On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941 (review)

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Native writers, such as Louis Owens, who have only peripheral ties to the Southeast; yet the majority of the collection is devoted to writers such as Janet McAdams of Creek descent with strong ties to Alabama and whose writing is actively concerned with "those families and individuals acutely aware of their Native ancestry but disconnected from a tribal community" (252). Hers is the sort of identity crisis with which so many of the writers of *The People Who Stayed* wrestle. The sheer number of works included in this collection is a testament to the "tribal community" that remains in the Southeast in spite of America's aggressive Removal policies. As with *Traditions of the Osage*, the accumulation of so many like-minded voices in one place strikes a timely blow to those who would prefer to ignore the thriving cultural traditions that have outlasted the concerted, and often state-sponsored, efforts to silence them.

On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941. By Steven Trout.
Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 304 pages, $48.50.

Reviewed by Sarah Stoeckl
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Steven Trout's study analyzing American memory of the First World War proves a much needed counterpart to Paul Fussell's seminal *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1977) and to other works of expansion and revision such as Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (2004). Trout's focus on "collective memory" provides important information about a conflict that left as many questions as casualties in its wake.

Trout rejects claims that the war has been forgotten and instead paints a picture of memory in flux, manipulated and manipulable. He unearths a plethora of narratives and interpretations that, he argues, led to a gap in American collective memory. The war is not so much forgotten as always confronting a void due to a lack of a stable, shared perspective. The efficacy of Trout's argument becomes evident when we consider its applicability to the evolving stances taken by veteran's leagues such as the American Legion as well as the fractured narratives of the Lost Generation. Trout maintains that the reason for this gap lay in the need to answer an unanswerable question—why?—a question made even more complex for Americans who went or sent their loved ones to fight a foreign conflict. Even as Trout uncovers diverse responses to the war, this unavoidable but unanswerable "why?" sustains readings of the war's futility and waste.

Trout's chapters range broadly in subject, beginning with the influence of veteran's organizations, particularly the American Legion, before turning to public attempts at memorializing seen in the mass-produced statue *Spirit of the American Doughboy* as well as the enigmatic Unknown Soldier. He then analyzes artistic responses to the war, ranging from the modernist paintings of Horace Pippin—veteran of the famed "Harlem Hellfighters" regiment—to the etchings of Kerr Eby. In his concluding chapter, Trout contends that the posthumous saga of Quentin Roosevelt (Theodore Roosevelt's youngest son) reveals America's shifting perspective on the war, which began with feelings of democratic solidarity between

France and the United States and ended with a focus on immediate family and American exceptionalism that came to dominate memory after WWII.

The volume includes many points likely to interest scholars of the American West. Trout's emphasis on American memory away from urban capitals provides a regional perspective on the war that includes communities in the Midwest and West. This regionalism appears in the American Expeditionary Force's combat units, generally organized by geography, and in the prominence of the American Legion on local and national scales in the construction of war responses. Specifically, the Legion developed and maintained a narrative that emphasized robust masculinity acquired in the theater of war even as it grew increasingly isolationist politically. It thus used tropes that clearly stem from mythologies of the West and the frontier to endorse American exceptionalism. Trout's picture of war memory also includes work by western modernists such as Hemingway and Cather, and midwestern painters Harvey Dunn and John Steuart Curry. Ultimately, the study will prove invaluable to scholars of modernism, the First World War, or war, memory, and mourning more generally.

Black California: A Literary Anthology.
Edited by Aparajita Nanda.
Berkeley, CA: Heyday Press, 2011. 333 pages, $24.95.

Reviewed by Blake Allmendinger
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Aparajita Nanda's recent anthology offers a kaleidoscopic array of writings by California's African American pioneers and modern-day residents, well-known and relatively obscure historical figures, social critics and political activists, novelists, poets, and dramatists. Many readers will be familiar with such contributors as Wallace Thurman, Eldridge Cleaver, Wanda Coleman, Walter Mosley, Bebe Moore Campbell, and Arna Bontemps, whose most famous works have been excerpted or reprinted here, though they will also be delighted to encounter less familiar pieces by some of the biggest names in African American literature. For example, Nanda includes Langston Hughes's previously unpublished one-act play *Hollywood Mammy,* which addresses the lack of non-stereotypical film roles available to women of color. Written in 1940, the play reflects African American sentiment shortly after Hattie McDaniel won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in *Gone with the Wind.* Also featured is an essay by Chester Himes about the Zoot Suit riots in Los Angeles, and a short story by Ernest Gaines, the author of *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman* (1971). Nanda has arranged the selections in roughly chronological order, which would seem to make sense—although it might have been better if she had provided a longer introduction, outlining the evolution of African American culture, or identifying shifts in attitudes as regional writers responded to California over the course of several centuries. Without such a framework, the entries in the anthology feel disconnected and must be evaluated on their individual merits.

The reasons for including certain entries seem unclear. Some writers only resided in California for a brief period of time, including James Madison Bell;