fairly small audience, but students who have the opportunity to interact with it will develop a richer understanding of the revolutionary era by learning about the everyday lives of people at that time.

California State University, Long Beach

David Neumann

The Children of Chinatown: Growing Up Chinese American in San Francisco, 1850-1920, by Wendy Rouse Jorae. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 312 pages. \$59.95, hardcover. \$22.95, paper.

The dominant image of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century San Francisco Chinatown, based on earlier studies, has been that of men without wives and families. More recent works have revised this image by examining the roles and experiences of women. But children have been largely invisible. In *The Children of Chinatown*, Wendy Rouse Jorae offers fresh insights into the role that children played in the development of the largest community of Chinese in America.

Most of the Chinese who migrated to the United States in the nineteenth century originated from southeastern China. Opium Wars, natural disasters like droughts, floods, and typhoons, and a dramatic rise in population pushed both adults and children to risk their lives by emigrating in search of work outside their homeland. With his sister having died from lack of medicine and his brother having been sold in order to help pay off family debts, for example, sixteen-year-old Yee Loon was forced to assume adult responsibilities, journeying to America in order to help support the family.

The author does not deny that Chinatown was in many ways a split-household community—that is, a community of men who had left their wives and children in China when they migrated to America to seek work. However, while longstanding exclusion laws, beginning in 1882, created barriers to the immigration of children from China, they did not prohibit them completely. In particular, wives and children of merchants were able to enter the United States with relative ease. And "paper" sons

and daughters—those who carried false documents identifying them as children of those who were permitted to have their offspring enter the United States—were often admitted into the country.

Jorae notes that children in general constituted a small proportion of San Francisco's population, and Chinese children in particular made up a small proportion of Chinatown's population. Nevertheless, according to the author, children maintained an important place in the lives of the residents of Chinatown and of its surrounding communities. Chinese children between the ages of ten and sixteen worked in Chinese laundries, in factories, and as domestic servants. In doing so, they played a key role in supporting the well-being of their families—both in Chinatown and in their homeland. However, with anti-child labor sentiment growing, middle-class reformers attempted to impose their values on Chinese working-class families. The children included in this study, both those who migrated to the United States and those who were born on American soil, also had to contend with anti-Chinese hostility, segregated schooling, and crime and violence in their neighborhood.

The author uses the voices of the children to reveal their experiences in their journey to America, in the pattern of their lives in Chinatown, and in the barriers they confronted at work and school. Jorae further examines court cases involving child abuse, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency, and the role of children in creating the new Chinatown that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Mining an impressive array of primary sources—oral histories, including those from Angel Island detainees, immigration records, census data, school records and reports, autobiographies, missionary reports, criminal and prison records, and newspaper accounts—Jorae demonstrates how children contributed to the development of the Chinese American community situated in the heart of San Francisco. The many excellent photographs of children enhance the volume's worth.

The detailed information, excellent sources, and focused period of study make this volume useful for undergraduate and graduate students in courses on Asian Americans, Chinese Americans, and minority/ethnic studies. The book can also be used as background material for instructors as they prepare their lectures. While the writing style could be livelier and more engaging, the research is solid. Most importantly, the author is to be commended for having filled a gaping hole in the literature on Chinese Americans.

University of Hawaii

Eileen H. Tamura

American Military History: A Documentary Reader, edited by Brad D. Lookingbill. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2011. 376 pages. \$49.95, paper.

The teacher of survey courses who would like to expose students to the experiences of the men and women who fought in America's wars are often faced with the difficult task of pulling together appropriate readings from a broad range of sources. This new work accomplishes that task and manages to provide a very diverse set of readings in the process. Whether for the general United States history course or an introductory course on United States military history, this work will be of use to teachers.

Divided into chapters that cover the range from the colonial period through all of the major American conflicts up to the current struggle against global terrorism, the readings provide students with ready access to soldiers on the ground, as well as outside observers. Ideas, theories, and movements which led to conflicts and/or influential

military operations are also covered. From the idea of Manifest Destiny to the sea power theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Lookingbill has provided an excellent spectrum of readings that can be used to expose students to the ideas which influenced leaders, both political and military. Another feature of the book is the inclusion of readings related to the periodic public discussions regarding the role of the military in American life. Voices of dissent to America's involvement in various conflicts are also heard in this work.

Each reading is preceded with an introductory paragraph which sets the context for the passage that follows. In addition, each reading is followed by three "Questions for Consideration." These questions ask the reader to recall some factual information, as well as to interpret the passage. A timeline begins each chapter, allowing the reader to readily see the flow of events. At the end of the text is a comprehensive timeline for American military history. The book is indexed and a full bibliographic citation is provided for each of the readings.

Even if a teacher is not inclined to adopt this book for classroom use, *American Military History: A Documentary Reader* would be a valuable addition to one's professional library, as well as a worthwhile recommendation for purchase for institutional libraries.

Stephenson County Historical Society, Freeport, Illinois

Edward F. Finch

Gaming the Past: Using Video Games to Teach Secondary History, by Jeremiah McCall. New York: Routledge, 2011. 197 pages. \$36.95, paper.

There is something about the phrase "21st-century learning" that implies an embrace of new technologies simply for the sake of hip novelty with little regard for the ways in which they can enhance students' learning. The classroom use of computer-based historical simulation games (HSGs) as part of this trend raises red flags for traditionalists and skeptics, particularly for those teachers unacquainted with the world of gaming. Jeremiah McCall's new book, however, puts these fears to rest by setting a high bar for resources advising teachers how to meaningfully and appropriately integrate this type of digital media in the classroom.

McCall rightly positions *Gaming the Past* as a response to the lack of practical resources that translate cutting-edge theoretical research about games and learning for history teachers who are pioneering the use of computer-based historical simulations in their classrooms. Already-devoted acolytes of appropriating digital media and video games for educational purposes will find both the organization of the book and the contents within quite useful. There are clear talking points to make the case for playing HSGs with students, specific criteria to help determine a game's validity in the classroom, tips for matching genres of HSGs with curricular content across the social studies, ideas for appropriate instructional strategies to meaningfully integrate game play, and sample units including detailed lesson plans and assessments for immediate implementation. Helpful appendices provide annotated references for further reading about the theoretical foundations of McCall's work; extensive profiles of currently available games organized by content topic; tips for logistical considerations including software and budgetary needs; and lists of websites helpful for web publishing, further historical research, and general games and learning resources.

Though not explicitly intended to persuade the unconvinced, McCall's thoughtful and careful approach to justifying, selecting, and incorporating HSGs in a secondary history

classroom provides compelling food for thought for any uncertain reader. He makes clear that HSGs ought not be used because they are fun, but because they support the goal of “fostering flexible, nimble, creative, curious, and collaborative student-thinkers who can criticize digital sources as easily as textual ones, analyze systems, construct defensible explanations of how and why human societies function the way they do, and evaluate interpretations and models” (p. 12). McCall’s description of the wide variety of games, the range of social studies concepts and content embedded in HSGs, and the multiple ways in which games can be played (e.g., brief teacher-led demonstrations, whole group play, or small groups playing over multiple days) does much to assure the reader that rigorous critical thinking skills and rich content knowledge can indeed be fostered through the thoughtful and appropriate use of HSGs.

In other words, just as the less intimidating but more traditional curricular materials like primary sources, films, and textbooks can enrich a classroom when properly introduced, integrated, and reflected upon, so can HSGs. Added benefits of computer-based simulation games in relation to these more conventional resources are that they can uniquely model complex concepts and systems, hook students who may otherwise struggle to be engaged, and promote critical media literacy that is increasingly important to youth bombarded daily by digital messages. Because the book is not aimed at skeptics, however, readers surprised by their openness to integrating these technologies may find themselves frustrated by the dearth of specific real world classroom examples to illuminate McCall’s advice. The appendices, though filled with helpful information, may also be overwhelming for those new to gaming terminology. In addition, little attention is paid to how to work with those students intimidated by game play—or how to overcome one’s own intimidation—beyond enlisting the assistance of more experienced students or practicing with a tutorial.

Any reader may be tempted to wonder how there is enough time to adequately integrate these games if fully enacting McCall’s suggestions for how to introduce, play, analyze, and reflect on HSGs. His couching these technologies in an approach to history education that is more focused on critical thinking than on rote memorization, however, is commendable and applicable to all other curricular materials. The history classroom conjured up in McCall’s book is one that would appeal to the most committed and creative of secondary teachers; any frustration with a lack of time for this kind of teaching, then, is less a critique of McCall’s suggestions than it is another reminder of the disastrous policies that serve to undermine or eliminate meaningful history education.

Ultimately, *Gaming the Past* makes a compelling case that computer-based historical simulation games are a legitimate and important curriculum resource for 21st-century learning that goes beyond hipness or novelty to foster the rich and rigorous critical analysis, interpretation, and synthesis skills that are so fundamental to a robust democracy. For the unsure and convinced history teacher or teacher educator, this is a worthwhile read and handy guide.

George Mason University, Fairfax Campus

Katy Swalwell

Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for the Apocalypse, by Jay Rubenstein. New York: Basic Books, 2011. 402 pages. \$29.99, hardcover.

Contrary to many contemporary musings on the coming of the Apocalypse, Rubenstein makes it clear from the outset of his work that for those engaged in the First Crusade,

as well as for those who did not venture to the Holy Lands, the conflict with the so-called Infidel was the beginning of the End Times. In this regard, he presents a theory of the Crusade that has not received the attention it most certainly is due. To that end, Rubenstein succeeds in his task.

Armies of Heaven presents a meticulously researched account of the First Crusade from its inception until the final battles of 1099. This narrative introduces significant detail and analysis to connect the apocalyptic aspect of the conflict to the initial calls for Crusade. From there, Rubenstein follows all of the major participants, and, indeed, more than a few of the minor ones, as they move towards the Holy Lands. He pays particular attention to the various interactions between crusaders and a variety of eastern rulers, whether they are the Christian kings of Latin Hungary and Orthodox Bulgaria or the more magisterial Byzantine Emperor. As such, one grasps how driven to accomplish their goals the crusaders were as well as how the receiving kingdoms were first disconcerted and then repulsed at the arrival of their supposed “saviors”. Even though significant numbers of westerners never reach the Holy Lands—the ill-fated movement under the leadership of Peter the Hermit should come to mind—those who do immediately engage the Muslim forces with mixed results to be sure. It is in their successes, though, that the crusaders see clear evidence that God is on their side. The successful capture of Jerusalem in the Summer of 1099 marks the final confirmation that the battle between Heaven and Hell, between Good and Evil, had indeed commenced.

One of the major strengths of Rubenstein’s work is the crusade narrative itself. In this regard, the book is accessible to a wide variety of readers, from the secondary school audience to the university student. The author’s style is such that the pages turn quickly, and there is a minimum of what can be in other accounts sometimes mind-numbing digressions regarding people and places. As for his central thesis, that of the apocalyptic aspect of this series of events, the text still proves useful, although other sources are more appropriate for those who wish a deeper discussion of the broader apocalyptic context and history of the Middle Ages. Additionally, the specialist of medieval intellectual and religious history might be disappointed to see the paucity of textual excerpts in the original Latin. In the end, these criticisms are minor at best. *Armies of Heaven* surely deserves a place in the classroom as it offers much in the way of explication and explanation about the connection between the First Crusade and the Apocalypse.

California State University, Long Beach

Gregory S. Beirich

Capital of the World: A Portrait of New York City in the Roaring Twenties, by David Wallace. Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2011. 290 pages. \$24.95, hardcover.

With twenty-one vignettes including, but not limited to, the Italian mafia, fiction writers, Mayor Jimmie Walker, print media, and the Prohibition Era with its culture of alcohol consumption, California-based writer and journalist David Wallace offers a brief history of New York City in the 1920s in *Capital of the World*. Wallace is a fine writer and offers engaging prose, but he is not a historian and in the end, we are left with a book that relies on stylistic flair, but not historical insight. He begins with a broad and overarching thesis: “the city was setting the pace for American and global change.” (p. ix). Such a statement is quite true, but this reader is not convinced of it within the pages of book. Nowhere does one get a real sense of New York City’s impact on the country

or the world because Wallace only scratches the surface of what New York City was in the 1920s with his focus on criminal celebrities, celebrity politicians, popular writers, and otherwise well-known people. As a former editor of *People* magazine and author of books about celebrities, one begins to see why Wallace uses such a skewed historical lens through which to understand the city he calls the "Capital."

The introduction lists a variety of ways that the 1920s changed the lives of large segments of the population. He notes that African Americans "migrated North" and "rediscovered their own roots" and white women were politically emancipated and "began taking on...occupations that were usually reserved for men" (p. x). But after reading the 277-page collection of "portraits," one is left wondering how this transformative period actually affected the millions of people, blacks, white women, and others, who resided in the ever-changing city and who, for whatever reason, saw Wallace's subject as worthy of notoriety. To be sure, African Americans like Langston Hughes and Bessie Smith as well as white women including Martha Graham and Texas Guinan, the queen of speakeasies, are discussed, but they cannot be seen as representatives of their racial and gender groups.

Not including meaningful discussions of the vast majority of New Yorkers is lamentable, but so are the pithy and de-contextualized "portraits" that his pen renders. In the chapter "The Harlem Renaissance," for example, Wallace fails to consider the multiethnic nature of the Harlem population that allowed for the extensive cultural production the neighborhood was known for and that made Harlem the cultural capital of black America. In so doing, he does not present the Renaissance as the social, political, and cultural movement that it was. Further, besides the chapter on the Harlem Renaissance and the mafia, people of color and white ethnic groups are virtually painted out of the picture despite their importance to the politics and economy of the city. Rather than the diverse, polyglot society that New York City was, the reader is led to believe that New York City was an all-white, English speaking, and native-born city filled with celebrities and want-to-be celebrities who liked to drink alcohol despite Prohibition. These shortcomings are partially explained by Wallace's meager bibliography of fewer than seventy sources which ignore seminal works in New York City history.

Wallace's narrative lacks breadth and depth and he has not demonstrated that he understands New York City, the roaring twenties, or how the two informed each other; therefore, the book will not aid the reader in understanding the era, urban space or culture, or modernity. Having taught and published materials about the city and the era, this writer is hard pressed to find ways in which *Capital of the World* can be properly used in the classroom setting to aid students in understanding the significance of New York City and the Jazz Age. Teachers and students interested in understanding the meaning of the 1920s and its impact on New York City and vice versa would be better served reading other texts. However, those interested in titillating trivia of celebrity culture will find the book most interesting. *Capital of the World* is a disappointing work of history even for a so-called popular history text and a prime example of how some journalists should leave historical writing to historians. It is reminiscent of history books that, while not falsifying the historical record, dilute content for quaint, easily digestible stories.

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