that there is no mention of Du Bois’s pioneering efforts to foster black children’s literature (both in *The Crisis* and in the short-lived children’s magazine *Brownies’ Book*, which was edited by Jessie Fauset). Likewise, a fascinating discussion of shifting female iconography in *The Crisis* in the 1920s, which saw the demure New Negro woman give way to “images of exotic African temptresses” (85), would have been strengthened by engagement with recent scholarship on the black diasporic dimensions of the Harlem Renaissance, including Clare Corbould’s *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919–1939* (2009). Notwithstanding these quibbles, this substantial monograph wears its learning lightly, breaking new ground in its exploration of how the association approached “questions of assimilation, cultural pluralism, class bias, cultural elitism, censorship, and propaganda” (6).

*Swansea University*

**RACHEL FAREBROTHER**

*Journal of American Studies*, 51 (2017), 4. doi:10.1017/S0021875817001062


In undertaking a historical and theoretical exploration of the co-constitutive nationalisms that have characterized US–Cuban relations since the Cuban War of Independence in 1898, John A. Gronbeck-Tedesco’s *Cuba, the United States, and Cultures of the Transnational Left, 1930–1975* provides several fresh perspectives notable to scholars working on the origins and trajectories of Cuban and American exceptionalism. The book centers on the failures and triumphs of two Left generations that saw revolution as a touchstone for campaigns of racial equality, anti-imperialism, and women’s liberation. Cuba was a literal and figurative terrain for US radicals and revolutionaries in the generational transition from the Good Neighbor Policy to cold war containment. (3)

In doing so, Gronbeck-Tedesco charts the multiple and polysemous political and economic connections that have characterized the hemisphere, and his book offers a fresh and compelling analysis of the intimacy between Cuba and the United States as a way of charting their coterminous history.

By framing the connection between the United States and Cuba as one premised upon intimacy in its political, economic, and aesthetic relations, Gronbeck-Tedesco deftly articulates the tempestuous bond between the two nations. The book notes how the shifting sands of modernity propelled both countries into an ambivalent relationship that created a “collaborative circuitry of women’s rights activism, anti-imperialist coalitions, racial alliances, and new creative expressions that drew from the aesthetic catalogs of modernism and postmodernism in contested narratives of empire and revolution” (4). These collaborations between the US and Cuba helped to propel progressivist ideals and also catalyzed backlash throughout the twentieth century.

Early in the book, Gronbeck-Tedesco skillfully underscores how José Martí’s vision of modern Cuba helped propel a “hemispheric cosmopolitanism” (22) that marked Cuba as a distinct cultural and political landscape ripe for the kinds of political
encounter that were, quite frankly, mired in Americanist racial politics anchored by American empire. Politicos and artists in both countries acknowledged the possibilities of progressive racial politics, even as their idealism often fell short of material equality. Still, in their interpretive and aesthetic choices, American and Cuban artists committed to racial equality provided linguistic interventions that signified and resignified the relationship between the US and Cuba in the war years. For the Cubans, mestizaje emerged in poetry and prose to shift racial representations in popular culture, just as in the United States the Harlem Renaissance used blues and jazz as repertoires of sonic difference that emphasized new racial identifications.

Although Gronbeck-Tedesco’s cartography of racial politics in the early decades of the century charts important moments of American exceptionalism and Cubanidad, the book is best as it examines how the failures of the Good Neighbor Policy, as well as internal pressures on the island, created the conditions for revolution. As he explains, “the way US radicals imagined Cuba was inextricable from the Cubans’ associations with empire and their desire to break from the northern hegemony” (4). And because the US and Cuban political imaginaries were so intertwined, of course they co-constituted strength and weakness during the Cold War as the US emerged as a global superpower and Cuba emerged as a shining example of the possibilities of postcolonial revolution.

Gronbeck-Tedesco’s analysis of race during the Cold War is insightful, particularly as he traces the aesthetic relationship between Harlem and Havana as it blossomed following the Cuban Revolution. Using woodworking metaphors of “joinery” and thinking through the politics of translation, Gronbeck-Tedesco underscores how poets in both locations created important sites of political and artistic encounter that helped propel US–Cuban collaboration and antagonism. As the language of modernization emerged in Cuba after the Revolution, it emphasized a new era of Cuban exceptionalism that influenced anti- and postcolonial movements across the globe, and which circulated and mimicked the intellectual productions and political strategies of Cuban revolutionaries. This was particularly true as the United States continued to try to dominate the island throughout the Cold War, to no avail. “At the core of Cuba’s alternate modernity was a rejection of alienation and reformulation of humanism that reorganized ideas about gender, race, and culture in a new nationalist script” (171), writes Gronbeck-Tedesco. In harnessing a new populism, Cuban leaders marshaled the language of utopianism, which impressed American youth and helped to shape leftist ideology in the United States despite opposition from the US government, especially before the Soviet collapse.

Arguably, the Cuban Revolution, moving against American empire as it clearly did, created new idioms and ideographs useful for understanding social oppression in the Americas and elsewhere. Gronbeck-Tedesco skillfully navigates the racial politics that underscored progressive and conservative impulses in both the United States and Cuba in the twentieth century to magnify moments, speakers, and texts that dramatized and mobilized exceptionalism as a co-constitutive discourse of modernity in both countries. While scholars can certainly read more comprehensive histories of American politics or art during the same time period, Gronbeck-Tedesco has taken on the unenviable task of writing a simultaneous chronicle of exceptionalism that certainly succeeds in demonstrating how the US and Cuba existed as imaginary spaces for writers and politicos in both countries. Yes, one can find more complete accounts of the black freedom movement or the women’s movement in both the US and Cuba. However, this book takes up those political spaces to understand how “[t]he work of...
transnational exiles, dissidents, and artists bears witness to the fragile, fractious dimensions of national belonging” (277), and in this the book triumphs.

Gronbeck-Tedesco describes how the US–Cuban dialogic underwrote much of the twentieth century’s most explosive political and cultural moments, creating the kinds of success and failure that propelled new ideas about nationalism, culture, art, and war, especially as Cuban notions of tricontinentalism abounded, connecting the island to global politics in a fashion that directly refuted American unilateralism. Charting the cross-pollination of ideas between Havana and the US through intellectual productions of Carrie Chapman Catt, Heloise Brainerd, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Doris Stevens, Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Amiri Baraka, Harold Cruse, Carlos Moore, Frantz Fanon, Huey Newton, and Che Guevara, the book emphasizes that the global circulation of new strategies for engaging nationalism across the globe provided new contact points for the production of ideology. My only quibble with these later chapters is the loss of focus on the actual texts that built this constitutive relationship in the early half of the century in deference to the inclusion of so many participants that helped shape the US–Cuban relationship.

Nonetheless, at the moment, the US and Cuba are enjoying a moment of reconciliation as a new wave of transnational exchange begins. Whereas earlier periods of US–Cuban interaction were characterized by controversial and often contentious policy, the current political climate demands scholarly attention to just the kinds of antagonism and cooperation that Gronbeck-Tedesco has so artfully portrayed, since it seems quite clear that the transnational relationship between the two countries will continue. With particular attention to contemporary identity politics, forthcoming scholarship on the special relationship between the US and Cuba should model this kind of thoughtful analysis.

University of Arkansas

LISA M. CORRIGAN


Transatlantic historiography commonly gets enacted one way, whether tracing the transplanting of peoples or recording the migration of ideas. Occasionally scholars can discern exchanges and reciprocity, as intellectuals learn from one another, or as institutions seek to emulate what is admired across the ocean. The Weimar Century offers something special, a kind of triangulation: five German thinkers who reached maturity after the First World War find refuge in the United States, and then manage to project their political views back after the Second World War, mainly in the land of their birth. One was a Protestant (Carl J. Friedrich); one was a Catholic (Waldemar Gurian); and the other three were Jews (Ernst Fraenkel, Karl Loewenstein and Hans J. Morgenthau). In their homeland the Third Reich had aborted their hopes for a viable democracy. But America gave this quintet a chance to promote free institutions during the postwar occupation. It facilitated the exiles’ influence, even as the pressures of the incipient Cold War accelerated the inclusion of the Federal Republic in the Atlantic alliance. Udi Greenberg’s meaty book makes this triangulation quite fascinating, and thus adds further luster to the vibrant field of