Arnett Fields suggests how cultural priorities might have directed Cherokee Judge John Martin's political choices in the era of removal.

More than one hundred years ago, when Frederick Jackson Turner identified the frontier as a significant area of research, he urged an interdisciplinary approach as the best way to come to grips with its history. Reviewing recent histories of the southern backcountry, Michael J. Puglisi asserts, however, that the cumulative effect of the past decade of research has been to produce a backcountry more complex and less easily categorized than ever before. Rather than clarify, he observes, studies of the southern backcountry have "muddied" the waters of our knowledge. Perhaps there is something inherently complicating about interdisciplinary studies. Warren Hofstra, in his epilogue to the volume, notes too that the sum of the essays here offers "more of a challenge than a conclusion" (230). Several of the authors themselves point out still-elusive areas for study such as the experiences of backcountry women and of those people Charles Faulkner calls "invisible": slaves and the white laboring class.

The editors have produced a useful and thought-provoking volume. The essays are well written and generally accessible to readers across the disciplines. They are also nicely varied in terms of geographic scope as well as chronology, without the kind of repetitions that often mark collections of topical studies. Students of the southern backcountry, as well as scholars generally interested in widening the net of evidence they use, will enjoy this book.

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National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men. By Dana D. Nelson. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 344. $17.95.)

Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic. By Bruce Burgett. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998. Pp. vii, 213. $39.50.)

Dana D. Nelson and Bruce Burgett are each concerned, at heart, with foreclosures of democratic practice in the United States in the early republic and the antebellum period. In Burgett's case, this concern manifests itself in his vigorous debate with political philosophers and literary scholars over the nature of the "public sphere." Burgett holds a partisan

preference for "republicanism" rather than the "liberalism" he believes has mistakenly relegated sentimental literature to the private sphere. Nelson, on the other hand, takes a less embattled approach and instead synthesizes an impressive array of scholarship on race and masculinity as a backdrop to the texts she analyzes. Her immediate challenge is to summon a measure of sympathy for the nineteenth-century men who inflicted such reprehensible damage upon other social groups as well as themselves.

Although both books are addressed primarily to literary scholars, they ask questions compelling to historians. Nelson and Burgett share a common concern with the history of political culture, albeit with different chronological emphases. Burgett focuses on literary texts of the 1790s, although he also includes a final chapter that leaps ahead into the nineteenth century. Nelson begins in the 1780s, but the core of her analysis focuses on the period from the 1830s to the 1850s. Historians interested in the "public sphere" will find Burgett's book conceptually challenging beyond his narrower chronology, while Nelson's book contains a narrative and conceptual framework more broadly useful to historians.

Burgett takes issue with "liberal" scholars who set the sentimental and the rational, the social and the political, and the private and the public, all in neat opposition to each other. The sentimental literary public sphere of the 1790s, Burgett insists, bridged these oppositions in confronting the status of "the body" vis-a-vis the "body politic." For scholars who favor a liberal account of modernity, according to Burgett, the sentimentalized body served purely as a tool of political exclusion. In this view, the public sphere was a device for political actors to turn their local, embodied experience into universal, disinterested meaning—the key trait of a citizenship that was restricted by definition to rational men rather than sentimental women. Burgett's alternative view favors a "republican"—*i.e.*, a publicized rather than privatized—account of modernity, and treats the sentimentalized body as a complex site of contradiction. For Burgett, sentimental literature did not stand apart from the political public sphere, but itself sought to reform both the private body and the body politic. Carrying his analysis through George Washington's "Farewell Address," Hannah Foster's *The Coquette*, Charles Brockden Brown's *Clara Howard*, and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Burgett concedes that each work aimed to bolster boundaries between public and private. In each case, however, Burgett finds pressure from democratic claims to political inclusion that blurred the boundary between private and public. While these works gestured toward liberal privacy, each ironically relied upon republican publicity even in seeking to render private the sentimental body. For Burgett, this contradictory quality should correct any scholarly

approach that discounts the place of reformist sentimental literature in the public sphere in the early republic.

Nelson focuses not so much on a crisis of masculinity—a theme that has become a staple of the burgeoning new scholarship on manhood—as on a crisis of fraternity in nineteenth-century America. If a crisis of masculinity hinges upon a loss of power, the nineteenth-century crisis of fraternity hinged upon the seeming impossibility of putting an ideology of "national (white) manhood" into successful practice. Nelson traces the role of this unifying ideal in the formation of American national identity beginning in the late-eighteenth century, and then in the professionalization of the middle class beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Meant to heal class fissures among men, both nationalism and professionalization were premised upon exclusions along lines of gender and race. A triangular structure served to consolidate white male subjectivity, where white men were to embrace imaginary affiliations with other white men who held common power over social groups such as women and blacks. National (white) manhood therefore comprises, according to Nelson, a fundamentally antidemocratic legacy of the nineteenth century.

Yet Nelson's story is largely about the psychic failure of this ideology of national manhood, and so she focuses on themes of anxiety and disappointment in a range of political, scientific, and literary texts. In a cultural logic that spanned multiple disciplines, the delineation of bodily differences was central to the symbolic construction of national (white) manhood. In his *History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (1814), for instance, Nicholas Biddle fashioned a heroic myth by judiciously excerpting Lewis and Clark's journals to sharpen race and gender contrasts. As another compelling example, Charles Meigs, in his *Females and their Diseases* (1848), outlined a medical system of essential gender difference to professionalize the emerging "science" of gynecology. In both cases, the articulation of national manhood happened through constructing an abstract fraternal sameness among white men, in turn by naturalizing social hierarchy along lines of race and gender, where all white men were rendered superior to all blacks and all women. A sense of anxiety persisted, however, because such imaginary affiliations faltered in the face of economic competition among men, the very problem these affiliations were supposed to overcome. National manhood proved successful only with respect to dead or imagined men, in idealized eulogies or symbolized Presidents— imaginary men removed from the inescapable competitiveness of "real life."

Of course, "real life" is constituted purely through its representation in literary texts and this highlights why some historians might find both of these books more suggestive than persuasive. It is impossible to gauge the

cultural force of the texts Burgett and Nelson analyze, because their close focus on textual analysis offers little guidance concerning the resonance in reading communities not only of explicit ideas but also of elusive subjectivities. The pressing question remains how these ideas and subjectivities were taken up in—and pressured by—social practice.

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A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics. By Mark E. Kann. (New York: New York University Press, 1998. Pp. x, 238. Cloth, $55.00; paper, $18.50.)

Prominently on display in this book are two of the most striking trends in recent historical writing: the "linguistic turn" toward making language into a primary topic for historical study, and the rise of gender analysis, placing issues of gender at the center of not just women's history, but also in histories of such seemingly male-dominated arenas as war and party politics. *A Republic of Men* represents one of the most thoroughgoing efforts yet to apply these new methods and themes to the era of the American Revolution and the early republic. Synthesizing a growing body of scholarship, supplemented with a moderate amount of research in published primary sources, Mark E. Kann argues that virtually everything the founders thought, said, and did can best be understood in terms of a "grammar of manhood" which they used to consolidate their power and cure the "democratic distemper" with which the Revolution had infected the American population (1).

Kann begins the book by setting out the "hegemonic norms of manhood" that he believes the founders sought to impose on their fellow Americans. According to Kann, the founders' "grammar of manhood" contained four main rules. First, "worthy men situated themselves in intergenerational time," a convoluted way of saying that they established families and tried to pass on legacies of liberty, honor, and family reputation to their sons (35). The second rule was that "meritorious men mixed their blood with the land to acquire and settle space for themselves and their families" (39). In other words, good men sought to amass landed property and make it productive according to the standards of Anglo-American society. The third rule held that "worthy men were social creatures who sought to fit into fraternal society" (43). This "rule" is left more vague than the first two, but it seems to be related to what the