



Schlabach, Elizabeth Schroeder *Along the Streets of Bronzeville: Black Chicago's Literary Landscape* Champaign: University of Illinois Press 192 pp., \$45.00, ISBN 978-0252037825 Publication Date: September 2013

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suggests that Black Hawk strategically employed a nonlinear chronology in order to mark distinctions between the campaigns in which he acted as a sanctioned Sauk war leader and those that he entered individually. The substitution of the original transcription's exclamation points with "more modest punctuation" (xi) also allows the Sauk leader's voice to resonate more clearly with modern readers. The explanatory footnotes throughout both narratives provide a remarkable depth of historical commentary, including extra contextual information, pertinent details, and astute interpretations of obscure passages.

Benn's concise yet informative introductions successfully position Black Hawk and Apeš's voices together in a stimulating and cohesive single volume. His seamless weaving of the primary authors' texts with global and local perspectives on the war brings indigenous wartime involvement onto the central historical stage and, at the same time, gives readers the tools with which to draw broader significances from the men's personal narratives. He also provides guidance on how to grasp the meanings embedded in each man's narrative style. Perhaps Benn could have further explored the importance of these texts' removal-era production, though this omission is understandable, given the text's specific War of 1812 focus. Benn ultimately concludes by putting the vibrant and enduring voices of Black Hawk and Apeš into the broader historical context of indigenous people having "retained their cultural identities" and "adjusted to evolving challenges and opportunities," despite "the baleful legacies of the contact experience over the past five hundred years" (122). Though of general interest to scholars of early America and Native North America, this volume also offers an outstanding opportunity for undergraduates to access indigenous voices in a text that places indigenous people at the center of history-making.

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**Along the Streets of Bronzeville:
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In her recent book, *Along the Streets of Bronzeville: Black Chicago's Literary Landscape*, Elizabeth Schroeder Schlabach (assistant professor of history at Earlham College) recovers the fascinating history of the Chicago Black Renaissance, re-placing Chicago's Bronzeville as America's epicenter of black culture in the mid-twentieth century. Schlabach argues that the South Side's African American institutions and streetscapes shaped the entire artistic movement. According to the author, Bronzeville's African American artists presented "black reality from the vantage point of African Americans in Bronzeville" (x), with a distinctively Midwestern conceptualization of aesthetics and space.

Throughout this history, Schlabach explores the cultural impact of black writers (e.g., Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Walker, Alice Browning, and Fern Gayden); visual artists (e.g., Richmond Barthe, Margaret Taylor Gross [Burroughs], William Carter, Eldzier Cortor, Charles Davis, Ramon Gabriel, Archibald Motley, and Gordon Parks); and musicians (e.g., Earl Hines, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie), but also cultural institutions, such as newspapers (e.g., the *Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Whip*, the *Chicago Bee*, *Negro Digest*, *Ebony Magazine*, and *Jet*) and community centers (e.g., the Hall Branch Library, the South Side Writers Group, and the South Side Community Art Center). Schlabach's project, therefore, contributes both to the field of African American cultural history and to theories of race and geography. Reading visual, literary, and popular texts, the author redefines the relationship between place and artistry. Building on the fragmented scholarship on black Chicago's history and literary history (by Adam Green, Davarian Baldwin, and Madhy Dubey, for example), the author offers a fresh

perspective by arguing that Chicago's black aesthetic production was defined by geographic continuities.

Chapter 1, "From Black Belt to Bronzeville," explores the South Side's geography. The author charts the interplay of race, location, and culture through Bronzeville's two main intersections: the "Stroll" district, at the intersection of 35th and State Street; and the intersection at 47th and South Parkway, home to the Savoy Ballroom, the Regal Theater, and South Center Department Store. The author masterfully demonstrates that Bronzeville's urban geography shaped Chicago Black Renaissance artists' interpretation of black life.

Chapter 2, "The South Side Community Art Center and South Side Writers Group," is a fascinating history of these two intellectual centers, which sustained the artistry of many Chicago Black Renaissance artists, such as Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks. Schlabach argues that these two centers were not only committed to, but also conditioned by, the people, life experiences, and urban spaces of Bronzeville. The cultural aesthetics they developed were distinctively Chicagoan and different from those of the Harlem Renaissance, painting the "normal" experience of the black common man, "juxtapos[ing] the sacred with the profane, street hustlers with businessmen, prostitutes with ministers, merging real-life experiences with the imagination—documenting the African American in the American Scene" (49).

Chapter 3, "Policy, Creativity and Bronzeville's Dreams," explores policy gambling as performance art and economic support for Black Chicago's artists. The author shows that policy kings and queens not only supported local cultural landmarks, such as the Wabash YMCA, the *Chicago Defender* Charities, the Bud Billiken Picnic, and the South Side Community Arts Center, but also influenced the art of many Bronzeville artists.

Chapter 4, "Two Bronzeville Autobiographies," explores the autobiographical works of Gwendolyn Brooks's *Report from Part One* and Richard Wright's *Black Boy (American Hunger)*, as conversations between the writers and Bronzeville's

residents and places. Schlabach argues that Wright and Brooks were typical South Siders and, precisely because they lived among South Siders, understood place and consciousness in the setting of Bronzeville's urban spaces.

Chapter 5, "Kitchenettes," is a study comparing Richard Wright's 1941 photographic essay *12 Million Black Voices* and his novel *The Outsider* with Gwendolyn Brooks's 1945 poetry collection *A Street of Bronzeville* and her 1953 novel *Maud Martha*. The author argues that Wright and Brooks viewed the kitchenette apartment as a symbol of black life, materializing "the isolation wrought by urban segregation and the unkept promises of migration" (117). Finally, Schlabach revises Chicago's Black Renaissance narrative of decline by showing that the experience of Bronzeville's residents during this period was not one of victory followed by demise. Instead, Schlabach shows, it was a "contradictory blend of expansion, progress, and stagnation" (xix).

Along the Streets of Bronzeville is a compelling and comprehensive history of Chicago's Black Renaissance. Along with her solid research and masterful prose, Schlabach shares many illustrations and archival documents to give life to this vibrant history of Bronzeville. All scholars interested in the history of black Chicago, African American cultural history, and literary history at large should read this book.

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Joseph, Gilbert M., and Jürgen Buchenau

Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century

Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press

252 pp., \$23.95,
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Yale's Gilbert Joseph and UNC-Charlotte's Jürgen Buchenau offer little that is earth-shaking, fresh, or innovative in this review of the Mexican Revolution—and that is precisely why every student of the Mexican Revolution should possess a copy of this work by two of the most well-known scholars of modern Mexico. This is a work that draws together all of the latest and highest-quality work on the subject. As a result, those who seek to contribute to the field will see all of the strengths and weaknesses of the research of the last thirty years laid out before them.

Mexico's Once and Future Revolution is a readable, well-organized overview of the 1910 revolution, from its foundations to the presidential election of 2012 and the meaning of the revolution in the present. The introduction establishes the importance of the revolution to Mexico and the world, and chapter 1 moves on to discuss the foundation of discontent in Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century. Chapter 2 draws on the Arizona school of research on Porfirio Díaz, offering a nuanced view of the dictator's accomplishments and failures.

Chapter 3 explores the rise and fall of Francisco Madero's leadership of the revolution, his brief presidency, and the factions that agitated first for and then against him. It transitions well into chapter 4, "The Violent Climax of the Revolution," and a focus on the period from 1920 to 1940 in chapters 5 and 6. Those two chapters, in particular, highlight the focus on identity and state formation so prevalent in the new scholarship of the Mexican Revolution and the move away from the portrayal of the leaders of that period as sinners, simpletons, or saints.

Chapter 7 contains the standard review of the "Mexican Miracle," with attending questions about the effectiveness and depth of that 1940–1968 economic and cultural renaissance. This is followed, in chapter 8, with a highly compact review of Mexico's economic collapse, transition to the free market, and political shift away from the ruling PRI party and toward a more effective multiparty system. The book offers a conclusion that looks at

the memory and meaning of the revolution for varied groups, from student protestors to indigenous rebels, Chicano artists, and middle-class consumers.

The book is a masterful compilation of the best and newest scholarship on the Mexican Revolution. From its sifting of revisionist historians to its heavy focus on the new cultural historians, the work is a portable reflection of the entire field of the 1910 revolution. Perhaps the best sign of this important function of the work is the excellent bibliographic essay. Organized according to chronological themes, the majority of the most important works on Mexico from 1850 to the present are found in the essay. The essay is also useful because scholars looking for their niche will notice that some areas—such as the section on the economic impact of modernization—offer few new works since the mid- and early 1980s. By contrast, other areas, such as the cultural and political history of the Porfirio Díaz era, occupy pages and include dozens of recent monographs.

As useful as the work is, it is not without some minor faults. The book promises a look at the roots of the revolution in the Mexico of Benito Juárez, which it only thinly provides. The presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas earns its own chapter, but subsequent presidents fade into passing mentions, and the thirty-two years from 1968 to 2000 are compacted into a single chapter. Although the book aims to explore the effects of the 1910 revolution, it skimps on the period from 1940 to 2000 and leaves the reader short on the topic. Also, though some areas, such as culture and politics, are well covered, areas such as the intersection of revolution and religion take a back seat, and non-Catholics are invisible in the work.

Nevertheless, upper-division undergraduate classes on the Mexican Revolution will find the book accessible, graduate students will find it a fitting beginning point for their first-year reading on the topic, and established scholars will find it an organized review that they will want to keep on hand as a quick reference. The book does not replace proven standards