

Vester also maintains that the European left was able to enact more enduring reforms than the American radicals who were engulfed by Vietnam, assassinations, violence, and political reaction ushered in by Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.

The final section of the book concentrates upon the legacy of participatory democracy for movements such as Occupy Wall Street and already seems somewhat dated, but the editors suggest that “participatory democracy offers possibilities for theory, action, and organization that await new trial and error” (15). Jane Mansbridge argues for the importance of consensus and equality of opportunity in collectives, but she concludes that these principles are not absolutist. James Miller, on the other hand, cautions that consensus may limit change and empower the status quo; especially when dealing with the power of global capitalism. Erik Olin Wright, however, insists that social and moral progress requires utopian thought. He believes that capitalism needs to be eventually replaced by a more socialistic system, but, until that day arrives, more democratic spaces must be created on the margins of capitalistic society. In conclusion, Richard Flacks argues that the Port Huron Statement reflects the pragmatic influence of American philosopher John Dewey. Flacks asserts that we must “learn from and respond to lived experience, to be experimental and nondogmatic about issues of strategy, to be open and heterodox ideologically, to emphasize the educative character of social action, to ruse any large-scale theory of history, to question authority, to maintain organizational fluidity, to emphasize face-to-face decision meeting, to stress personal growth as a means of political validity” (238).

The contributors to this volume perceive the Port Huron Statement as a useful vehicle to address progressive social change in the twenty-first century in a nation and world where economic inequality is growing. For those who want to investigate the potential for change and participatory democracy outlined in this manifesto of the New Left, the complete text of the Port Huron Statement is reprinted. Rather than brief excerpts, the complexity of the manifesto is evident in a 25,000 word document that is both utopian and practical, calling for personal as well as societal reform and progress.

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## Recovering 1940s Horror Cinema: Traces of a Lost Decade

Mario DeGiglio-Bellemare, Charlie Ellbé, and Kristopher Woolfer, Editors. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015.

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Horror cinema from the 1940s gets no respect. It has been largely written out of histories of film in general and of the horror genre in particular. It deserves better. Such are the contentions of the scholars who put together the collection of essays in *Recovering 1940s Horror Cinema*. The established narrative of the horror film sees the 1930s as a golden age that produced such groundbreaking classics as *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), and *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). The 1940's decade is regarded as a period of decline, when the iconic terrors of the previous decade became props for Universal Studio's “monster rally” pastiches, or worse, foils for the same studio's popular comedy duo of Abbott and Costello. Some critical allowances are made for the stylishly moody body of work produced by Val Lewton at RKO Studios from 1942-1946. But Lewton's films are seen as idiosyncratically intelligent exceptions in a horror field dominated by formulaic B-movie programmers, many of them ground out with little care or expense by “Poverty Row” production companies like Monogram or PRC. Seemingly emblematic of this artistic fall from grace is the career of Bela Lugosi. Once brilliant as the original cinematic Count Dracula and the star of critically acclaimed films such as *The Black Cat* (1934), by the 1940s, Lugosi found himself increasingly confined to working in “Poverty Row” potboilers. He was well on the way to his fateful collaboration with Ed Wood. It should be noted that the contributors to this volume are focusing on the scholarly reputation of 1940's horror movies, not their popularity then or now. These films did not sink into oblivion. They have been revived repeatedly, first in double features during the 1940s, and thereafter on television. Today many of them can be found in such varied venues as the respectable precincts of Turner Classic Movies (TCM), the zany confines of monster movie shows like that of Svengoolie on MeTV, and the bargain DVD bins in any box store. The “monster rally” and haunted house movies of the 1940s inspired popular programs such as *Scooby-Doo*, *Where Are You!*

(1969). Today any ten year old recognizes Dracula, the Frankenstein Monster, the Wolfman, and the Mummy. Culturally, this is not an insignificant legacy.

The contributors to *Recovering 1940s Horror Cinema* defend their subject by making a tacit concession to the authority of traditional film scholars. Instead of making a vigorous case for the output of Universal Studios, they broaden the definition of horror film to encompass a range of genres, including gothic and psychological thrillers. This tactic is justified by the attitudes of the period. In the 1940s, studios, critics, and audiences made little distinction between films with sensational content. A violent and moody film noir might pack the same visceral punch as a vampire film, and given the cinematic prevalence of expressionistic black and white photography, both movies might look a lot alike as well. So, for the purposes of this volume, any film treating terror and the uncanny makes the grade. Hence, there is a fascinating article on *The Snake Pit* (1948), a groundbreaking exploration of life in a mental hospital. But this is a long way from *House of Frankenstein* (1944). Indeed, though periodically and rather disparagingly referenced throughout the book, there is very little said about Universal Studios and its trademark monster movies. For the scholars whose writings are collected here, the mix and match approach of Universal to its monsters in the 1940s evidently cannot compare to the glories of the 1930s. Horror must be justified elsewhere. As a result, readers of this book will learn a lot about *The Spiral Staircase* (1945), a gothic shocker about a young mute woman who is stalked by a deranged serial killer. This widening of the critical lens concerning horror in 1940's film proves quite illuminating. There is a great deal of resonance, both thematically and technically, between the conventionally supernatural films of this decade and the more ostensibly realistic noirish psychodramas. Lon Chaney Jr.'s character of Larry Talbot, wrestling despairingly against the curse of the werewolf, is every bit as much the victim of a cruel fate as the protagonist in a film noir ensnared by the wiles of a femme fatale. The essays in this book are uniformly interesting and reasonably free of academic jargon. Though hardly the last word on 1940's horror cinema, it should spur useful debate and research.

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## Sacred Land: Sherwood Anderson, Midwestern Modernism, and the Sacramental Vision of Nature

Mark Buechsel. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2014.

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The arena of American regional studies has long been dominated by the South. New England and the West have made decent showings as well; however, the Midwest—that vast stretch in the middle—has continuously been dismissed as an also ran. Many have dismissed the field by arguing that the Midwest lacks a unified regional identity or that the Middle Western states merely imitate a broader American culture. Mark Buechsel's *Sacred Land* admirably disproves many of these counterarguments, and, if for no other reason, this book is a very welcome addition to a sparsely populated field. Happily, Buechsel's book accomplishes this easily, and the majority of its pages interrogate the idea that Midwestern writers responded to the "failings of modernity" (17) with a turn to nature and sacramentalism.

Buechsel takes as his central argument the notion that modernist Midwestern writers, repulsed by the industrialism of modernity and the Protestantism of their forebears and inspired by Europe's sacramental tradition, re-appropriated the pastoral myth. He reexamines Henry Adams's fascinating metaphor of the dynamo and the virgin and asserts that the Midwesterners writing during this period envisioned a heartland more akin to medieval Europe than to mechanized America. Additionally, according to these writers, the protestant legacy of the Midwest's settlers betrayed the early Edenic promise of the region. Finally, Buechsel maintains that the sacramental vision in Midwestern writing persists beyond the modernist period and cites Jane Smiley as the representative of a generation of writers connecting "postmodernism and modernist neo-sacramentalism" (284).

The only significant drawback to this very readable book is its unbalanced structure. It is organized into ten chapters with four of these devoted entirely to Sherwood Anderson. Four of the other chapters are assigned to one author each: Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ruth Suklow, and Jane Smiley. The remaining two chapters, while again spending considerable time on Anderson, provide an instructive overview of Midwestern writers and their unity of vision.

In addition to scholars and students of Midwestern literature, this book is useful to anyone with an interest