

CORNELIS A. VAN MINNEN AND MANFRED BERG, *The U. S. South and Europe: Transatlantic Relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2013), 318 pp.

If ever scholars saw the southern United States as an isolated region preoccupied with parochial concerns, the edited volume *The U. S. South and Europe* will dispel such old stereotypes. What appears in the narratives of the fourteen essays included here is a distinctive area long engaged in global concerns. The scholarship on the Atlantic World has demonstrated this point already, especially in the context of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization, but the work at hand advances the field of study by demonstrating a triangulated approach that places the South within the context of Europe and the United States. The old binaries of North versus South and black versus white that have driven academic inquiry for decades, give way as the authors consider new questions about the influence of Europe on the South and the impact of ethnicity on the region while also taking into account the United States. By approaching the South through the lens of Europe, these essays offer a fresh look at the region.

The subtitle clarifies the timeframe as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with nearly one hundred and fifty years covered—albeit unevenly—from the 1830s to the 1970s. Five chapters are set in the Antebellum South, one during the Civil War, two in the 1890s, two in the early twentieth century, two during the Second World War, and the last two in the Civil Rights Era. Likewise, the subject matter shows the region from a variety of Western European perspectives, from that of German travelers, French journalists, British reformers, Italian immigrants, and Swedish researchers in the U. S. South, to southern perceptions of Renaissance Italy, Medieval Europe, English evangelicals, and African decolonization. In short, the breadth makes the volume valuable.

Opening the book is the essay “Southerners Abroad: Europe and Cultural Encounter, 1830-1895” by William A. Link, who uses travel accounts of southerners who toured Europe in the nineteenth century to suggest how tourism influenced the region’s thinking about the old country. In a novel approach that considers issues of race and gender through a reading of black and white, male and female accounts,

Link discovers European travel presented some women an escape from the patriarchy and for African Americans a romanticized escape from the harshness of white supremacy. In “Alexis de Tocqueville and Three German Travel Accounts on the Antebellum South and New Orleans,” Thomas Clark inverts the gaze. While the Frenchman has long been a staple of studies that cast a European perspective on the U. S. South, Clark pairs his musings in *Democracy in America* with writings by the German revolutionary Julius Frobel because both considered the slave society doomed. In contrast, two German freethinkers who traveled to New Orleans, Samuel Ludvigh and Louise Weil, found refined southerners and their society preferable to that of money-grubbing Yankees and their crass culture. Similarly, Daniel Nagel evaluates contemporary German attitudes about the region in his essay “The German Forty-Eighters’ Critique of the U. S. South, 1850-1861.” Nagel observes that this generation recasts its idealism from the German Enlightenment with the republicanism of the revolutionary era, taking these radical beliefs in exile with them to America where they fueled critiques of slavery and support for the American Republican Party. All three essays emphasize the intersection of travel and ideology.

Historical understandings of Europe inform the next three essays. Perceptions of the golden age of the Renaissance city-state provide the background for Kathleen Hilliard’s essay “‘In the Days of Her Power and Glory’: Visions of Venice in Antebellum Charleston.” Sensing decline in the late antebellum age, Carolina’s old elite recalled their impressions of Venice from the Grand Tour to rally support for Charleston’s renewal through enterprise, agricultural reform and regional independence. Elsewhere in the gamecock state, planters defended notions of chivalry to stave off challenges to their world as detailed by Lawrence T. McDonnell in his essay “Elizabethan Dreams, Victorian Nightmares: Antebellum South Carolina’s Future through an English Looking Glass.” Arguing that the elite took the cavalier legacy seriously, McDonnell finds the feudal code contributed to civil war. Building on his seminal scholarship about southern nationalism, Don H. Doyle suggests a misunderstanding about European dependence on cotton resulted in the South reconsidering its commitment to the peculiar institution in his essay, “Slavery or Indepen-

dence: The Confederate Dilemma in Europe,” Doyle describes how at the end of the war in a desperate bid to secure independence through European recognition, Southern leaders advanced the idea of emancipation.

Shifting the focus to the turn of the century, two essays approach the subject of lynching. Stefano Luconi expands the standard black/white narrative on the subject by considering mob violence against Italian immigrants in the U. S. South. Through a close analysis of an infamous 1891 lynching in New Orleans, Luconi explores the complexities of ethnicity in a racially segregated society. Turning to Europe, Sarah L. Silkey evaluates pressures placed on Americans to halt vigilante violence as explained in “Southern Politicians, British Reformers, and Ida B. Wells’s 1893-1894 Transatlantic Antilynching Campaign.” Juxtaposing the region’s most vociferous critic of lynch law with regional desires for foreign investment, Silkey finds southerners began to see the costs of mob rule outweighed the gains.

William R. Glass recounts the history of two evangelical English churches that received two North Carolina Baptists as pastors in his essay “Transatlantic Fundamentalism: Southern Preachers in London’s Pulpits during World War I.” Although the churches had been involved in the anti-slavery movement, the congregations accepted the southern ministers who, during their time in London, promoted Protestant fundamentalism. The South as viewed through the lens of Hollywood provides the subject for Melvyn Stokes’s essay “Europeans Interpret the American South of the Civil War Era: How British and French Critics Received *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Gone With the Wind* (1939).” Released in the wake of the two world wars, the films begged for foreign commentary on the depiction of southern race relations, however, Stokes finds criticism varied from country to country, in part because in both cases, world war delayed release of the films in France. The research and writing of the landmark study *An American Dilemma* provides the subject of Louis Mazzari’s essay “Gunnar Myrdal and Arthur Raper in the Jim Crow South.” Mazzari believes the collaboration of the Swedish and American social scientists during the Great Depression and World War II marked the highpoint of their careers. Southern racial practices undermine American efforts to win the psychological war being waged in “Explaining Jim Crow to German Prisoners

of War: The Impact of the South on the World War II Reeducation Program,” according to Matthias Reiss. Two-thirds of all German POWs lived in southern camps, and while confronting racial discrimination against African Americans, the prisoners befriended black southerners and came to see themselves as sharing in their second class status. When evaluated together, the wartime essays and those on lynching identify the South as complicating American hegemony.

The last two essays are set during the postwar struggle for democracy around the world. Clive Webb compares and contrasts the fight for human rights in his essay “Britain, the American South, and the Wide Civil Rights Movement.” Pushing the analysis beyond the “long civil rights movement” to suggest its “wide” global impact, Webb considers such protests waged in Britain as the Nottingham race riot in August 1958 and the sympathy March on Washington held in London in 1963. Webb concludes that England’s minority population lacked the size, homogeneity, charismatic leadership, and de jure racial discrimination experienced by African Americans. Daniel Geary and Jennifer Sutton consider the defense of white supremacy in their essay “Resisting the Wind of Change: The Citizens’ Councils and European Decolonization.” By looking at southern attitudes towards Africa’s independence movements as reported in the white supremacist press, the authors find the persistence of segregationist sentiment in conservative white internationalism that impacted foreign policy decisions up to the 1990s. Together these two essays join recent scholarship that places the American civil rights movement within a global framework.

Building on the work of the Southern Studies Forum, the Roosevelt Study Center in Middleburg, the Netherlands, sponsored the 2011 theme-based symposium on “The U. S. South and Europe” from which these fourteen essays originate. The contributors included a number of leading scholars in their field who came from their home institutions across Europe and America to participate in what must have been an invigorating symposium. Conference planners quickly recognized the papers all contributed to a new transnational approach to studying the U. S. South and determined to make the work more accessible by editing the proceedings into the attractive volume, *The U. S. South and Europe*. University Press of Ken-

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tucky agreed to publish the book in its *New Directions in Southern History* series edited by Michele Gillespie and William A. Link. Now scholars can glean from these essays further

evidence of the triangulated interactions of Europe with the U. S. South and North.

Atlanta

Glenn T. Eskew