

tory,” then do her heirs, in effect, own at least a part of “history” by owning the copyrights to her novel? Can anyone *own* “history”? Especially if that narrative, which has become “history,” does not bear witness to holistic historical realities—for example, the brutality and widespread sexual misconduct that were real parts of slavery in the American South. Kreyling’s inquiries into affidavits that supported either the plaintiffs or defendants, into the original judge’s decision, and into the lawsuit’s broader implications involve questions of what is or is not allowed to survive as “history” and who decides which narratives may actually reach the public.

In his concluding chapter, “Nostalgia, Alternate History, and The Future of Southern Memory,” Michael Kreyling moves quickly through briefer discussions of more recent selected works to illustrate his concept of the “postsouthern.” By including commentary on books like Tony Horwitz’s *Confederates in the Attic* and films like *CSA: Confederate States of America* and *Sherman’s March*, and how they might relate to portrayals in other works like Charles Johnson’s novel *Middle Passage*, he provides a range of examples of modern cultural/ artistic works—again, books and films—that are interpreting (or toying with) the intricacies of “memory” and “history” in the South. Because re-imagining the past and ostensibly the future are both possible, works ranging from *Middle Passage* to *CSA* offer a plethora of ideas to consider about truth, actuality, and meaning.

*The South That Wasn’t There: Postsouthern Memory and History* wraps itself around an extremely nebulous subject and can provide a literate reader with some insights. While the difficulty of the book lies in Kreyling’s heavily layered presentation of ideas and wide-ranging cited examples, the reward of engaging it fully becomes apparent with time and continued reading. For example, in the first nine pages of his chapter about *Beloved*, he barely mentions the novel at all, yet what first appeared tangential made sense in context when applied to the larger discussion about the novel. To be clear, this isn’t beach reading; it is a heavily exemplified and well-supported juxtaposition of literary explication, historical inquest, psychological study, sociological study, and legal quandary. No easy answers appear, and Kreyling doesn’t seem to be seeking any. The question is: what is he trying to accomplish? Perhaps he answers by writing, “If southern memory has a future, it would seem to be among the simulacra that crowd in upon the omnimediated experience of the present” (194). In our media-heavy world, our understanding of the South’s past may well be handed over to the decision-making of novelists, filmmakers, and other cultural contributors who create and distribute the approximations—the “simulacra”—that we consume, and often believe.

—Foster Dickson

Vogel, Shane. *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009.

In *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, Shane Vogel re-presents the “everynight life” of the Harlem Renaissance to offer an incisive examination of the ways various cultural workers activated the time and space of cabaret to critique, and even reject, normativizing discourses

and narratives deployed to restrict the performative possibilities of race and sexuality in the early decades of the twentieth century. A logic, an ideology of racial uplift and sexual respectability informed much of the theoretical underpinnings and cultural production of the Harlem Renaissance. Vogel turns to the work of the “Cabaret School”—described as “A subterranean literary tradition within the Harlem Renaissance that provided new ways of performing, witnessing, and writing the racial and sexual self”—to think through the ways its members reimagined cabaret to resist and make new meanings, new narratives against such ideological, discursive, and performative configurations (5). Indeed, at stake in this eloquent and engaging study is a consideration and recuperation of the “critique function” of Harlem’s vibrant nightlife.

At the center of that nightlife were the many cabarets that promised patrons an opportunity to eat, drink, cavort, and experience performances within their intimate confines. Chapter 1, in part, traces a history of American cabaret. The Chat Noir in the Montmartre district of Paris (which opened in 1881), along with urban, working-class concert saloons, “black and tan” saloons, and rural jook joints, Vogel explains, prefigured the American cabaret of the 1910s and 1920s. What distinguished later iterations of cabaret from its predecessors, however, was a new interest in marketing such spaces and entertainments to a more “respectable” middle-class patron. This reworking of the terms defining nightlife meant that “What was previously denounced as the questionable morality of the lower class could now be acceptably consumed under the banner of European sophistication” (54). Still, Vogel notes, cabaret retained its relationship to nonwhite racialized and working-class cultures. As such, it proved a tremendous site of anxiety for both white and black Americans interested in surveiling and regulating the “doings” of these communities.

In addition to constructing a genealogy of cabaret, chapter 1 also charts how the form of cabaret evolved as an intimate performance event. Both the spatial and performance practices of cabaret produced intimate social formations that emerged from an “interplay of closeness and distance, acceptance and refusal, connection and disconnection, concentration and distraction” and that constituted identities and communities (70). The writers and performers of the Cabaret School, Vogel persuasively argues, exploited cabaret’s production of intimacy to critique the illogics of white supremacy and Harlem Renaissance investments in a politics of respectability.

Vogel takes as the subject for his second chapter the scene of the Harlem cabaret during and after 1926. He surveys the putative divisions between “segregated cabarets” and “black cabarets,” and, necessarily, exposes how several nightlife figures made a fiction of such a binary at the level of existence. Productively, the chapter offers an alternative way to interpret the “affective geography” of Harlem’s nightlife: through a spectrum of “tightness” and “looseness.” If “tight spaces” are those that reinforce existing social structures, then “loose spaces” afford greater opportunities for improvisation—to imagine new ways of knowing and being. Through close readings of Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* (1928), Zora Neale Hurston’s “How It Feels to Be Colored” (1928), and Wallace Thurman’s *The Blacker the Berry* (1929), Vogel makes eloquent the ways in which members of the Cabaret School refigured the scene of cabaret to “loosen” the “tightness” of racial and sexual normativity and the problematics of the “Negro Vogue.” It is his turn to Bessie Smith’s 1933 recording of “Gimme a Pigfoot (And a Bottle of Beer)” at the chapter’s end, however, that best illuminates the means by which performers often redeployed the spatiotemporal and

performance practices of cabaret to critique narratives of race, sexuality, and, in the case of Smith, class and gender. To be sure, this chapter evidences Vogel's deftness as a reader of both literary and performance texts.

Vogel breaks new methodological ground in chapter 3 via an examination of Langston Hughes's poetry collections, *The Weary Blues* (1926) and *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927). Significantly, he argues that members of the Cabaret School, Hughes in particular, abandoned historiographical and archival conventions tethered and indebted to uplift ideology to produce, instead, alternative archives of queer practices. In rearticulating the queer poetics of Hughes's writing, Vogel convincingly demonstrates how the poet's renderings of the afterhours club—those spaces that disordered the organizing logics of “closing time” and, correspondingly, the law—inscribed queer temporalities, socialities, and intimacies that escaped or refused “the rules of evidence” central to archival practices. Vogel's queer readings of Hughes's poetry prove incredibly insightful, especially in regards to debates about Hughes's (homo)sexuality (and the lack of evidence thereof). The chapter proposes an alternative mode of understanding Hughes's own refusal of the “closure” of binary categories of sexuality. Indeed, it forces into reconsideration the ways that Hughes, in shirking such identificatory categories, made a case for the queerness of desire itself: that is, the ways that desire always and already exceeds logics of rationality.

If Vogel's engagement of Hughes's poetry foregrounds the ways in which the Cabaret School frustrated normative narratives of sexuality, temporality, history, and, correspondingly, the archive, his rereading of W. E. B. Du Bois's analysis of Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928) in chapter 4 surfaces the Cabaret School's remapping of the spatial logics of uplift epistemologies and sociologies. McKay's novel, to which Du Bois wrote a searing response in 1928, unmade privileged sociological accounts of urban life, such as Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), to circumvent normative social constraints, Vogel asserts. For McKay, “The cabaret and other places of amusement are places for the cultivation of non-normative intimacies that ultimately imagine a world of interclass solidarity between the black working classes and the black underworld's submerged tenth” (135). Thus, the novel's returns to and departures from cabaret expose the potentialities (not the problems) of such amusements. In so doing, it uncouples the practices of the everynight life—the “underworld”—from the disciplinary desires and intentions of sociological discourses.

Lena Horne, the chanteuse-cum-activist who got her start at sixteen in the chorus of the Cotton Club, takes center stage in the book's final chapter. Vogel's look back at Horne propels the book beyond the Harlem cabarets of the 1910s and 1920s (historical, literary, and otherwise) to the segregated cabarets of the 1930s and 1940s and through the Civil Rights Movement. Vogel's narrativizing of scenes in which Horne offered performances marked by aloofness and withholding are his most evocative, even if his reasoning for positioning Horne within the Cabaret School demands greater explanation. He argues that Horne developed myriad strategies to “unperform the sexual subjectivity that her audience expected of her” (180). What he cites as Horne's “impersona,” again, “loosened” space for her to destabilize those (white) expectations overdetermined by politics of racial and sexual respectability. To listen to Lena, Vogel maintains, was to accept the possibility of not hearing anything at all. Horne developed a mode of performance that allowed her “to invent and inhabit a self that was not symbolic” (193). This performative “self” not only made it possible for Horne to endure the hostility of segregated cabarets, but also to imagine and enact a world not-yet-come.

Vogel arrives at drag performance artist Vaginal Davis's Los Angeles club, Bricktops, in the closing pages of the book. He argues that a number of contemporary cultural workers, like their Cabaret School precursors, have returned to the scene of the Harlem cabaret to "practice a queer critical imagination in order to irrealize a queer Harlem Renaissance" (198). It is the beginning of what could prove a compelling argument. Nevertheless, in a project that pursues its thesis with extraordinary rigor, it begs for greater elaboration.

Vogel's nuanced deployment and expansion of the methods of literary, queer, and performance studies, alongside his renderings of the vitality of Harlem's nightlife, mark *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret's* greatest achievements. The book is at once a fresh, important, and critically generous investigation of the Harlem Renaissance that powerfully makes a case for the productive and generative possibilities of critical inquiry at the intersections of blackness and queerness. Perhaps greater clarification about the multiple ways "scene" is meant to signify across the text would have further enriched this volume. Nevertheless, Vogel's masterful "strolls" through literature and performance, away from and back to myriad scenes of Harlem's everynight life—with theoretical sophistication and expressive prose that, indeed, apprehend—registers this study as essential reading for scholars across multiple (inter)disciplines: certainly performance, literary, and queer studies, but also history, African American Studies, American Studies, and beyond.

—Isaiah Matthew Wooden

Hill, Constance Valis. *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.

In 1968, Marshall and Jean Stearns published *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance*. For the last four decades, it has remained the most comprehensive and influential history of the art. A number of excellent books have discussed American vernacular and black American dancing since—Joel Dinerstein's *Swinging the Machine* (2003), Brenda Dixon Gottschild's *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Dance* (1996), and Jacqui Malone's *Steppin' on the Blues* (1996) are three of the strongest—but none has approached the ambitious scope of *Jazz Dance*. That is, not until Constance Valis Hill's *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History*. Hill's book fills a niche that has been empty for too long.

Hill, a professor of dance at Hampshire College, traces the development of tap from 1650 to the present. Much of the Stearns's *Jazz Dance* discusses tap, and while Hill covers some of the same ground—she in fact cites the Stearns at least twenty times—she brings their work up to date with impressive, original research on the last four decades of tap history. No other writer has chronicled these recent years so thoroughly. Existing histories of jazz and tap often focus on male stars, whereas Hill makes a point of giving women tappers their due. From Ada Overton Walker, who shared the stage with her husband George Walker and the comedian Bert Williams at the turn of the twentieth century, to Ayodele Casel, who in 1998 became the only woman in Savion Glover's dance company. The result is a monumental history by a leading scholar in the field, a valuable resource for historians of both dance and American culture in general.

Many people think of tap as a historically black form, but Hill shows that its origins are various and tangled. Black and white performers have mimicked and altered one