itself exponentially among ‘other’ contexts … with the philosophical ruminations of Deleuze often as the guide” (11). Following Deleuze’s wayward lead, Jarraway makes “forays into contexts where the impact of Stevens is obviously less than direct” (11). Indeed, Jarraway concedes at the beginning of chapter 2 that “The collocation of Wallace Stevens and queer discourse, for some, is likely to be somewhat of a stretch,” because “[q]ueer is hot” whereas “Stevens is not” (57). Clearly, gay poet Doty is hotter than straight Stevens, “outdistancing” the latter, in the poem “Fish R Us,” “on the matter of a noncategorical and nonreferential approach to identity” (21). The “stretch,” however, may have more to do with Jarraway’s manipulation of the elastic quality of Stevensian discourse itself, the “sense of indeterminacy” and of repetition and change in which Jarraway identifies the “hallmark of reformative queer discourse” (53). Jarraway is more convincing when correspondences between Stevens and his Others are less evanescent; for instance, in his illuminating reading of Stevens’s camp correspondence with gay Cuban poet and editor José Rodriguez Feo, and in his extended and sensitive treatment of Stevens’s late poetic return to his early mentor at Harvard, George Santayana. Even here, however, there is a clutching at semantic straws: at the “queer assertion of humanity” in the title poem of The Rock (1954), for instance, the late sequence in which Stevens’s homage to Santayana, “To an Old Philosopher in Rome,” appears.

Throughout, a Stevensian vocabulary of the provisional and the possible is in tension with Jarraway’s own overdetermined latching on to “queer” keywords, to epigrams, and to epigraphs: an epigraph from Stevens’s “A Rabbit as King of the Ghosts” forms too tenuous a link between the poet and the Updike of the Rabbit tetralogy, for instance, and one wonders why Ernest Hemingway, in place of the unlikely trio of Updike, Roth, and McCarthy, does not appear among Stevens’s Others.

Despite its considerable gender- and genre-bending promise, Jarraway’s book doesn’t quite prove the adage from Stevens that it takes as its own epigraph, that “The theory of poetry is the life of poetry.” When Jarraway tells us that “if ‘incompossibility’ is now a means of communication (Deleuze, once again), it’s only because ‘the poem wants the impossible’ (Doty, once again)” (22), we may think twice about what Stevens called “The Pure Good of Theory.”

Lee M. Jenkins

University College Cork


In 1917 Horace Pippin enlisted in the 15th New York National Guard, soon to become the 369th Infantry Regiment of the American Expeditionary Forces, one of only eight all-black infantry regiments in America’s racially segregated military to see combat service in World War I. Better known to history as the “Harlem Hellfighters,” the regiment spent 191 days on the front lines of the Western

front – longer than any other American unit. In so doing they achieved semilegendary status in the annals of the Harlem Renaissance and long after (Max Brooks’s 2014 graphic novel *The Harlem Hellfighters* is only the most recent example of their enduring fame) as examples of black martial masculinity proudly fighting a double war against both foreign enemies and domestic institutional racism. Yet Pippin, who received a 75 per cent disability diagnosis after being shot in the arm by a sniper, refused such a narrative, focussing instead on the prolonged suffering and trauma the war had caused to him and his wider community in a series of autobiographical manuscripts, paintings, burntwood panels, and sketches. *Suffering and Sunset* tracks Pippin’s extraordinarily rich and prolonged meditation on this subject, giving Pippin the kind of extended and meticulous scholarly attention he has long deserved and in the process establishing him as one of the most significant artists to deal with America’s engagement in World War I.

This is a big book, in every sense. Pippin’s achievements have long been occluded by biographical inaccuracies and reductive, racially skewed interpretive paradigms, and *Suffering and Sunset* takes both to task. Bernier’s exhaustive archival research significantly reshapes our understanding of Pippin’s life – on topics as varied as the identity of his mother, exactly what exists of his correspondence in the archives, the dating of his access to painting materials and his use of color, and the authenticity of recent paintings attributed to Pippin, amongst other things. The insights gleaned from these archival discoveries help Bernier counter a long-standing scholarly narrative that Pippin was a “primitive” or self-taught artist “discovered” by well-connected white dealers and patrons. Instead, the Pippin that emerges here is rather an artist who was “self-made,” self-reflexive, experimental, and highly active in shaping his public presentation and the terms on which his artwork was disseminated. Moreover, rather than being an isolated visionary, he was thoroughly (and critically) engaged with both white mainstream art traditions and a deeply sedimented tradition of racist visual representation.

The core of *Suffering and Sunset* is sustained attention to how this engagement played out in Pippin’s many arresting images and narratives reflecting on his personal war experience. Bernier is a fine reader of Pippin’s long-overlooked autobiographical manuscripts, four of which have only recently been published (in digital form by the Smithsonian). Particularly rewarding is her reading of his interplay between sketches and literary narrative in his unpublished “Autobiography” (*c.*1920s), but all attend to his highly elliptical, symbolic style, and his preoccupations with what he termed the “batel feel” and “Nomanland” of the front line in France. For Pippin, as for so many other combatants, these were places of unparalleled psychological, sensory, and physical intensity, but although he saw it as a terrain effecting a “radical declaration of racial equality” in its violent dehumanization of black and white alike, he refused – unlike many other African American veterans – to see it as a black masculine proving ground with the potential for “political and personal fulfilment” (193, 236). Instead, he viewed it in essentially nihilistic terms as a terrain of irredeemable, traumatizing, and barely representable physical and psychological wounding.

But it is his visual art which most powerfully speaks to his experiences of frontline service, and which best craft the “antiwar monuments” which Bernier sees as his career-long imperative to fashion. Although forced to destroy many of the sketches he made during his service under the compulsion of military censorship, his postwar work in sketches, burntwood panels, and paintings was both technically unorthodox – he used oak panels burned with a fireplace poker and house paint as
core materials in his work—and politically radical. He undertook the “burden of representation of Black military lives” to reclaim them from the reductive and emasculating visual and literary depictions which were everywhere in the mainstream cultural and memorial response to American service in World War I. His paintings, many of them reproduced in color in this volume, were often narratively sophisticated—Bernier suggestively links this feature to patterns of oral storytelling in African American culture—and registered the psychological and personal complexities of African American veterans in a way unrivalled in the cultural record of World War I. They also paid testament to Pippin’s ongoing battle with what he termed the “blue spells” produced by his service. Just as exciting as these readings is Bernier’s identification of what she terms the “Unofficial Five” of similarly marginalized African American veteran painters who dealt with the war in their work—Malvin Gray Johnson, Dox Thrash, Henry Ossawa Tanner, and Albert Alexander Smith, a “missing school of African American war painting that has yet to be fully mapped, much less theorized” (351). One hopes this call to future scholars will not go long unanswered.

The scholarship on African American service in World War I has been completely overhauled in the past decade, with major historical scholarship by Adriane Lentz-Smith, Chad Williams, Richard Slotkin, and Jennifer Keene, and literary histories by Steven Trout, Jennifer C. James, Trevor Dodman, and myself. Yet all of these books paid little or no attention to Pippin. Bernier wholly succeeds in framing his cultural interpretation of the war and its position within a long American history of racism and violence as indispensable to World War I history and American art history. And Suffering and Sunset is likely to secure a similar place.

University of Oregon

MARK WHALAN


This compelling reassessment of the NAACP focusses on the cultural dimensions of the association’s campaign for equality, “a battle fought not just in the legislature and