

Note from the Editors

Welcome to the twentieth issue of *49th Parallel*. Following on from our two special editions in 2006, this issue features five articles: one on political theory, one article on cinematic history, one on rock music in the 1960s, two articles on literary ecology, and finally, ten book reviews relating to varied aspects of US history.

Firstly, we present two articles that engage with contemporary US politics and popular culture.

In “The ‘Clash of Civilizations’ and the ‘War on Terror’” Michael Dunn critiques the application of ‘clash of civilizations’ theory to the ‘war on terror’ by those insisting on the use of a dichotomous approach to explain the post-9/11 world. Instead, Dunn seeks to construct a different means to understand and conceptualise the ‘war on terror’ by positing it as a conflict between two powerful groups of elites, for whom the ‘clash of civilizations’ is an essential form of discourse. Indeed, the author suggests it as a means of extending power and privilege.

David Eldridge’s “Hollywood Censors History” is an intriguing piece of research on cinematic history, particularly in relation to the manner in which historical events were depicted on film during the time when the Production Code Administration dominated Hollywood. In an analysis of many original documents relating to the production of ‘historical’ films such as *Young Bess* and *Madame DuBarry*, Eldridge examines how the PCA often sought to alter the depiction of historical events in order for films to conform to a prevailing conservative agenda, which proscribed narratives that did not reinforce dominant patriarchy.

In the next three articles, environmental themes form the main focus of research, with the final two articles being specifically concerned with ‘literary ecology’.

David Ingram, in his article on counter-cultural rock music of the 1960s, unveils and analyses the subtle contradictions between the technological and the pastoral, which seemed to be a major component of the discourses surrounding this musical movement. In doing so, the author establishes competing ideologies of the ‘electronic pastoral’ and the ‘anti-pastoral’. Ingram also explores the ways in which these ideologies impacted upon the oppositions inherent in having musicians romantically championing the virtues of the natural world, whilst their art form was dependent on modernity and technological development.

In “Landscape Lessons” Susan Maher discusses how the deep tradition of the ‘watershed’ narrative in the North American canon has reached new expression in Don Gayton’s *Kokanee*. Throughout the exploration of Gayton’s study of biodiversity, of his interest in “storied” landscape, of his positing a land ethic, through landscape lessons, “to protect the deep history of place and to root the human cultures of the plains back into [their own] place,” Maher stresses Gayton’s indebtedness to the practice of environmental writing of authors like Aldo Leopold and Paul Lindholt. In *Kokanee*, through layers of stories including

a personal intergenerational fishing story, Gayton criticises the rationalising habits developed within a “sustainability ethic” that interferes with human connection to landscape and the natural world. As Maher argues, the “bigger question in Gayton’s writings has to do with human attempts to restore “trueness and coherency” after human activity has degraded the natural landscape,” and in this respect, resistance to homogenised globalisation is a difficult but necessary cultural process.

Kateřina Prajznerová then offers a comparison of Miles’s *The Spirit of the Mountains* (1905) and Carr’s *Klee Wyck* (1941) from an ecocritical perspective, and analyses the different sources of the similarity between the narrative strategies the two story collections employ. In particular, Miles and Carr blend the genres of the travel narrative and environmental history to create stories of place that dramatise the ways in which the natural environment functions as an agent in economic and cultural development, thus exposing the ecological and social abuses that have shaped the history of Southern Appalachia and Central Cascadia, yet also unveiling the multicultural native elements of the regions’ heritage.

Finally, we are pleased to feature ten book reviews that pertain to US history. These cover broad themes from traditional foreign policy and diplomatic relations between states and individuals, to economic and intellectual history, and domestic politics.

We would like to express our gratitude to all who have contributed to this issue of 49th Parallel. We hope you enjoy all the featured articles and reviews and feel engaged by the ideas and thoughts that they stimulate.

KM, ER & MS