

style and combination of worldviews . . . contains the possibility of a synthesis between selfish individualism and group responsibility that could provide an instructive moral vision for the entire society."

The bulk of this book analyzes select aspects of black culture for traits that would define such a unique ideology. In African proverbs, slave folk-tales, and blues music, Henry finds a distinctive "style and ethos." Several prominent figures and events from Nat Turner to the Watts Riot are offered as evidence of the mix of religion and politics in black culture or the importance of the "bad nigger" as a hero, an expression of manhood and liberation. Marcus Garvey and Martin Luther King, Jr., are portrayed as adapters of the Puritan jeremiad to black values, producing both a unique political style and a potential goal of liberating all oppressed people. The book culminates in an analysis of Jesse Jackson's campaigns, which the author sees as containing the style and themes of African-American culture and as an effort to recapture the "moral hegemony of the Civil Rights era."

Henry supports these ideas by citing other works on Afro-American culture and values. This methodology is at once a strength and central weakness of the book. That quite a few works are abstracted makes this work a handy introduction to the literature on black consciousness and cultural uniqueness. But such is Henry's emphasis on the writings of others that those authors often become the topic of a subchapter, and a coherent and clear development of his own thought is obscured. The reliance on other writings also leaves many key ideas resting on little more than the authority of other generalizations, often themselves drawn from abstract or theoretical works.

Historians will also be troubled by the very selective presentation of figures and events from the black past, sometimes arbitrary interpretations of these (e.g., Frederick Douglass as a classic example of the "bad nigger" with no reference to his many assimilative efforts), and the overall paucity of historical facts. This is not a history of black politics or political figures. But the nationalistic and often radical perspectives it synthesizes have been an important part of black scholarship since the late 1960s, and for teachers unfamiliar with that literature, this book could provide a useful orientation.

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**Milton Meltzer. *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? The Great Depression, 1929-1933*. New York & Oxford, Facts on File: 1991. Reprint of 1969 edition. Pp. x, 130. Cloth, \$16.95.**

The Great Depression was one of the more harrowing experiences in American history. Most Americans were affected either directly or indirectly by the collapse of the Stock Market in 1929. By the time of the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, more than thirty percent of the nation's workforce was unemployed. Men, women, and children faced deprivation that would affect them for several generations. For African Americans and farmers in the nation's corn belt, the Depression came much earlier. And yet, as Milton Meltzer points out in this brief but excellent social history survey of the Great Depression, the top five percent of the nation were not affected at all. Moreover, where one might have supposed that there would have been fervent political activity, most Americans had internalized the work ethic and the idea of individualism so well that they more likely blamed themselves rather than the system for their economic misfortune.

Milton Meltzer has done American history survey courses (as well as advanced high school history classes) an immeasurable service in producing this volume. Not only does he succinctly provide reasons for the Depression, but through his uses of ordinary people's observations and popular culture as well as newspapers and weekly news magazines accounts, students should walk away from this book knowing more about the underlying causes of our modern day welfare state and the reasons why we still can't, as they say, "get it right."

The book is divided into fourteen very short chapters that first show how and what caused the Depression and then the impact that the Depression had on the nation's people. In this time when American history continues to undergo a massive narrative change so as to be as inclusive as possible

of all the various constituencies that make up the nation, Meltzer has proven that it can be done and done well.

Within these pages, students will find what the Depression's impact was on African Americans, women, farmers, factory workers, and the middle class who got hooked into the new wave of advertising, installment credit, and consumerism. Throughout the narrative, Meltzer provides snippets of essays and commentaries from distinguished writers such as Edmund Wilson, John Dos Passos, and Gordon Parks, as well as popular music that was composed by Florence Reece and Woody Guthrie, among others. But for the most part it is the people themselves to whom Meltzer gives much space, thereby enabling students to read and hear the words of the Kentucky mine worker or the wonderful account of the young hobo who travelled throughout the South and then on to California in search of work. Meltzer does not slight the ways in which families coped with the Depression, especially women who were abandoned by their husbands who could no longer support them. There are many specialized studies that are appearing that deal with gender in the Depression, but the overview here is a good starting point for students who might want to do theme papers on that topic.

A word of caution must be given here about the bibliography at the end of the book. To my mind it is very thin. Over the last twenty years there has been a wave of studies on the Great Depression covering all of the areas that are looked at in this book. Yet I found that nothing is provided on the intellectual history that figures so importantly during that period (Richard Pells's work, *Racial Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression years*, should have been cited.) Undoubtedly, students are going to wonder why there was not more political upheaval and there are books such as Pells's that address that very matter. Likewise, Raymond Wolter's and John B. Kirby's work on African Americans in the Depression and during the Roosevelt era should have been mentioned.

In the end, this is a work, despite the bibliographic caveat, that is well worth presenting to students. Meltzer has deftly woven in an understanding of current events in an effort to get students to better understand the meaning of the Great Depression. But despite the possibility that the subject may be very depressing to address and somewhat complicated, the best part of this book is its demonstration of how all Americans were affected and how they coped. For that we are in Professor Meltzer's debt for this wonderfully lucid and moving account.

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**Carole Ann Pearce. *Amelia Earhart*. New York and Oxford: Facts on File Publications, 1988. Pp. 169. Cloth, \$16.95.**

In *Amelia Earhart*, Carol Ann Pearce has written a brief biography of the famed pioneer in American aviation. Pearce is a free lance writer who produced this work for the "Makers of America" series of biographies, under the general editorship of John Anthony Scott, an historian. The series is primarily for young and general readers.

The book is written in an easy to read style and focuses primarily on Amelia Earhart, a pioneering woman, in a field and a time when women were not thought capable of doing things like flying airplanes. There are no footnotes, which may bother some educators, but there is a bibliography. This is not a scholarly book about Earhart or her times, but it is an interesting book probably most useful in introducing high school students to the topic of women's history or aviation. Young women in particular might appreciate the difference between today's society and the twenties and thirties in terms of a woman's options.

There is a general theme to the book of Earhart showing the world that women can, and should, do the daring, dangerous, and foolish things that men do. Her list of accomplishments and awards takes up two pages. She was the first woman to solo the Atlantic by air in 1932 and the first person to solo over both the Atlantic and Pacific. Earhart also set altitude and speed records at