

# Reviews

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*Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture.* By Karen L. Cox. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Pp. 210, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95, paper)

In her book *Dreaming of Dixie*, Karen L. Cox argues that “most Americans during the first half of the twentieth century saw the South and southerners through” a “magnolia-shaped lens” that was put in place largely by nonsoutherners through popular culture (p. 1). According to Cox, this image of the South as a place with “links to the rural past and the one [region] least spoiled by urbanization and industrialization” was created by “New York advertising agencies, radio show broadcasts from Chicago, or Hollywood films” and was embraced by southerners and nonsoutherners alike (p. 5). Inspired by the Lost Cause mythology and the “culture of reconciliation” that arose in the late nineteenth century, mass culture created this “South of the American imagination” that came to be universally accepted throughout the United States (p. 5).

Cox approaches her topic thematically, looking at images of “Dixie” that were promulgated through music, advertising, radio programs, film, literature, and travel, with a chapter devoted to each mode of production. The first chapter, entitled “Dixie in Popular Song,” chronicles the careers and legacies of such mid-nineteenth century songwriters as Stephen Foster and Daniel Decatur Emmett. Both northerners, Foster’s and Emmett’s respective songs, “Swanee River” and “Dixie,” which “shared the composers’ nostalgia for the South and sentimentalized its race relations,” were as

popular in the North as they were in the South, and that popularity endured well into the twentieth century (p. 11). Such works also inspired the songwriters of New York’s Tin Pan Alley, who continued producing “back-to-Dixie”

songs that “repeated the well-worn southern themes of moonlight, cotton fields, and singing ‘darkies’” from the 1890s into the 1930s (p. 17).

Equally as compelling as the chapter on music is the chapter on advertising. Using “the allure of the Old South” to sell products from pancake flour to cologne proved profitable, according to Cox, and it was largely perpetrated by northern advertising agencies (p. 34). One of the most compelling examples is that of Aunt Jemima pancake flour, a product developed by a St. Louis milling company in the late nineteenth century that became a wildly successful national brand after the J. Walter Thompson Agency (JWT) crafted a backstory that traced the product’s roots to a fictional former slave woman, Aunt Jemima, from a Louisiana plantation. The JWT Agency may have been from New York City, but the account representative behind the Aunt Jemima and later the Maxwell House coffee advertising campaigns that fictitiously linked both products to the Old South was a native Kentuckian, James Webb Young (p. 40). So while it is true that it took Madison Avenue to make these products nationally known, the brains behind the campaigns had southern roots.



While Cox's chapters on radio and film are engaging, the chapter on literature focuses as much on tourism as it does on literature, leading to a great deal of overlap with the final chapter, which has tourism as its main topic. *Gone with the Wind*, arguably the single greatest force in shaping the public perception of the American South, crops up in every chapter of Cox's book. While this is not surprising, it does raise a question about the book's structure. Perhaps a chronological rather than a thematic narrative would have been useful for clarifying how popular culture embraced and leveraged nostalgia for the Old South as the nation wrestled with the forces of industrialization and modernity. Certainly a chronological approach would have eliminated much of the repetition that permeates the book. Nevertheless, Cox has crafted a fascinating look at how the Lost Cause mythology and its attendant nostalgia for "the Old South" came to be the dominant narrative in America in the early twentieth century, even though the South of the American imagination was not based on reality but rather on a romanticized notion of the past.

Cox ends with a brief look at the evolution of the South of the American imagination in the wake of the civil rights movement, noting that such television programs as *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Designing Women* shifted the narrative, but only slightly. The "Old South" as imagined in the first part of the twentieth century gave way to a version of the South that no longer relies on stereotypes of happy slaves on the plantation but still purports to be a "hospitable region" that the entire nation looks to as the antithesis of modernity. As Cox concludes, "Dixie may only be a state of mind, but in popular culture it remains ever present" (p. 166).

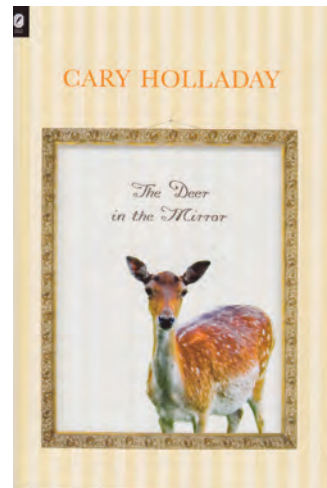
--Jennifer W. Dickey



***The Deer in the Mirror.* By Cary Holladay. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 172, acknowledgments. \$24.95, paper)**

A collection of works previously appearing in elite publications, *The Deer in the Mirror* presents a study of connections. Cary Holladay refers to these works as "stories" (p. x), but her close associations make the volume at least as unified as William Faulkner's novel *Go Down, Moses* or Eudora Welty's self-described short story cycle *The Golden Apples*. The result is a challenging, thoroughly satisfying, exercise in making sense of relationships between past and present, man and woman, and—not surprisingly given the title of her volume—man and animal.

Set primarily in Virginia and spanning some 300 years of that state's history, the stories offer detailed, engrossing vignettes of individual experience, each completely different from the last yet connected by tenuous strands of language and history. For example,



in the "The Flood," set in Rapidan, Virginia circa 1886, Henry Fenton provides for and mentors the orphaned Gid Ulsh, and Ulsh afterward becomes a prosperous man. Later in "Hitching Post," a modern-day tale characterized by "the store, the village, the sense of being out of time" (p.115), protagonist Jennilou receives assistance from a farmer named Fenton whose family has long lived in the region (p. 122). Then, in the subsequent novella, "Heart

on a Wire,” Emlee McCampbell remembers working in Mr. Beale’s store in Raccoon Ford, “a few miles away” from the Rapidan of “The Flood” (p. 150). Such details interweave to anchor the disparate tales and give the sense Holladay chronicles the larger historical continuum of the region through glimpses into individual lives. Readers see characters wrestling with the same conflicts in different time periods and Holladay thus reminds us that human nature does not change with time and circumstance.

Another constant is the problematic nature of romantic love. In story after story readers see characters take, or fail to take, a chance on love, all to the same effect—heartache. The young widow Verena Morrison Whitlow weighs her attraction to a German immigrant against the proposal of a colonial governor. Eileen Ryburn uses her slave, Rose, to poison her husband and then allows Rose to be burned alive as punishment. Gid Ulsh realizes too late that he wants to marry Lottie Hawley, and “five minutes” after Coleman Barbour arrives back at home, he realizes that his marriage to the Civil War orphan Alice “was folly” (p. 53). Similarly, in the modern day tales Holladay details equally difficult relationships. For example, after Jennilou learns that Bruce wants a divorce and has been having an affair with Trista, the “surprise of it all ran down her body, head to toe, so she stumbled” (p. 129). In that stumble, readers see echoes of the other romantic blunders, and in the end, only Jennilou, not the reader, remains surprised.

What does surprise, though, is the inordinate number of animals that populate the pages of Holladay’s text: Verena Whitlow Morrison’s title deer, Gid Ulsh’s rabbits, and even sled dogs and a monkey in the Alaskan novella, “Heart on a Wire.” Even as Holladay makes visible the past within the present, she repeatedly reminds readers of the connection between the human and animal worlds. Verena “loves the deer’s reflections in mirrors, a glimpse of an animal’s head behind her own” (p. 4). Later when Verena sets her lover Conrad’s mirror on a shelf in

the barn and thinks, “How strange to see her eye caught in reflection among the tools” (p. 18), readers realize that she, too, as a young widow, is trapped: as out of place as her pet deer. In this same vein, Gid Ulsh clings to the rabbits that his father saved from a flood, simply because they survived and his father did not. Most obviously, Emlee McCampbell, favorite of brothel owner and frontier entrepreneur Soapy Smith, seems as pretty a pet as the monkey that Soapy gives her. Yet the connection between human and animal also deeply affects Holladay’s characters. As Lottie Hawley says, “The good part of my life is animals. My life’s a history of animals” (p. 80).

All of these connections lead readers to explore one final link, that between reader and writer. Holladay encourages her readers to explore beautifully intersecting plots, to read echoes of the past in the present (and vice versa), and to see the interconnected nature of existence. In doing so, she loosens the barrier between reader and writer, allowing readers to participate, actively, to make meaning of her elusive stories. The end result records the sort of everyday magic that allows a deer to appear in a mirror, that touches our minds and hearts, and allows us to contemplate our place and time.

--Lorie Watkins



*Theaters of Skin.* By Gordon Osing and Tom Carlson. (New York: Spuyten Duyvil, 2013. Pp. 59, appendix. \$20.00, paper)

This lovely book contains poems by Gordon Osing accompanied by prints of various fishes and aquatic creatures by Tom Carlson. Osing, retired from teaching writing at the University of Memphis, espouses a modernist sen-

sibility, which is evident in his playful and entertaining, but also somewhat dense writing. These poems are mostly fairly compact and yet resonate beyond the page and require consideration. The book begins with a fairly easy to slip into introduction to what is in store for the reader with a poem called “Gyotaku”:

What is Spring to a geezer: April fools!  
Unless one has learned, say, how to see  
the sea, life in the green chill of a river,  
in the shiny khaki surface of the lake  
those who live within . . .

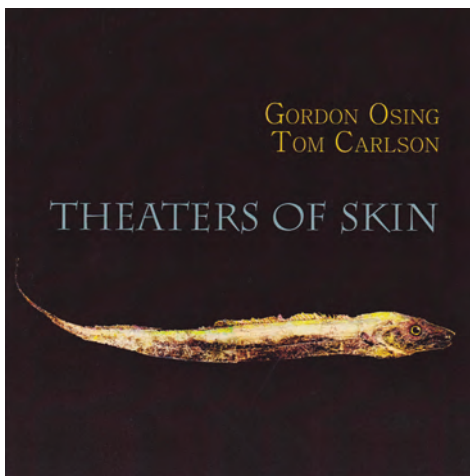
Immediately, the reader sees that Osing’s language is playful and quite full. He capitalizes his seasons, perhaps personifying them or at least adding emphasis. He refers to the audience (we, the “April fools”) and maintains a conversational tone with asides like “say” in line 2. Osing includes some slippery (forgive the pun) internal rhymes, such as line 2’s “see” and then, continuing to line 3: “sea” and “green” which keep the poem moving. And what is this “khaki surface” to this lake? Khaki tends to imply something boring but necessary, like the khaki colored pants many of us wear to work. Perhaps Osing is implying that “the lake” is our own lives (we being “those who live within”) which we can only truly appreciate once we’ve learned to see beyond the khaki dullness. Young “April fool” whippersnappers haven’t mastered this, but also plenty of geezers haven’t, either. Here, we see Osing taking what could easily be a di-

dactic or even melodramatic message, and through his playfulness and attention to form, presenting it entertainingly.

Osing’s poems are grouped as series under a handful of names of fish. They tend to be meditations on similar themes throughout the series. But as the collection progresses, Osing also meditates on the differences and similarities, the connections, between us and his fish, such as the struggle to evolve, physically, for fish, and spiritually, for us, the meaning of the hook and the net, for fish, and their symbolic counterparts for us. As Osing puts it in section 5 of “Gyotaku,” “So here is a collection of great-great-great Grandpa’s/time in the sea.” He continues:

. . . He believed  
in the swimming everything of liquid existence.  
He could not imagine missionaries or basilicas  
where he could always be found hanging out,  
looking for his in the food chain. What a shame  
he began to think about it. Worse, talk.

Osing’s wry commentary on the presentation of fish in the Christian mythos is humorous and telling; he implies that the true spirituality and beauty of the fish might have been squished out under the weight of its meaning. But isn’t this, also, an all-too-human problem? Being caught up in “the swimming everything of liquid existence” is one of the greatest lamentations many of us have. And being able to see beyond it, to dream of something as profound as Osing’s examples, seems impossible when we are weighed down with day-to-day worries. Osing’s fish, are, of course, us, or perhaps we are them. Throughout the collection, Osing seems to be attempting to get inside the heads of his fishy characters, and more importantly, at times, to slip away from his own mind. What many would consider an unsavory life—that of being underwater—he presents with curiosity, grace, and beauty. He thanks them and celebrates them.





Tonally, Osing's poems read like meditations which flow from a central idea. Often, he begins with a commentary on a quality of a type of fish, usually physical, and then explodes that idea into a metaphorical or spiritually resonating concept. He balances pathos and humor while always keeping an eye on the eternal.

It should be noted that the illustrations in the collection, by Tom Carlson, are quite interesting and oddly beautiful in their alienness, much like Osing's portrayals of fish. They are very detailed but at the same time somewhat distant, perhaps commenting on the observer's perception. Regardless, the book is worth considering for their sake, alone.

--CL Bledsoe



***Trials of the Earth: The Autobiography of Mary Hamilton, 3rd edition.* Ed. by Helen Dick Davis. (Santa Barbara, CA: Mary Mann Hamilton, LLC, 2012. Pp. xv + 258, introduction by Morgan Freeman, foreword by Ellen Douglas, illustrations, original postscript. \$14.95, paper)**

Books published by under-educated, and even illiterate, writers have attracted a renewed interest by scholars. They recognize that there is a tradition of vernacular writing that stretches to classical times. Scholars such as William Hansen have published accounts such as Phlegon of Tralles's *Book of Marvels*, and other classicists have studied the writing of non-elites, including joke books and collections of recipes from Ancient Greece and Rome. By the early 20th century, anthropologist, folklorists, and other researchers became intrigued by connec-

tions between life history and ethnographic study. European ethnologists encouraged local raconteurs to tell their life stories to document the history and cultural traditions that show up in first-person accounts of a storyteller's autobiography. Books by the Irish seanchaís, Peig Sayers, Tomas O'Crohan, and others inspired an interest in reading their vivid accounts of life from those who directly experience their own culture. American analogues to this peasant literature are clearly seen in the rich tradition of American Indian autobiographies that were largely recorded by ethnologists and literary artists, and then translated into English. With the shift into new social history and an ethnographic turn in numerous humanities fields, researchers have looked for other examples of vernacular autobiographies. Mary Hamilton's autobiography was compiled in the 1930s and first published in 1992 by the University Press of Mississippi. This new edition of her story is a welcome addition to this type of writing as it relates to the Arkansas and Mississippi Deltas.

Mary Hamilton was born in 1866 in Randolph County, Illinois. Following her father's death in 1884, she, her mother and five siblings were left in Sedgwick, Arkansas. Along with her sister, Lucy, and an African-American woman, the seventeen year-old ran a boardinghouse for workers of a local sawmill. She was soon to meet one of the boarders, Frank Hamilton, an Englishman whom she describes as about thirty years of age with "piercing steel-gray eyes" and the physical bearing of a soldier or athlete. She soon was to marry Frank, and Hamilton lived a long and challenging life. Four of her nine children died in early childhood, and her life was largely one of poverty and hard times. In 1932, she began writing down her story, and Helen Dick Davis had a 150,000 word manuscript a year later. Davis edited and compiled what would become *Trials of the Earth* before Mary Hamilton's death in 1937. Yet the manuscript was not published until 1992 when the family granted publication rights to the University of Mississippi Press.

This new edition includes information on why the book remained unpublished for such a long time as well as new information on the decision to return publishing rights to the Hamilton family.

The book is divided into three parts: “The Wild Country of Arkansas,” “The Mississippi Delta,” and “The End of the Trail.” Each section offers compelling narratives and descriptions of life in these regions near the turn of the century. She describes the operation of a boardinghouse for over a hundred employees of a sawmill in a matter-of-fact style that poignantly represents that challenges of cooking, cleaning, and managing supplies for scores of workers. Her descriptions of settling near Clarksdale, Mississippi along the Sunflower River are especially engaging. Her family opened up new lands for timbering and cultivation, and the sense of presence in her prose is remarkable. The final section of the book chronicles her return to Arkansas in 1911 following a series of severe economic setbacks in the Mississippi Delta. They settled in Pocahontas, where they did some farming and found other sources of income for a meager existence. The family’s situation was stabilizing, as they grew cotton and corn and processed syrup for their main livelihood, but then tragedy struck. Frank Hamilton suffered an injury while loading lumber on a trip to Black Rock. When he returned home, the family recognized the severity of his injuries, including a condition likely caused by botched medical treatment that he originally received while away from home. Hamilton soon succumbed to the illness, leaving Mary Hamilton a widow with young children. Curiously, this third part of the book is the shortest by far, and the autobiography largely glosses over the two decades of life in her later years.

*Trials of the Earth* will appeal greatly to readers interested in social history, especially as it relates to women’s lives. Her story is resonant with other biographies of the hard lot of poor women in the 19th and early 20th century, but Hamilton emerges as a courageous survivor. Her

accounts of the losses of her children, for example, are heartbreaking but not maudlin. These tragedies are balanced by joyful accounts of the subsequent birth of her remaining children and warm accounts of their personalities and youthful adventures. Contemporary sensibilities may make us question the patriarchal elements of the established ideology, but her relationship with her husband is intriguing. Frank Hamilton faced challenges with alcoholism, and he chose to live a life with a hidden past. Readers, however, will appreciate Mary Hamilton’s loyalty to her husband. This bond emerges as mutual affection and appreciation, and the family clearly found ways to cherish and support itself in challenging circumstances.

Readers interested in race relations will find the book intriguing as well as disturbing. Morgan Freeman’s short introduction characterizes the importance of her matter-of-fact prose, and he values the honesty of her account—even identifying with her as a “child of the Delta.” Freeman’s introduction allows readers to experience for themselves the ideological underpinnings of this type of description. Hamilton gives us a typical justification for lynching, for example, and the aftermath of one is described in gruesome detail. Her good memory for names of white people is present throughout the book, but she usually identifies the African-Americans as anonymous “negroes.” Complicit with these assumptions and ideological constructs, the social and economic stratification is taken as a given in her descriptions, and readers will recognize how the racial status quo was regarded as a natural part of social life. It’s clear that Mary Hamilton sought to live an honest and charitable life, yet we can see how her moral values were shaped by living in an era that preceded the Civil Rights movement.

The republication of her book marks an important contribution to this type of vernacular writing. Literary scholars will appreciate the chance to read an extended verbatim transcript of Mary Hamilton’s prose. When these passages are compared to the edited version first written

by Helen Dick Davis, they'll note problems with the rhetoric of authenticity that may be assumed in this type of vernacular literature. Social historians will find a wealth of details about everyday experiences, including excellent descriptions of farm work, family life, and trade. Oral historians will also find remarkable passages, including Hamilton's presentation of a first-person account of the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811 and 1812. Scholars interested in doing research on life history will find the book an excellent resource for expanding their research, and the book has great value for comparing her own ways of composing a life with the articulations of other women, especially when we look at Mary Hamilton's life story in relation to patterns of narration offered by anthropologists such as Mary Catherine Bateson. Along with the academic value, *Trials of the Earth* also has as its great strength an appeal to the non-specialized reader. The book is highly readable, and Hamilton's descriptions are vivid and visual—even cinematic as noted by Morgan Freeman.

--Gregory Hansen



***The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color.* By Gary B. Mills. Revised Edition by Elizabeth Shone Mills. Forward by H. Sophie Burton. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. Pp. 280, notes and bibliography. \$24.95, paper)**

In 1943, a World War II veteran, Private James Holloway, came across the community of the Isla Brevelle area of Cane River Lake, near Natchitoches, Louisiana. He described them as nice people who spoke French and broken Eng-

lish and “gave us coffee and hot biscuit, [and] Creole gumbo.” When asked who they were, one lady answered in French: “We are the forgotten people of America” (p. 1). The same year, Private Holloway wrote the *Chicago Tribune* requesting information about these Creoles. Gary Mills's *The Forgotten People* was first published in 1977 and was acclaimed as the first and only historical scholarship about Natchitoches for decades. Mills recovers the forgotten story of the Creole people of the Cane River. Neither black nor white, the multiracial Creole created a distinct ethnic group and class called *gens de couleur libres*, who benefited from the plantation system. Because they tended to marry other free people of color, the Cane River Creole became a successful group and the local elite. While their story was not unique in the American South, Mills asserts that French and Spanish Louisiana's laws, and cultures offered opportunities that facilitated the economic rise and growth in numbers of free people of color—rarely granted to counterparts in the English colonies and Anglo-American states. Mills concludes that their economic power enabled the Creole to sustain themselves politically in the increasingly restrictive American South.

Mills's story is confined to one family group, the Metoyer, concentrated in the heart of Louisiana. Cane River's first non-native settlers in the early eighteenth century were French soldiers and their wives and a half French half Caddo explorer who became a planter settled the Isle Brevelle. By the time cotton was king, the Creoles' plantations stretched for thousands of acres along the river. Like a legend handed down by word of mouth



through successive generations, the story of the community owes its beginnings to a woman called Marie Thereze Coincoin—a former slave of either African or Indian origins. Freed and granted land and a couple of slaves, Coincoin carved a successful indigo plantation that enabled her to purchase the freedom of her enslaved daughter. Most of her children however, were free of Franco-African descent, resulting from her relationship to Thomas Metoyer from a French noble family from Natchitoches post. As they entered adolescence, her children made their first communion according to the religious customs of that time. Before her death, Coincoin divided her extensive assets among her children. For the next half a century, the Metoyers of Cane River extended their wealth few whites of their era could match. Their children received a prestigious education with studies in classics, philosophy, law, and music and attended universities. The Metoyers were accepted and accorded equality in many ways by Cane River’s white planters despite their color and racial origins. Founded by the Metoyers, the community grew in size as well as economic, social and political influence as successive generations introduced new family names of other free people of color. While the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 signaled the beginning of the end of the family’s era of affluence, the community prospered until the eruption of the American Civil War. During the Jim Crow era, and well into the twentieth century, the people of Isle Brevelle became the “forgotten people”—forgotten by their former white friends who now saw all people of color as a threat and by the American government who abandoned them in 1877 with the official end of reconstruction.

Recently revised by Elizabeth Shown Mills, the new edition is forwarded by Sophie Burton. Burton seems surprised that “much of the scholarly community overlooked the book” despite some complimentary contemporary reviews (p. xii). She suspects that Gary Mills’s work might have been neglected because it dealt with Louisiana, a non-English-speaking colonial

state’s history that dominated American history during the 1970s. The new edition offers decades of additional research and includes two new photo essays: *Cane River, circa 1740-1880* and *Isle Brevelle, 1940*. While Mills, looks at the story of the Metoyers as a window on the Creole’s experience in early American frontiers and borderlands, one might wonder how representative is this group of other people of color in the rural American South.

In the end, the work represents an addition to many historical studies of the colonial and antebellum history of the South and of the free people of color in particular. Although a few previous studies focused on free blacks in New Orleans, the free people of color of rural Louisiana have received little attention despite their significant number and economic importance. Moreover, studies overlooked the eighteenth century as they tended to focus on the Antebellum era. *The Forgotten People* adds to the colonial and regional historiography as it traces the roots of the Creole community to the colonial era and highlights the subjects of slavery and lives of free people of color in Louisiana. Mills’s work brought to light the existence of the vibrant community of free people of color. In addition to academia, the book could be of interest to a large audience including those interested in Louisiana’s rich heritage and genealogy.

--Sonia Toudji



*Desire and the Divine: Feminine Identity in White Southern Women’s Writing.* By Kathaleen E. Amende. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 184, acknowledgments, notes, works cited, index. \$35.00, cloth)

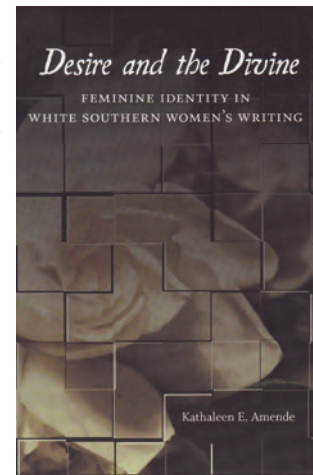


In *Desire and the Divine* Kathaleen E. Amende creates a small but textually dense work that takes on the complex task of representing the intersection of the sexual and the sacred in the works of a handful of white female Southern writers including Rosemary Daniell, Valerie Martin, Lee Smith, Connie May Fowler, Sheri Reynolds, and others. This scholarly work draws on the ideas of theorists such as Foucault and Bhabha to conceptualize ways in which Southern women create liminal spaces connecting the sexual and sacred, allowing them to understand the seeming disparity between the two and perhaps even to create meaning from the disjunction. The liminal, or in-between spaces, can be both real and imagined places in which people seek to form new fuller identities. These spaces can include the bedroom, the church building, or anything in-between, connecting the two as a stairwell connects different floors in a building. What Amende allows the reader to see is a careful examination of the creative ways these authors have represented the liminal spaces as opposed to the accepted traditional interpretation of separation of desire and divinity in body as well as in society.

Amende analyses fictional characters and stories that reveal much about the experience of growing up in Southern communities with their strict codes that seek to dictate religious mores to women as she makes the seemingly solid dividing wall between sexuality and spirituality more permeable through the analysis of literature, theology, and theory.

She demonstrates how literary works can both reveal and heal. In a chapter about resolving parental conflict, Amende gives examples of writers and their characters who suffered from the handing down of ideas about how good Southern women should behave, ideas that generally have more to do with the “religion” of the Lost Cause than with anything found in sacred texts. By handing down damaging ideas from generation to generation, it is both the tyrannical patriarchal fathers as well

as the unquestioning mothers that perpetuate Southern ideals that omit the place of sexuality in women’s lives. Many of the works Amende analyzes show means of resistance and creation of agency through art and individual expression, avoiding the



monotony of portraying women merely as victims of Southern patriarchy. For example, she provides a beautiful description in which Lee Smith’s character, Grace, in *Saving Grace*, fights against guilt as she forces herself, after a long time of running from her Southern religious upbringing, to finally return and examine her life. In doing so Amende writes, “Grace has fought off the demons of her past that have kept her compartmentalizing bits of herself and her psyche . . . to pull them together to create a whole being” (p. 98). Though not all of the characters find redemption, as in Grace’s example, all are depicted as having a lifelong struggle to understand the psychic wounds dealt them growing up in a guilt-ridden culture. Amende unflinchingly chooses to address the complexities exhibited in the character’s struggles even when they deal with such taboos as sadomasochism.

One of the best examples of this is in the chapter on “Mysticism and Masochism,” in which Amende deftly handles the subject of sadomasochism in a thought-provoking way, debunking Freudian theory that depicts sadomasochism as passive and problematic. Instead the author looks more at Foucault’s ideas of it being “potentially positive and productive of, at the very least pleasure” (p. 102). Amende’s examples provide a corrective to prevailing thought on sadomasochism by showing ways in which Southern writers create meaning through

these acts. Drawing on lives of the saints and comparing the act of mystics' self-inflicted pain—such as that of Catherine of Siena or Teresa of Avila—with Southern heroines, the author shows an overlooked connection. She points out “both mysticism and masochism result from a desire for transcendence and/or communion, and both ultimately produce similar types of pleasure and/or psychologies” (p. 103). She foregrounds Valerie Martins' characters in *A Recent Martyr* and shows two women who try to reach transcendence both by mortifying the flesh, one through spiritual practice and the other through violent sexual acts. Yet another character, Bone, in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, uses pain in the sexual act in ways that she is able to control, thus giving her agency and resistance against the violence done to her by others and allowing her to productively channel the pain in the way she chooses.

While giving many literary examples by Southern writers, the author does not neglect theology that helps the reader to theorize the connections between *eros* and *agape*. Citing Paul Tillich and Anders Nygren, she engages the reader in a discussion of the role of desire and the part it plays in bringing people closer to one another and to the divine.

The book ends by transitioning from the imagined community of the South found in books to the very real spaces and events in the South today, including mega-churches, purity balls, Christian gyms, and Christian Internet sites. Amende shows that religion in the South is still a prevalent part of women's lives, and she poses the question of whether religion in the South can have a positive coexistence with a healthy view of women's sexuality.

Though the authors and their characters do not share a singular perspective, they do share a common thread, according to Amende, by each working “towards an understanding of faith that incorporates the body and its pleasures and pains” (p. 135). Sexual desire, so often seen as antithetical to spirituality, is treated in this book as a necessary component of a holistic

life—one that includes spirituality as much as it does sexuality. *Desire and the Divine* is a valuable tool for understanding this small group of Southern writers, but beyond the imagined community of the literary South, it leaves us with the question of how religion and desire can coexist in real women's lives in a meaningful way.

--Katherine Dillion



***Show and Tell.* By William Greiner. (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2013. Pp. 184. \$35.00, hardcover)**

Filled with hauntingly realistic images, *Show and Tell* is a collection of twenty-eight pictures taken by William Greiner, each of which is paired with the piece of short fiction it inspired. Though reminiscent of something that might be placed on coffee tables, Greiner's book is much more than that. The characters and storylines that are presented here are as vivid and colorful as the pictures they juxtapose. Although each paired story and photograph is independent of the others, common themes such as love, loss, disappointment, and most often death are threaded throughout to weave the pieces together, forming a tapestry every bit as complex as the humanity they strive to represent.

*Show and Tell* is the perfect book for readers who are looking for striking pictures and stark prose. A majority of the stories compiled here have a gritty or even tragic tone, such as “Riptide,” “Point of View,” and “On Her Special Day,” but against such dark backdrops, love can still be found in the characters' motives, be they pure or otherwise. And like real life, which may often seem harsh or hopeless at first glance, readers will find surprising bits of brightness

sprinkled throughout in pieces like “Six Little Words,” “After School,” and “The Plateau,” if they are willing to look. The protagonists in *Show and Tell* range from adolescents—a gifted middle school student and a suicidal preteen—to octogenarians who have spent their lives fixing cars or righting the wrongs done to their loved ones. This broad spectrum of view points makes the stories and pictures all the more interesting to experience, as each turn of the page brings a new emotion to light through a different pair of eyes and a different set of problems.

Though the overall experience of reading and viewing *Show and Tell* was moving and provocative, the size of the book as well as the orientation and placement of the pictures felt awkward at times, but perhaps Greiner meant these aspects to echo the awkwardness of life that humans so often experience, as do many of the characters depicted in his book. The authors of these stories do not shy away from scenes that may feel strained or uncomfortable. Readers are just as embarrassed as one of the narrators is sitting in a sauna, surrounded by naked strangers or just as bewildered when another narrator awakens in a stranger’s bed, only to find a man staring at him from across the room. It is this unabashed honesty that gives the characters and pictures alike an authentic feel that they may have otherwise lacked.

Similarly, the unpleasantness of psychoses has not been overlooked. Flawed, perhaps even deranged as some characters might be, they are no less relatable for their desire to eat sweets instead of counting calories, escape confining and empty marriages, or find the love that has always been out of reach. That very relatability might be the point of it all. We are all human, the authors collectively seem to say, and we are all imperfect, and death will take us all in the end, be we rich or poor, famous or anonymous; but while we’re alive, we deserve to be listened to and cared for. What is remarkable about *Show and Tell* is that all the contributing authors were able to produce texts that are so easily compatible with one another when each had

no more direction than to base a story on one of the photographs he or she was given.

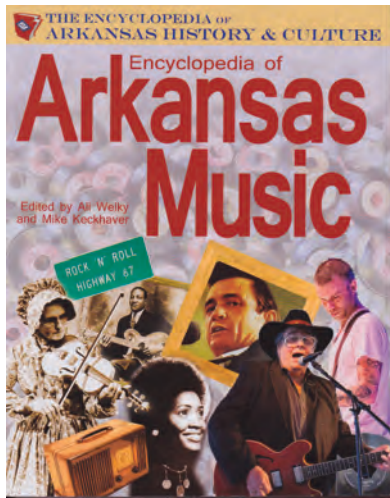
As the title suggests, the book has a dual purpose, and in focusing on “showing” the audience what people are really all about, Greiner’s efforts have produced beautiful, stimulating pieces of art that speak much more than a thousand words. They “tell” the larger story of humanity, the darkness that beckons to us all, and ultimately the choices we have to make, and leave the audience a little more enlightened for having experienced them. Of course, the duality of the title along with the ambiguity that is present throughout each piece of the work seems to contradict the presence of a greater meaning or unifying theme. But then again, perhaps considering those things aren’t what is important when reading *Show and Tell*. In Greiner’s own words “This book is not about good writing or literature, it’s about one person’s notion about the meaning of a photograph. There is no good story, no right or wrong answer” (p. 183).

--Kerri L. Bennett



***Encyclopedia of Arkansas Music.***  
Ed. by Ali Welky and Mike Keckhaver. (Little Rock: Butler Center Books, 2013. Pp. 242, preface, musical map of Arkansas, photos, acknowledgments, author index, index. \$34.95, paper)

There was a time not so long ago when one heard the word *google* and it was actually spelled *g-o-o-g-o-l* and it meant the number ten followed by one hundred zeroes. Since the inception of Google, however, the misspelling of the word has come to refer to an online search engine, a huge multi-national corpora-



tion, and it has morphed into a verb. Now anyone with an appropriate device can access the internet and instantly retrieve an almost endless amount of information on nearly any topic by googling. Still, there remains a certain comfort in the look, the feel, and even the smell of a book. Although a single volume is unable to contain the same quantity of information as the entire internet, content is not dynamic and able to be updated instantly, and a book may not be quite as portable or as convenient as a smart phone, the quality of the content can still be extraordinary and the delivery system infinitely more satisfying when content is presented via the written page. It may never be as spiritually fulfilling to prop yourself up in a warm bed with a laptop, an e-reader, or a smart phone on top of the comforter as it is with a good book. Especially when said book is a well of knowledge on a range of related topics such as is found in the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas Music*.

Over one hundred scholarly writers contributed to topics ranging from ABNAK Records, the Texas label where Arkansas rockabilly artist Dale Hawkins became a successful producer and company president, to the Zeta Upright model bass invented by Arkansas Jazz musician Fred Marshall. Editors Ali Welky and Mike Keckhaver have done an impressive job of organizing and presenting a wealth of information on a wide variety of performing artists and styles—including blues, classical, country, folk, gospel, jazz, opera, pop, and rock—as well as peripheral topics, such as equipment and

ways in which the music is heard.

Arkansas has long been recognized as the birthplace or the home of music luminaries such as Johnny Cash, Glenn Campbell, or Levon Helm, but it may come as a surprise to readers of *The Encyclopedia* to find that ragtime great Scott Joplin spent part of his early life in Texarkana, or that Dale Evans was raised in Osceola, or that 1930s opera star Marjorie Lawrence taught at Garland County Community College during the 1970s and is buried in Hot Springs. *The Encyclopedia* is packed with fascinating tidbits about people like Louis Jordan, Paul Klipsch and Conway Twitty and bands such as Black Oak Arkansas and Evanesence, all of whom have strong connections to Arkansas and have made lasting impressions on music in so many ways.

This single volume, published by Butler Center Books, contains not only well-written articles, but numerous accompanying photographs, maps and illustrations which enhance the stories of the contributions Arkansas has made to the wide world of music. The introduction by Keith Merckx presents a concise overview of what the average reader can expect to find between the covers. The index provides a precise map for the more knowledgeable reader who may be searching for information on a specific topic. Whether a casual reader or someone more expert in the field of music, everyone is likely to find *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas Music* to be a valuable as well as entertaining resource.

As with all reference books, there are some omissions. For instance, there is no mention of successful singer/songwriter Danny Tate from Camden. Space could be dedicated to the unique opportunities provided by the Scottish music program at Lyon College in Batesville. The Hickory Valley Methodist Church outside of Cave City was long recognized nationally for its annual shape singing, and yet it is not mentioned in this edition. It is hoped that subsequent editions may one day follow and that still more topics will be explored and presented.



Overall, the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas Music* is a wonderful resource. It is filled with many pleasant surprises as well as reliable information about more well-known entities. Read cover-to-cover, or simply by individual article, it provides a fairly comprehensive view of the contributions Arkansas has made to the music world. Best of all, a reader can sit on a bench on a warm spring afternoon with a canopy of apple blossoms blooming overhead and open the book to any page to find something of interest. If you google “Arkansas” and “apple blossom” you will find that the apple blossom is the state flower, and by reading the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas Music* you are likely to find that someone has written or sung about it.

--Kenton Adler

