

Elliott J. Gorn, ed. *The McGuffey Readers: Selections from the 1879 Edition*. Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998. Pp. xv, 202. Cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 0-312-1766-6. Paper, \$7.50; ISBN 0-312-13398-7.

This compact and, in its paperback version, very affordable volume deserves serious consideration by college teachers and those teaching advanced high school history courses. It is part of Bedford/St. Martin's intriguing new Series in History and Culture, an effort to make available important documents in United States history, with introductory, interpretive essays by the books' editors.

McGuffey's Readers are highly significant in the cultural history of the United States. For most of the nineteenth century, no other volume, save the King James Bible, had greater readership. Between fifty and one hundred million were published--no one knows the exact number--and each volume passed through scores of hands to be memorized and recited cover to cover. The readers reflected, legitimated, and to some extent probably reproduced particular aspects of contemporary life while silencing or marginalizing alternatives. They offer our students a powerful glimpse into American culture and its construction.

Gorn's introduction is brilliant. In just over thirty pages of lucid prose, he sketches the life of William Holmes McGuffey and his readers, explores the social context in which the readers flourished, and cogently critiques their message and their pedagogy. His brief bibliography and the endnotes to his introduction reveal broad, current reading in relevant literature.

The selections are drawn from the *First* through the *Sixth McGuffey's Eclectic Reader*, the third edition of the series originally published in the 1830s. Rather than presenting the selections in the random order that McGuffey favored, Gorn has arranged the selections according to twelve themes that emerge from the volumes: childhood, family, virtues, vices, character, education, men and women, religion, work ethic, citizenship, history, and literature. The themes clearly increase in sophistication from the first to the last, and reflect the increasing difficulty and sophistication of the readers themselves from the first to the sixth reader. The First Reader appears here only once; the other readers are represented between a dozen and nearly two dozen times, with the Sixth Reader carrying the greatest burden.

To capture the fullness of the cultural vision constructed by the readers, students need to consider more than those twelve themes, for the silences the readers enforce are as important as the images they provide. Social class, ethnicity, and race, for example, do not exist in the world that McGuffey created. Though flourishing in an era of vast conflicts--Reconstruction, labor warfare, industrialism, socialism, feminism, monopoly capitalism, immigration, urbanization, and other processes, ideas, and movements--the only conflicts that emerge here are personal, not social, moral conflicts, whose resolutions are never thorny or ambiguous. Meanwhile, the uniformity of the images McGuffey offers misleadingly imply a cultural conformity

that never existed in the nineteenth century. The pedagogy embedded in the readers discouraged inquiring into alternative ideas.

All social history, popular culture, or history of childhood courses might profit from this volume. It provides highly accessible insights into images and ideas that millions of children consumed. Through its introduction, it also provides insights into the silences and omissions that helped shape their consciousness. Gorn is on the mark when he describes the Readers as "Educating America."

University of Georgia

Ronald E. Butchart

Robert D. Schulzinger. *U.S. Diplomacy Since 1900.* New York, NY & Oxford, UK, 1998. Fourth edition. Pp. ix, 437. Cloth, \$21.95; ISBN 0-19-510631-8.

Robert Schulzinger has done it again. In this, the fourth edition of his survey of United States diplomacy in the twentieth century, he has provided a text remarkable in its combination of breadth and readability. In this book's tightly packed sixteen chapters, Schulzinger manages to provide a classic account of United States foreign relations since the turn of the century.

Schulzinger begins his book with a look at "The Setting of American Foreign Policy." In addition to an examination of makers of foreign policy and the influence of "outsiders" on national policy, this chapter provides a retrospective look at the century. This is one of the most important contributions of the book. Benefiting from hindsight possible only at the end of the century, Schulzinger is able to assess one hundred years of American foreign relations. It has been, as he points out, an "Age of Interdependence and Imperialism."

The twin themes of imperialism and interdependence serve as connective tissue drawing the whole work together. Schulzinger takes a balanced look at the policy with which the United States pursued its imperial interests, both political and economic, in the rest of the world. Through this pursuit, he notes, the United States created a sense of interdependence between this country and those with which we have dealt.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this book is its readability and balance. Schulzinger manages to analyze complex issues in accessible prose, which he packs with anecdotes certain to enliven the most torpid reader. The balanced nature of the work is clear in that he examines various perspectives of controversial issues. He considers numerous influences in foreign relations, from revisionism to domestic politics and public opinion. Finally, he provides frequent historiographical analyses of issues that foster comparison between his assessments of particular topics and those of other historians.

This latest edition of Schulzinger's book benefits from an illustrious pedigree. His earlier editions of the text have been long recognized as among the most