

bleness” makes it possible to see the texts at hand as Norwegian-American and as American at the same time.

The nature of the Norwegian-American identity was the subject of reflection by two Norwegian-American authors in particular, Waldemar Ager and Ole E. Rølvaag, and Gulliksen devotes particular attention to their views. His analysis of Ager’s *Paa veien till smeltepotten* (1917) and *Gamlrelandets sønner* (1926) is particularly interesting, and Gulliksen is able to show how *Paa veien till smeltepotten* should be seen in the context of a larger American discussion of the role of immigrants in American society during the first decades of the 20th century. The 1917 novel is a clear critique of the concept of the melting pot which Israel Zangwill had made so influential in his 1908 play *The Melting Pot*, and expresses similar sentiments that would characterize the movement for American cultural pluralism associated with Horace Kallen. Gulliksen’s chapter on Rølvaag criticism in the U.S. and Norway since 1930 is also very illuminating, and shows both the significance and usefulness of applying the double perspective in the analysis. Gulliksen can thus show that to many Norwegian critics, *I de dage* and *Riket grundlægges* were seen as tragic stories of Norwegian emigration by a Norwegian author, whereas some American critics have seen *Giants in the Earth* as a forward-looking American pioneer story of the frontier, without any strong ethnic dimensions.

Øyvind Gulliksen has written a well-conceived and stimulating book about Norwegian-American literature and culture. The book’s strength lies in its thematic focus and in its use of the concept of double identity. The author convincingly shows how Norwegian Americans were able to actively reflect upon and construct a new identity for themselves by drawing upon the cultural contexts of both Norway and the U.S. *Twofold Identities* should serve as an inspiration for studies of similar processes among other immigrant groups.

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Edward Ashbee, *Get Set for American Studies, Get Set for University*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. 183 pages; ISBN: 0 7486 1692 6; £6.99.

Ashbee’s *Get Set for American Studies* is part of a series of books designed to introduce students to various fields of study. As such, it is geared toward the beginning student who may desire a very broad overview to either decide to choose that field of study or give some general context. It is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the field of American Studies; the second, basic study skills for students.

Within the first part, Ashbee’s first chapter poses the question, “Why Study the United States?” He provides the equivalent of an excellent introductory lecture to a survey course. He cites military and economic power, cultural, corporate, and demographic transference as justification. Without specifically mentioning those Euro-

peans who believe the US has neither history nor culture, he seems to be addressing just those arguments. He concludes this section with a list of American ideas that he argues are very different from European ideas, focusing on the cultural results of immigration, vast spaces, the frontier, and “intermingling” diversity. He goes on to discuss the expansion of American Studies within Europe, attributing this to the growth of American power in the world after WWI. He finds that although the government of the United States provided financial support for such study, European scholars questioned American values and highlighted structural weaknesses within the United States. He cites the valuable comparative nature of American Studies in Europe. Unfortunately, this otherwise well-developed chapter is left hanging with two box inserts that are not integrated within the chapter and he sees the methodological critique of the field as solely European, ignoring the very same critiques which have come from American scholars. It does, however, provide a coherent and persuasive response to contemporary accusations against the United States in the European media.

The largest individual chapter, Chapter two, gives a broad overview of the information to be covered in a number of the basic courses in American Studies. To get a sense of the breadth of this section – all of American history is covered in 11 pages. Nineteen pages explain how the American government works. Foreign policy and cultural studies take 5 pages. Such brevity necessitates a superficial approach. The danger is that some students might use these pages as they often use “CliffsNotes” – as a replacement for studying, rather than an outline to assist their studies. These sections are followed by even more compressed outlines of American literature, the role of the frontier, immigration, and the American south.

The third chapter, “American Studies at University,” could more appropriately be named, “A detailed description of UK degree programs, and how to operate within them, for students.” It has little use for anyone outside the UK. Such details as that notes from missed lectures can be gotten from departmental secretaries demonstrate the narrow audience aimed for in this series.

The next two chapters provide information useful to a broader audience. The glossary of terms, which makes up the fourth chapter, is basic and superficial, but that is all it is intended. The purpose is to introduce simple concepts in an overview setting. One might argue with why certain terms are included, and not others, but comprehensiveness is impossible in a few pages. The statistical tables in Chapter five, are likewise, limited in scope. In both chapters, students will find key terms and tables that focus on things Europeans love to despise about Americans as well as general overview information.

Part II of *Getting Set for American Studies* covers general study skills. Ashbee provides suggestions for how to read for academic purposes, rather than pleasure, as well as hints for making oral presentations and writing essays. His advice is similar to that most of us give students every year. There is nothing new and exciting in this section.

It is common sense, to those who have succeeded in academia. But for beginning students, being told to talk to us if they are out sick might just be a necessary bit of advice. We are often surprised by what beginning students do not know about life. This section provides good, common sense advice to young people as they move toward adult responsibilities at the university.

In general, this book is part of a series that specifically addresses beginning students in the UK, and is intended as a quick overview of a field they may be contemplating studying. As such, it does a good job. However, those outside the UK and those who are more advanced students will find the book, as a whole, more limited. If one overlooks that, there are concise pearls to be found.

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