

England found themselves ill-prepared for the hardships of life abroad. The actress, on the other hand, while not considered quite respectable, carried an aura of glamour, and was increasingly welcome in Victorian social circles. Upper class Victorian women were admitted to institutions of higher learning, but few of these educated women were able to find the employment for which they qualified.

Victorian sexuality remains a strong area of interest to present day historians. Carol Christ and Sally Mitchell re-evaluate the Victorian images of masculinity and femininity in the literature and popular magazines of the day, while F. Barry Smith takes a fresh look at Victorian sexual behavior, questioning the validity of the source material used to create the stereotype of the prudish Victorian. Part II of Barbara Kanner's excellent annotated bibliography on Victorian women completes the volume. (Part I of Kanner's work is included in *Suffer and Be Still*.)

Taken together, these articles show the Victorian female to be a complex and varied woman, with more options available than we have heretofore imagined. Yet, as Vicinus cautions, we must be careful not to replace stereotype with stereotype. The tenets of respectability and convention were ever-present in Victorian society—a burden to be borne if one submitted, or a force to be reckoned with if one rebelled. It must be remembered that the Victorian woman sketched by earlier historians is the model that the Victorians created for themselves. If that model was not an accurate reflection of women as they were, it did represent women as Victorian society wanted to believe that they were. The relationship between the ideal Victorian woman and the real Victorian woman will occupy historians for years to come.

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Black Ethos; Northern Urban Negro Life and Thought, 1890-1930, by David Gordon Nielson. West Port, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977. pp. xvii, 248. Bibliography, index. \$14.95.

During the 1890s, the few remaining black and white radicals, who attempted to create a democracy in the post-Civil War South, saw their last hopes extinguished by a counter-insurgency. As the southern states put the final touches to the system of segregation, the oppression which accompanied Jim Crow precipitated a great migration of southern blacks to the industrial cities of the North. Because blacks were forced into congested neighborhoods by racism, close physical proximity made it clear that they had a common plight and oppressor. The result was a heightened sense of "peoplehood" among black urbanites. It is the general thesis of Nielson's study that the period from 1890 to 1930 was particularly crucial in the development of a distinct Afro-American culture. Even though individual Negroes improved their

own social-economic position in the cities, "the ordinary black was still at the mudsill." He was still powerless, and awash in a world designed and controlled by hostile whites.

Nielson believes that this increased sense of distinctiveness led to the creation of a "separate system of society and economy" in the burgeoning black ghettos. While Negroes did not consciously choose a course toward cultural nationalism, the ethos of the community reflected an inherently nationalistic character even while blacks retained a basically American identity. According to the author, the ordinary Negro "was not trying to preserve a cultural heritage in his nationalism; he was building one." It is, therefore, among the poor ghetto dwellers of the Progressive Era that Nielson finds the roots of modern black nationalism. His intention is, therefore, to describe "the characteristic spirit" which permeated the "northern black urban experience" between 1890 and 1930.

Throughout the first five chapters, Nielson's success is hampered by one significant flaw. Like two pieces of a puzzle which do not fit, the author fails to couple his theme of developing black nationhood, with the "search for order" thesis which provides the broader historical backdrop for his study. This latter hypothesis, developed by historian Robert Wiebe, maintains that the major thrust in Progressive America was a rationalization of all social institutions in order to achieve predictability and control. Since whites could conceive of them in no other station, the status of blacks in this new order was to be at the bottom of the social pyramid. Even though this is a fascinating line of inquiry, Nielson never adequately explains the functional connection between the two theses. The evidence presented only indicates that white society was generally racist, and that consequently, a "mood of bitterness" emerged" in the black community. Neither proposition can, nor has been, seriously questioned by modern historians. Moreover, since widespread discrimination existed before and after the Progressive Era, it is difficult to see how that alone can explain the development of a distinctive black ethos. The problem is, at least in part, methodological. The author's chief reliance is on literary works, and only historical studies which support his thesis are utilized. This has skewed the research away that body of historical literature which could assist in putting the puzzle together.

Nielson is at his best when analyzing the internal destructiveness of the "color complex" and the "class complex" to the black community. Here the sources are excellent for the task at hand. Since blacks were rejected, and then relegated to a position at the bottom of society because of their color, blacks themselves accepted that standard with inevitably tragic results. Thus, the mulatto found himself caught between two antagonistic worlds; mothers worried whether their children would be born with "good" hair (fine), and "good" features (aquiline). These and other manifestations of self-hatred naturally took their psychological toll. Similarly, the pressure of the color line produced an agonizing class consciousness within the community. It produced distrust between lower class blacks, and those of the emergent middle class, as well as that handful in the upper echelons of soci-

ety. The need to demonstrate social distance by the more affluent, while at the same time being denied mobility in the white world, further exaggerated class friction and produced such compensatory outlets as conspicuous consumption. Moreover, class consciousness hampered any concerted effort to unify the community and doomed any potential political struggle for fundamental reform.

Even though *Black Ethos* contains little new knowledge for the Black Studies specialist, the book does provide a good summary of black consciousness during the Progressive Era, and can be read with interest by the informed public.

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The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920's, by Raymond Wolters. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. pp. viii, 370. \$16.50.

In this book, Raymond Wolters uses a much neglected aspect of American social history to link the present to the past. It is primarily an examination of some of the major controversies and rebellions which occurred on predominantly black college campuses during the 1920's. Curious glimpses of the treatment and conditions of black students in some predominantly white universities are included in the last substantial chapter. Parallels to developments of the last two decades abound throughout the work, even though no obvious attempt was made to establish any analogy. Precedents for demands by students in the 1960's to remove R.O.T.C. programs from college campuses and pressures on faculty members to be sensitive to minority groups were set by students at Howard University in 1925 and Shaw University through the closing years of that decade. The push of the 1960's and early 1970's for black studies was anteceded by similar demands by students at more than a dozen predominantly black schools and by some black graduates of predominantly white schools during the 1920's.

In the 1920's, as now, educational policies and practices tended to mirror beliefs and practices in the larger society. The overwhelming majority of black college students were in predominantly black institutions; a much smaller number attended predominantly white universities in the North. Most black colleges and universities were located in the South and were publicly supported. With the exception of Lincoln University of Missouri, those in the North were private with large portions of their budgets contributed by white sources.

Curricula and staffs were tailored to conform to demands and expectations of white politicians, donors and the local citizenry. Deviation from the norm often caused retribution. Nathan B. Young, for example, was credited with transforming Florida A & M College from a third rate post-secondary

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