

construct and employ political capital, Elder's call to interpret widowhood as a complex and individual experience is a constructive and timely one. The attention to detail, brisk prose, and novel methodology make *Love and Duty* essential reading for anyone interested in the Civil War South and the history of emotions.

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Martin Dines, *The Literature of Suburban Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020, £85.00). Pp. 288. ISBN 978 1 4744 2648 0.

Martin Dines's new book eloquently analyses post-1960 literature and other cultural materials that respond to the socio-spatial changes of metropolitan America. The inclusion of a breadth of sources and writers leads to an engaging and multifaceted read. His book is an important contribution to American suburban studies because it provides a detailed, dynamic consideration of how writers have utilized different literary forms to articulate the various ways the suburbs are multifarious and "still in production" (7). The book continues the work of scholars like Kenneth T. Jackson and Jo Gill who see the suburbs, and their representations, as interconnected with cities, rich in history, constantly evolving, and inspiring creativity.

Before the revisionist work of scholars like Andrew Weise and his book *Places of Their Own* (2004), most studies of the suburbs focussed on interpreting them as white, middle- to upper-middle-class places: this is evident in *Bourgeois Utopias* (1987) by Robert Fisherman. Dines, as he says, "takes a leaf from the New Suburban History" (13) by constantly focussing on the relationship between the suburbs and other places. However, the texts Dines investigates, though broad from an age and socioeconomic perspective, are predominantly by white authors. Nevertheless, *The Literature of Suburban Change* is valuable because, unlike any other study, it details how suburban pasts in literature have been employed and reshaped through suburban spatiality.

Each chapter focusses on a particular literary form and how the texts have engaged with suburban spatiality. Chapter 1 investigates novel sequences and what Dines coins "metropolitan memory" (24). John Updike's Rabbit tetralogy (1960–90) and Richard Ford's Frank Bascombe books (1986–2006) are central to the chapter. A focus on journeys, particularly commutes, and the layout of the novel itself points to, as Dines puts it, the "tension between the production of progressivist and deconstructivist narratives" (25). Dines's analysis of how the experience of spatial change fuels nostalgia in Updike's Rabbit tetralogy is of note; instead of seeing nostalgia as redundant and backwards, Dines highlights how movements across the metropolis serve to "undermine the security of nostalgic imagery" (51). Dines calls this "rhythmic or fluctuating nostalgia" (51). Harry Angstrom's nostalgia is propelled by change but also undone by it as he realizes that the past is "never as one would prefer to remember [it and is] not fixed but also in flux" (52). Dines's consideration of the disturbing and unsettling nature of nostalgia in Updike's tetralogy is an important addition to the field.

Chapter 2 considers Gothic novels, and how authors employ the genre to explore the histories of class- and race-based exclusion that haunt and irrevocably shape the suburbs. The consideration of Anne River Siddons's *The House Next Door* (1978)

is particularly insightful, with Dines contending that since “the source of disturbance is ... written into an architectural design [there seems to be] something profoundly flawed and unliveable about the organisation of the suburbs” (96). Moreover, a close analysis of *The Virgin Suicides* (1993) by Jeffrey Eugenides reveals that Gothic writing can disrupt the suburbs when registering their historicity and desire to exclude the past from the present. Dines contends that such texts insist “that the place we presume to know so well can never be fully known” (124). Though this analysis is common in a consideration of Gothic texts, the examination of how this Gothic technique is “at home” in fictional, suburban settings provides a rich and nuanced consideration of both genres.

Chapter 3 positions the emergence of the suburban memoir within the larger “memoir boom” of the 1990s. The analysis of J. Waldie’s *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir* (1996) is particularly compelling. In this section, Dines opens with Waldie’s reflections on William A. Garnett’s aerial photographs of Lakewood, California: of which Waldie is a lifelong resident. Garnett presents, as Dines phrases it, “an eerie necropolis,” with Waldie highlighting that Garnett’s photographs depended “on what they lacked ... it’s always late afternoon ... the sunset is pouring tarry shadows across the barren backyards of not-yet-homes” (147). Dines explores how Waldie counters pernicious “myth[s] of suburbia” with a sensitive, complex look at the construction and residential experience of Lakewood. This chapter unwaveringly highlights the complexity and layered experiences of the suburbs, and the position of the suburbs within wider regional and national histories.

Chapter 4 investigates comics (which Dines refers to as graphic narratives) and how they position suburban homes in broader economic, environmental and social histories. Dines takes particular care to consider the development of framing techniques. He argues that some graphic narratives portray “anticipatory histories” (26) that put process rather than permanence at the centre of their narratives. At the centre of the chapter is an analysis of Richard McGuire’s *Here* (1989, 2010) and Chris Ware’s *Building Stories* (2012). Dines contextualizes their work to support his conclusion that their creativeness does not come out of anywhere and attends to “the historicity of suburban domestic space” (206).

Chapter 5 considers short-story cycles, and how their multipartite structure provides writers with a narrative vessel through which they can communicate: varied outlooks and multifaceted temporalities of suburban locations. Dines’s analysis of the metafictional techniques employed by Pam Conrad in *Our House* (1959) and John Barth in *The Development* (1992) explores how this performativity communicates attachments to the suburbs and reflects the shifts and changes in the location’s form. Furthermore, this chapter examines how these writers investigate the suburbs as sites of continual change, and it is by narrating these changes that inhabitants strive to understand their lives and the world surrounding them. A key strength of this chapter is how Dines does not see nostalgia in these texts as a harbinger of backwardness and instead contends that the sentiment is employed in the literature in productive ways.

Chapter 5’s consideration of diasporic narratives adds breadth and depth to Dines’s work. Dines draws on multiple scholars, including Martin Fischer, to examine how the suburban short-story cycle offers writers from ethnic minority backgrounds a “device ... to activate in the reader a desire for *communitas* with others, while preserving rather than effacing differences” (Fischer quoted at 215). The section’s focus on Jhumpa Lahiri’s collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) is insightful and considers the

legacy and place of difference in suburban settings: Dines's analysis of the religious paraphernalia in Lahriri's "This Blessed House" is particularly strong. However, this analysis also points to the unsubstantial analyses of other minority voices in the book, including Russell Banks's and Maxine Hong Kingston's.

The book concludes with a consideration of the 1990s and the new urbanists, including Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, who believe the "suburban age" has ended; *The Literature of Suburban Change* challenges such "terminal diagnoses" (234). A closing investigation of Marc Palieri's *Levittown* (2006), Lisa D'Amour's *Detroit* (2010), and Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park* (2010) supports Dines's assertion that the suburbs continue to inspire narratives that explore the spatial complexity and contested historicity of the suburbs.

I concur with Dines that the suburbs are "here to stay, but they are neither static nor hermetic" (247). His work excitingly paves the way for future scholarship on the suburbs and its various iterations. Though the focus of *The Literature of Suburban Change* is spatial complexity, it naturally delves into numerous, related topics often explored in the genre, including community, diaspora, nostalgia, historicity, and gender anxiety. At times the book's examination of these interweaving topics feels rushed, but for a 248-page book, Dines craftily stays loyal to his subject while pointing to the breadth and depth that this field of study provides.

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