

despite drawing inspiration from the research conducted by neo-Marxists, materialist–feminist and queer theorists, and historians of racial capitalism. As a consequence, Petrzela does not provide a defined theoretical framework for understanding the connection she makes between consumerism and the US nation. Such a clarification would have facilitated the recognition of the discourses and practices emerging from the American fitness industry and the American political elites as interconnected components of the political history of American capitalism. By not establishing a more overt dialectical relationship between the industrial and the political logic of American nation building, the author inadvertently mitigates the level of radicalism in her analysis. I personally identify Petrzela's reluctance to explicitly recognize fitness culture as a constituent element of the socioeconomic and political production of the nation as a consequence of her epistemological omission. Does this omission subsequently expose her cultural history to the potential inclusion of certain culturalist explanations? I leave this question open for future readers, as the author's book serves as an ideal platform for engaging in sharp critical thinking regarding contemporary American capitalist and national culture.

The presence of a few critical ambiguities and vagueness in Petrzela's work also mirrors the potentialities and possibilities inherent in her book. The author's insightful and relevant analyses can be fully realized through a politically engaged reading of the *Fit Nation*. Therefore I encourage readers to approach the book with a discerning critical eye, allowing them to interpret Petrzela's analyses through their own lens. The author's selection of relevant and rich examples provides readers with an opportunity to engage in critical thinking, ultimately enriching their own perspectives through Petrzela's undeniable intelligence, fascinating insights into the cultural history of the American nation, and erudite mastery of the chronology of fitness. Infused with humor and self-reflection regarding her fascination with the ideals of fitness culture and her involvement in its exclusive spaces, the author presents an embodied and situated history of the political impact of the American fitness industry. Petrzela wittily and skillfully avoids the pitfalls that often accompany the writing of history centered around a seductive theme, one that is characterized by the fluorescent Lycra jumpsuits of the *Jack Lalanne Show* and the questionable exoticism of California's New Wave movements. While acknowledging the allure of the kitschy, entertaining, and prosaic aspects that these objects hold for both the author and the reader, Petrzela engages in a serious discussion about the underlying structural political injustices within the commercial consumerism of the American fitness industry.

*Université Paris Cité and  
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne*

ALEXANDRE PIRES

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John Ernest (ed.), *Race in American Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, \$39.99). Pp. 452. ISBN 978 1 1084 8739 9.

The existing scholarship on the dynamic of race in American literature and culture, broadly speaking, focusses either on transcultural or interracial dynamics or on the variety of literary traditions that have emerged from the complex history of race in the trajectory of American society. As an illustration of the first type of scholarly

preoccupation, one could turn to Eric J. Sundquist's *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1993), which examines how white and black literatures create an intertwined tradition by way of the dialectics of African American and European American perspectives, thus reevaluating American literature from 1830 to 1930. On the other hand, Richard Gray and Richard J. Gray's *A History of American Literature* (2011), which extensively surveys American literature from pre-Columbian times to the present, can be cited as an instance of the second kind of scholarly preoccupation.

From this perspective, *Race in American Literature and Culture*, edited by Prof. John Ernest, is a laudable endeavour as it blends together these two distinct, but intersecting, strands of scholarship, seeking to overcome the limitations of both. In other words, Ernest's critical anthology aims to simultaneously address the intercultural interactions and the variety of literary and cultural traditions that have resulted from the ideological constructions of race (including the white, the African American, the Chinese, the Latinx, and the indigenous traditions), focussing on the interpretive and representational conflicts between these traditions. The work is thematically divided into two parts. The first of these two parts consists of four sections – "Fractured Foundations," "Racial Citizenship," "Contending Forces" and "Reconfigurations." According to Ernest, this part is in fact concerned with "the cultural construction of race" (7), or in other words, with the "*white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race ... a cognitive and moral economy psychically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement*" (7, italics original). To achieve this aim, these sections have been arranged in a partially causal sequence that seems to respectively emphasize the problematic and unstable nature of white, racist constructions; the protest against such constructions on behalf of the marginalized communities; the conflict, uncertainties, and a degree of integrative and egalitarian promise conditioned by oppositional views of race; and the annihilation of the racist standpoints to reconceptualize racial concepts.

In keeping with this sequence of emphasis, the three chapters in "Fractured Foundations," by Edward Larkin, Katy Chiles, and Gesa Mackenthun, portray the contradiction between commitment to diversity and racially motivated discrimination against certain communities in American empire since its birth, and the historically specific nature of racial construction in the late eighteenth century and the continuing functions of slavery and settler colonialism that defy temporal specificities, in addition to a white-supremacist anxiety about the loss of domination over nonwhite individuals and a black Atlantic literary discourse (that challenges racial capitalism and the attendant slavery) through "the trope of racial hybridity" (42). A part of the same sequence of emphasis, "Racial Citizenship" consists of three essays by Derrick Spires, Koritha Mitchell, and Edlie L. Wong. These essays address the reimagination of the concepts of citizenship and communities by the African American and Chinese American writers of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth century to challenge the social assumptions and practices of the dominant white population that supported citizenship based on race and thus denied official recognition to certain racial groups (e.g. African Americans and Chinese immigrants). In the same way, "Contending Forces" deals with the issues of heightened racial tensions, the resultant uncertainty, and the probabilities of national integration in the wake of the Civil War, and "Reconfigurations" examines the part of American literature (African American stories addressing racial passing, Latinx writings, and so on) that deals with racial

overlap, the pressure of assimilationist calls, and the trope of passing from one culture and race to another. Through this sequential arrangement of four sections, the first part of this book, which aims to focus on “the cultural construction of race” (7), stresses not only the subjective and exploitative construction of racist thoughts, but also the conflicting strands of racial thought in American literature and culture that have shaped the trajectory of American society. Through the same sequence, especially through the chapters of the second, third, and fourth sections, the first part also emphasizes the intercultural interactions between the white racist and the white liberal traditions, and between the white racist and the minority traditions, alongside anticipating the emergence of a variety of literary and cultural traditions in the second part of the book.

The second part of this book is divided into three sections – “Envisioning Race,” “Case Studies,” and “Reflections and Prospects.” As the editor asserts, this part aims to “focus primarily on the cultural communities and literary traditions that have emerged from this history (the racial history indicated in the first part of the book), exploring the representational priorities and the interpretive methods central to these traditions” (7). Accordingly, “Envisioning Race” examines the technologies of vision – whether literary or non-literary – developed by different racial cultures, and the role of literature both to strengthen and to challenge our habits of viewing, while “Case Studies” attends to the scholarship on the variety of literary traditions influenced by the racial history of America. Such scholarship has a broad range of focus that includes, among other issues, the attempt to recover marginalized texts, as part of the stated objective of the second part in this book. Finally, in line with the same objective, “Reflections and Prospects” speaks to “the brutal inhumanity of systemic white supremacy” and stresses the necessity of appreciating the humanities to address stories relating to the racial injustices of the past and to raise future possibilities (395).

The book is notable for its extensive scope that encompasses the ideological constructions of race, the different literary and cultural traditions that have emerged from such constructions, and the intercultural dynamics. By simultaneously possessing these three aspects, the book enhances Sundquist’s *To Wake the Nations*, which is concerned exclusively with intercultural (or interracial) dynamics; Valerie Babb’s *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature* (1998), which focusses only on the evolution of white identity by examining the representation of it from the early American literature to the literature of nineteenth-century America; Anna Brickhouse’s *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (2004), which considers nineteenth-century American literature as the outcome of the interactions between US, Latin American, and Caribbean literatures, and thus ignores the internal dynamics of American literature; and Brook Thomas’s *The Literature of Reconstruction: Not in Plain Black and White* (2017), which considers American literature of the Reconstruction era as a site of moral, political, and economic debates about the birth of a new nation after the Civil War, and reflects no consciousness of the variety of literary traditions within American literature.

However, the book’s focus on the conflict between various literary and cultural traditions makes it partially indifferent to causality in the arrangement of the sections, causing the repetitive focus on the idea of racial overlap in “Fractured Foundations” and “Reconfigurations.” A consistent focus on such conflict also prevents the essays included in this book from adequately exploring whether there are commonalities between these traditions, and whether such commonalities imply the universality of certain literary canons. Despite this methodological limitation, *Race in American*

*Literature and Culture* deserves appreciation as it equates American racial history with a palimpsest and thus leaves open the possibility of further exploration of this fraught area of knowledge.

*Bankura University*

JOYDEEP CHAKRABORTY

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David Johnson Lee, *The Ends of Modernization: Nicaragua and the United States in the Cold War Era* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2021, \$54.95/£45.18). Pp. 188. ISBN 978 1 5017 5621 4.

The US pursued programs of socioeconomic and political development in the global South, conceived as “modernization,” during the Cold War as a key method of safeguarding US national security by preventing radical revolutions and fostering the evolution of friendly but authoritarian regimes towards more democratic and stable forms of government. David Johnson Lee’s *The Ends of Modernization* is a significant analysis which provides a fresh perspective on this project in two ways. First, his focus on the perspective of elites in Nicaragua and their interaction with US development projects, rather than the conceptualization of development in Washington, provides a more “bottom-up” view of development. Second, he analyses shifts in development policy toward Nicaragua from the 1960s to the 1990s, rather than homing in on one era of policy only.

In six chronological chapters, the author examines the impact of key shifts in US development policies: from the state-centric Alliance for Progress of the 1960s, to a doctrine based on human rights and basic human needs in the 1970s, to a shift toward a neoliberal model of development which appeared in the 1980s and was applied more fully in the 1990s. He argues that Nicaragua played an important role in catalysing shifts in US development doctrine over this period, most significantly during the 1980s.

The book is strongest when considering the interaction of Nicaraguan elites with US development programs and imperatives. Lee goes beyond a simple dynamic focussed on elite “collaboration or resistance” regarding US power (11), as incarnated in development projects, to focus on “history as a dialogue” (3) between American and Nicaraguan actors. Nuanced analysis shows how different elite factions often sought to co-opt these projects to achieve their own political aims. Lee examines actors often underrepresented in the historiography of US–Nicaraguan relations, going beyond consideration of the Somoza dictatorship and the leftist Sandinistas to focus on the role of Nicaragua’s anti-regime conservatives. This analysis is well supported by Nicaraguan sources and even an interrogation of the literature produced by this group. Lee convincingly shows that opposition to the Somoza regime’s acceptance of some US development programs was a key factor in forging a right–left alliance which led to the Sandinista revolution of 1979 and demonstrates the importance of conservatives to this process.

There are also several threads running through the chapters of interest to those focussing on the US implementation of development programs. First, Lee shows that increasing US development funding for Nicaraguan civil society organizations was an attempt to resolve a key tension: while US development programs ostensibly aimed at fostering democracy over the long term, they tended to strengthen dictatorship by building the capacity of the state over the short term. Using civil society organizations as conduits for aid was an attempt to bypass this issue by diminishing the