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Review of *Sombreros and Motorcycles in a Newer South: The Politics of Aesthetics in South Carolina's Tourism Industry* by P. Nicole King

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The area might have stayed like this had it not been for two hurricanes, Eloise in 1975 and Frederic in 1979, which destroyed many of the small cottages and businesses along the shore. Instead of rebuilding, locals sold their property to developers who constructed high-rise condominium complexes that blocked the view of the beach and damaged the marine environment and whose new residents helped create nightmare traffic jams. Condos and start-up cities brought a new type of person to the region—so-called snowbirds—retirees who did not approve of “[r]edneck” accommodations and who wanted to recreate the region they had just left (p. 105).

Jackson is at his best when discussing how the locals dealt with these changes. Leaders faced the difficult decision of whether to preserve their local culture or to accept the economic benefits these new tourists and residents provided. In some cities, officials forced new developers to revamp local infrastructure before granting construction permits, while distancing the region from the Redneck Riviera nickname. Other locations pushed back against large-scale development completely, passing height restrictions on buildings, thus eliminating condominium construction. Despite the changes, residents and longtime visitors clung hard to their traditions of fishing, hard drinking at notorious establishments like the Flora-Bama, and partying to favorite local music acts like the Trashy White Band.

Organized chronologically, this work extends from the 1930s, through the rise of Panama City, Florida, as a spring break mecca in the 1950s and 1960s (and the controversies that came with it), all the way to the effects of the 2010 British Petroleum *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig disaster on fishing and tourism. Jackson eloquently employs personal insights and quotations from everyone from residents to rapper Snoop Dogg. If there is a fault with the book, it lies with the author’s close ties to the region that, at times, make the narrative feel like Jackson is pining for days gone by. This small criticism aside, *The Rise and Decline of the Redneck Riviera* is a significant addition to the long ignored but growing field of southern recreation studies.

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Sombreros and Motorcycles in a Newer South: The Politics of Aesthetics in South Carolina’s Tourism Industry. By P. Nicole King. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. Pp. [xiv], 255. \$55.00, ISBN 978-1-61703-251-6.)

In this intriguing study, P. Nicole King goes in search of a “Newer South” that speaks to her experiences and those of younger generations of southerners for whom the South of Jim Crow and the civil rights movement is a foreign country where they are merely tourists (p. 3). In that pursuit, King highlights two sites in South Carolina whose significance, in her telling, comes from their uniqueness and resistance to traditional scholarly labels. Both South of the Border—a bizarre (and, for many, tasteless and offensive) assortment of restaurants, lodgings, arcades,

and gift shops situated on Interstate 95 near the state line—and Atlantic Beach—a once vibrant but now troubled African American beach town—have “weathered the trauma of progress” that enveloped the South over the past several decades (p. 3). In telling their stories, King deploys innovative conceptual tools that should influence future studies of leisure and popular culture.

King divides the book roughly into two parts, which contain chapters on the histories and cultural aesthetics of South of the Border and Atlantic Beach, respectively. These sections are preceded by an informative first chapter on the meteoric rise of South Carolina’s tourism industry in the second half of the twentieth century. King effectively demonstrates the role tourists and tourism played (and continue to play) in shaping the state’s contentious racial politics and its citizens’ continuing struggles for social and economic justice. Her examination of the politics of leisure in this chapter promises to become an increasingly central theme in studies of southern politics and society.

Given its style and structure, this book seems well suited for use in college-level courses in southern and American studies. Scholars will appreciate King’s thorough research and penetrating theoretical insights, while students will be drawn to these compelling histories and the provocative set of issues they raise. Is South of the Border’s ironic play on racial and ethnic stereotypes harmless and, perhaps, a healthy sign of a South growing comfortable with its diversity? Or is it a modern-day roadside minstrel show? How does the story of Atlantic Beach speak to the losses black southerners experienced as a result of desegregation and help explain many peoples’ ambivalence toward the fruits of progress in the decades since? Are efforts by white public officials to crack down on Atlantic Beach’s annual Bike Week rooted in widely shared “color-blind” concerns over decency and public safety, or is it another example in a pattern of suppression of black leisure whose roots run deep in the American soil—or, in this case, sand? From these sites, key themes of a “Newer South” come into focus, including the emergence of a tourism industry and a low-wage, service-oriented economy and the struggle over the meaning and marketing of southern culture in the wake of the civil rights revolution. *Sombreros and Motorcycles in a Newer South: The Politics of Aesthetics in South Carolina’s Tourism Industry* forces us to stop and inspect places on the southern map that most scholars of the South tend to drive past. Thanks to King’s sharp analysis and insights, future students of southern culture will be sure to take the business of pleasure more seriously.

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Life and Labor in the New New South. Edited by Robert H. Zieger. Working in the Americas. (Gainesville and other cities: University Press of Florida, c. 2012. Pp. [xii], 363. \$74.95, ISBN 978-0-8130-3795-0.)

Expanding on earlier volumes that he edited in 1991 and 1997, the late Robert H. Zieger’s *Life and Labor in the New New South* presents a fresh

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