Family Values is split into three sections centered on education, motherhood, and masculinity. Dowland argues that while the rise of Christian schools in the South started as a response to desegregation, evangelicals came to view public schools as secular institutions that allowed students to challenge authority and question gender norms. Further, the perceived failure of public schools amongst conservative evangelicals drove support for the homeschooling movement. Despite the movement originating out of the anti-establishment left, it would ultimately become controlled by conservative evangelicals by the turn of the twenty-first century.

Motherhood became central in defining Christian right activism. Pro-life activists framed abortion as an assault on motherhood, in part because abortion made child rearing a matter of choice rather than women’s primary role in society. Similarly, conservative evangelical activists framed their opposition to gay rights as a threat to the family, describing gay men as praying on children and shirking their family duties. Motherhood gave evangelical women the authority to become politically active. In the discussion of Anita Bryant’s well-publicized anti-gay crusade in the late 1970s, Dowland notes of Bryant that “as a mother, she could become an activist” (168).

Masculinity became fundamental to conservative evangelicals. This explains in part how conservative evangelicals came to embrace Ronald Reagan, who despite perceived moral failings (previously divorced, a Hollywood movie star, passed a Therapeutic Abortion Law as governor of California), “presented himself as an aggressive, red-blooded American man” (177). Evangelicals became some of the standard bearers for the American military in the post-Vietnam era, and stood against multiple mainline churches in supporting Reagan’s opposition to a nuclear freeze, deepening the relationship between conservative evangelicals and the Republican Party.

Dowland persuasively demonstrates the pervading influencing of family-values rhetoric. Numerous scholars have noted that in spite of its rise, the Christian right has lost many of its battles on gay rights, abortion, and school prayer. However, as Dowland notes, conservatives have succeeded in defining family values in national political discourse, with evangelicals playing a “key role in shifting the political battleground from equal rights to family values” (10). From today’s vantage point, Dowland is correct, as both major political parties focus their attention on working families. In doing so, Family Values offers an important corrective to the rise-and-decline narrative of some Christian right scholarship. While one might question Dowland’s lack of emphasis on race at the expense of gender, this is a highly readable and engaging perspective on the Christian right. Moving through the key figures and events, Family Values challenges and incorporates many of the older debates into a persuasive narrative that should engage both scholars and the general public.

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Without denying the influence of transnational connections in US southern history or in the very contemporary texts he explores, Christopher Lloyd also recognizes the appeal of theoretical models that would “deteritorialize” the region, “deconstruct[ing]”
monolithic ideas of what the South is in favor of “a pluralized – often fictionalized – location, forever in flux” (5). He worries, however, that such “postsouthern” analyses might disregard or obscure the region’s “placedness, especially in relation to a located cultural memory” (1–2). In contrast, Lloyd seeks to articulate a South that both is, and is more than, a “cultural construct,” in which meanings are embedded in the region’s “geographical and cultural terrain” as well as its representations (145). Often, his prose takes on an ethical charge, insisting that the goal of “Southern scholars” must be, at least in part, to pull “the thousands of discarded, throwaway bodies of the South … out of the ground” (159).

This emphasis on bodies and geography explicitly evokes Patricia Yaeger’s Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing (2000) and Thadious Davis’s Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region, and Literature (2011), both very influential in southern literary studies; accordingly, aspects of Lloyd’s textual analyses are unsurprising. He resists, for example, the postsouthern view that the Gothic provides a stereotypical trope through which a version of the region can be consumed, countering with the claim – also broadly prominent – that the genre provides a venue through which “contemporary Southerners … access particular cultural memories of violence and horror” (88). But in turning to the photographs of Sally Mann – rarely examined in southern studies – he provides a formally insightful account of how this artist seeks to “root” history and culture in the interplay of earth, sky, camera, chemicals, and, sometimes, corpses.

The stakes of such “rootings” merit further consideration, however. In a chapter regarding literary journeys southward, Lloyd argues that Toni Morrison’s Home (2012) implies an “ethical obligation to look at” those who have suffered racist abuse, while Cormac McCarthy’s The Road (2006) urges us to attend to the father’s “Southern memories” (127, 145). But where Lloyd demonstrates how Morrison depicts remembrance as a necessity in pursuing emotional and communal recovery, he focusses on proving the presence of southern landscapes in The Road’s postapocalyptic geography, which some critics map differently. Attending to McCarthy’s representation of characters might disrupt this parallel, however, as the son – who lacks cultural memories – provides a model of kindness, whereas the father retains disturbingly patriarchal impulses. Here and elsewhere, Lloyd’s determination to prove that regionalism remains relevant obstructs inquiry into its value.

Lloyd’s study opens with a brief analogy between the terms “postracial” and “postsouthern,” and throughout, he evinces concern that the latter is insufficiently attentive to race.¹ That insight – still under debate, but potentially crucial – does not imply, however, a countervaluing corollary between interests in region and in racial justice. In a chapter on post-Katrina texts, most thoroughly Spike Lee’s documentary When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (2006), Lloyd provides a formally and historically rich account of a “Southern biopolitics” (53) in which black lives are devalued, and this scholarship is useful. But his insistence that attending to the storm’s “regionalism” constitutes “the most ethical response to Katrina” disregards the fact that critiques were focussing on governmental structures – local, state, and federal (55). Privileging an ambiguous ethics over palpably vital politics raises the question of regionalism’s aims.

¹ Martyn Bone has also recently explored this possibility: see his “Postsouthern,” in Scott Romine and Jennifer Rae Greeson, eds., Keywords for Southern Studies (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), 348–51.
Tragically, Lloyd’s argument is undercut by events that no doubt occurred after his manuscript had gone to press: after highly publicized police killings of unarmed African Americans and the poisoning of Flint, Michigan, it is ever more clear that governmental callousness toward black life is not restricted to the US South. This twenty-first century necessitates interrogating our spatial frames, in order to recognize precisely where and how a more just society can be imagined and pursued. In otherwise thoughtful readings, Lloyd depicts Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World* and Valerie Martin’s *Property* (both 2003) as expressing “Southern cultural memory” of slavery (43), but this formulation moves too easily between literary analysis and sociological generalization. At a time when both scholars and social movements insist on the role of slavery in shaping the nation, the significance of the region as a site of social critique and cohesion (as opposed to aesthetic production, which Lloyd argues effectively) cannot be taken for granted.

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Mark Seltzer’s career-long interest in the relations binding narrative form, collective psychology, and power relations achieves a sleek, elegant crescendo with *The Official World*. The study works through interrelated chapters that proffer theoretical claims with sophisticated readings involving modernism and modernity. Though its critical touchstones belong to more recent theoretical discussions (as they have become assimilated into the anglophone academy), the monograph recalls a slightly older phase of literary and cultural criticism that smoothly interlaced argument and style of exposition. In particular, *The Official World* can be seen as an interlocutor with D. A. Miller’s *The Novel and the Police* (1988), especially as Patricia Highsmith’s Ripley tales are often the cornerstone for Seltzer’s readings. Miller’s collection of essays is widely seen as having reshaped Victorian studies with its deployment of Americanized Foucauldian criticism about the disciplinary construction of interiority and the role of the novel in constructing a decentralized institutional apparatus that pulses power relations through the socialized body. Miller’s suspicion about the production of sensation was later implicitly challenged in literary studies by the revaluation of Gothic and sentimental works, often through affect studies, which presented emotional relays in a more admiring light. The post-Miller criticism consequently saw affect as more progressive in its politics, especially as affect studies rarely troubled itself with the ways in which populist affect could be marshalled and incorporated with right-wing movements and post-rational politics. Miller’s approach exemplified a hermeneutic perspective that has likewise come under criticism in ways exemplified by Rita Felski’s *The Limits of Critique* (2015). Felski leads a charge against context-oriented criticism, a perspective that for her includes otherwise disparate schools of thought, from cultural materialism to New Historicism, and sometimes paradoxically seems to suggest that queer theory has its own subterranean links to the form of patriarchal discourse now colloquially called man-splaining.

One way to approach *The Official World*, then, is as a monograph that threads the needle between work from the late 1980s and early 1990s and contemporary