

Ellsberg, meanwhile, had gone underground for twelve days while the FBI searched for him as the source of leaking the top-secret *Papers*. If convicted of a dozen Federal felony charges Ellsberg faced a possible 115 years in prison. When the FBI issued a warrant for his arrest, Ellsberg reported to Federal court for arraignment. The judge presiding over Ellsberg's trial eventually dismissed the government's case in light its suppression of evidence, its destruction of relevant documents, and its invasion of the patient-physician relationship. While the trial was going on, newspapers revealed that weeks earlier the judge had met with President Nixon and his adviser John Ehrlichman. The judge and Ehrlichman even met a second time. Ironically, the Attorney General who had indicted Ellsberg, John Mitchell, went to prison for his crimes in the Watergate affair.

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'This book,' Ellsberg explains, 'represents my continuing effort – far from complete – to understand my country's war on Vietnam, and my own part in it...' (vii-viii). Of the book's three subjects, one, *The Papers*, is straightforward but a second, the system of secrecy and lying that dominated the formulation and execution of Vietnam policy, because of its complexity, continues to attract a multitude of scholarly examinations. Thirty years after the events, Ellsberg still does not understand fully his transformation from supporter to opponent of the war. Many Americans likewise still wonder how a generation of national leaders could have made so many decisions that produced such disastrous results. Ellsberg's book reads easily but its descriptive nature cannot provide the answer to why responsible leaders acted the way they did and devised the policies they did. As early as the summer of 1965 John McNaughton's wife understood clearly.

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Kirse Granat May, *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California Image in Popular Culture, 1955-1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002; xi + 243 pages, 12 black and white illustrations; ISBN: 0-8078-5362-3, paper, \$18.95; 0-8078-5362-3, cloth, \$49.95.

That few if any American states have received as much attention as California is hardly surprising. Its size, history and influence; its status as both host to many leading educational institutions and source of much of the nation's media and cultural output; and its correspondingly distinctive place within the public imagination – all have helped attract scholarly and popular concern. Carey McWilliams' *California: The Great Exception* (1949) and Kevin Starr's multi-volume history, *Americans and the California Dream* (1973 to date), are only some of the most renowned works in what is therefore a sizeable field. An appreciative blurb from Starr features on the back cover of Kirse Granat May's *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California Image in Popular Culture, 1955-1965* and does so deservedly, since hers is an insightful addition to a distinguished literature.

As its subtitle suggests, May's book addresses itself to popular images of the state ('the appearance of California – both the place and the ideal' [4]), and more particularly of California youth, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Such images offer keys, she suggests, not only to popular understandings of the post-war American experience but also to public 'values and beliefs' (2). They do so in part because behind them lay an 'explosion of media coverage [and an] idealization of California as both model and magnet' which constituted 'an exercise in regional myth-making' (15). Associating her own work with the development of a 'cultural studies' devoted to examining 'how images produce meanings and shape perceptions' (2), May argues that an analysis of California's popular imagery enables her to 'challenge the view of the fifties as an age of conformity and stagnation, alter the picture of the revolutionary sixties, and reveal the critical links that bind the apparently different decades' (1).

Following an introduction setting out the scope, objectives and major arguments of the study, *Golden State, Golden Youth* adopts a broadly thematic approach. The opening chapters discuss popular media rehearsals of the state as a suburban Garden of Eden and larger-than-life Disneyland, before moving on to rehearse California's close association with sun and surf, beaches and the beautiful. Sources drawn on here range from real estate advertising and popular magazine articles, editorials and imagery, via television ('The Mickey Mouse Club') and film (the *Gidget* and beach party movies), to the popular sounds encapsulated by the phrase 'surf music' (notably Dick Dale, Jan and Dean, and The Beach Boys). Through the latter 1950s and into the early 1960s, May notes, the dominant imagery of the Golden State was positive and confident, associating California with promise, prosperity, progress and youth, and making of it 'a Mecca for baby boom families' (4).

But as *Golden State, Golden Youth* moves into its latter chapters – chronologically associated with the mid-to-late-1960s – so May finds that the generally sunny and optimistic tone of the images, themes and materials previously rehearsed becomes supplanted by harsher and more strident vibrations. Whatever anxieties might once have been attached to juvenile delinquency and such mid-1950s figures as movie star rebel-without-a-cause James Dean, by the mid-1960s their challenge to bourgeois, nuclear domesticity had paled in the face of a burgeoning, politicized youth movement and deepening social confrontation – all in the very heartland of a once suburban Eden. Two events in particular May identifies as key to and symbolic of this change in the cultural weather. Firstly, the Free Speech Movement at the Berkeley campus of the University of California which in 1964 'challenged one of the most powerful and reassuring myths of the postwar period, altering the images of California's young people that had pervaded popular culture' (155). Secondly, the Watts riot the following summer: a 'racial eruption' which, May tells us, 'marked the end of California as the happy harbinger of things to come' (7).

In fact, it was the distinctively happy nature of the prospect rather than the state's status as a harbinger that the uprising in Watts threw into question. For as May makes

clear, popular dissent at differing levels of the class structure not only exposed the fragile and constructed nature of the state's squeaky-clean public image; it also provided the raw material for a politics of anxiety, resentment and fear that would make California as cutting-edge for the politics of scarcity as it had been for the politics of abundance a decade earlier. The state remained, that is, a 'compass for the future' but now it simply 'offered a bleak example of what lay ahead for America' (166) – and in more ways than one. 'Fears of future rioting and anxiety about campus morals,' for example, 'pushed the state to the right politically' (166). Latched onto in 1966 by successful state politicians like Republican gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan, California's internal conflicts fostered a 'new conservatism' that would not only help carry Richard Nixon to the White House in 1968 but whose 'political aftershocks [would] continue to be felt' into the early 21st century (192).

May's association of dominant popular imagery with not only Watts and the Free Speech Movement but also earlier events and long-term demographic, economic and institutional trends is symptomatic of her underlying concern with an issue of long-term relevance for both American Studies and Cultural Studies more broadly: the relationship between culture and society. In its theoretical and methodological approach to the relationship, though, *Golden State, Golden Youth* is – for good and ill – less future-oriented than the boosterist claims often made for its California teen subjects. The author may position her approach rhetorically beyond the anxious tones of the Frankfurt School's 'culture industry' thesis; she may describe her focus on 'California imagery' as offering 'a social and historical perspective' that marks a 'departure from traditional [sic] postmodern or feminist critiques' (67). Yet the main thrust of *Golden State, Golden Youth* owes less, perhaps, to the American variant on British Cultural Studies pioneered by Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall than to the work of American Studies scholars Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx and others conventionally (and too simplistically) identified as the 'myth and symbol' school.

Not surprisingly, given these auspices, May's book is particularly concerned with – and good at – identifying socio-cultural complexes and reading public beliefs and values into (and out of) a range of popular cultural forms: from print to television, from the visual to the musical. If the interpretation offered of early Beach Boys music, for example, downplays or ignores those aspects that do not fit into the dominant 'surf music' image, then it makes a fine case for the claim that their music 'tapped into a rich vein of golden hopes and ... played upon an existing set of values and ideas about California's kids' (114). At the same time, though, the approaches adopted in *Golden State, Golden Youth* more fruitfully identify and illustrate such socio-cultural complexes than they fully explain or interpret them. To say that through the changing representations of the protagonists in *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Gidget* 'the evolution from juvenile delinquent to an idealized version of California youth can be traced ... matching that of the culture at large' (66), or that 'the connections between these film images ... reflect the changing mores of American culture' (68), is to raise as many questions as answers.

As preceding quotations should have made clear, it is not that May fails to provide a broad interpretive framework or a specific thesis. The 1950s, she says, were not solely 'an age of conformity and stagnation.' The 1960s were not as revolutionary as they may have appeared. And the two were linked in critical ways (1). Yet in *Golden State, Golden Youth* the nature of such connections takes on a particular quality. The cultural dynamic at work in California between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s involved, May implies, a kind of socio-psychological return of the repressed: the state's initially optimistic mood and image being in part the means and in part the result of a collective 'denial [of] the problems that emerged in the sixties with a more satisfying and less threatening picture of its youth' (4). California, in this sense, served (as more broadly the west had done for previous generations) 'as a safety valve for generational fears' (5) – another familiar American Studies myth (in Henry Nash Smith's definition, an 'intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image') that casts shadows even as it illuminates.³

In its defence, if such readings raise as many questions as answers then in doing so they also provides a valuable agenda for further debate. Indeed, one of the great strengths of *Golden State, Golden Youth* is that it places cultural, social and political developments within a common framework, enabling light to be thrown beyond the remit of the book itself on much of its subject matter. Anyone with more than a passing interest in the music of The Beach Boys may reflect, for example, on the extent to which Disneyland could have provided a ready-made cultural lexicon for their early hits. In pedagogic terms, meanwhile, Kirse Granat May's book will prove welcome to students and teachers of American popular culture and media history. Its prose style, vocabulary and thematic form are likely to make it attractive to an undergraduate audience, while the primary resources it pulls down from the pop culture attic for sustained attention ought to appeal to any teacher or researcher ever prone to spates of California Dreaming.

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Emily J. Teipe, *America's First Veterans and the Revolutionary War Pensions*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002. vi + 245 pp.; ISBN: 0-7734-7100-6; \$109.95, cloth.

After the initial *rage militaire* of the early phases of the American Revolutionary War, the patriot cause was faced with a serious shortage of manpower. Realising that appeals to abstract and vague notions of liberty and rights were not enough to convince most Americans to risk their lives for independence, the Continental Congress reluctantly agreed to offer a number of financial incentives to those enlisting in the army. One of these incentives was the granting of limited pensions. Traditionally,

3. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), xi.