

Selling the Sights: The Invention of the Tourist in American Culture. By Will B. Mackintosh. New York: NYU Press, 2019. 272 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. Hardcover, \$35.00. ISBN: 978-1-4798-8937-2.

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Reviewed by Henry Knight Lozano

Selling the Sights is an engaging cultural history of travel and tourism in the antebellum United States. It traces transformations in the dissemination of “geographical knowledge” and the publishing of travel literature; the republic’s growing transport networks and marketed itineraries; and evolving, contested meanings of leisure travel, especially in the Northeast (p. 24). Based on a wealth of sources—including letters and diaries, published travel accounts, guidebooks, and works of fiction—the book approaches these several genres through the theoretical framework of “commodification,” arguing that, while the American readers and travelers of the 1820s and 1830s did not employ the term themselves, their experience of travel and its literature was shaped fundamentally by the market and transportation revolutions of Jacksonian America in which “tourism entrepreneurs gradually constructed a national market for commodified leisure experiences” (p. 86). Focusing on case studies such as Niagara Falls and Saratoga Springs, author Will Mackintosh shows how emergent commodification shaped a new dichotomy in U.S. literary culture between constructions of the “tourist” and the “traveler”—the former ignorant and superficial, the latter possessed of knowledge and purpose—the legacy of which, as he concludes, remains evident in today’s dismissive discursive references to “passive, consumeristic tourists” (p. 195).

Through careful, close readings of a range of travel publications across five thematic chapters, Mackintosh demonstrates how the complex process of commodification led not only to significant changes in the content and marketing of travel literature but also to the creation of the much-satirized tourist figure. The book explores how, for affluent leisure seekers themselves, the “relationship to . . . commodified experiences was central to their own understanding of their social position” (p. 6). The importance of gender is emphasized through examples such as Margaret Fuller—whose commercially successful 1843 travelogue about the Great Lakes met with curmudgeonly criticism from male reviewers who felt her prose lacked “the tidiness we always look for in a woman” (p. 184)—while the author perceptively analyzes the Anglo-American relationship, a kind of transatlantic sibling bond and rivalry that can be seen in both the literary impact and U.S. satirical representation of British travelers in the American republic. Recognizing how the process of commodification was “equal parts material and

conceptual,” Mackintosh deftly charts how commodified tourist trips and experiences evolved thanks to the twin developments of a national publishing market and dramatic transport improvements (p. 5). Thus the new steamships and railroads, with their standard ticketing and schedules, transformed the necessarily self-reliant traveler of the early republic into a market consumer, with distinct expectations of service and status. Often assumed to be passively in search of whatever “picturesque” site or scene the travel guides proffered, this travel consumer became a figure of much mockery. By midcentury the commodification of the tourist experience had become a popular subject of satire both light and dark, penned by lesser-known authors as well as luminaries like Mark Twain, who gleefully poked fun at tourists as tellers of tall tales and naïvely pompous fools—a caricature that would live on to the present.

Some areas of analysis might have been further developed. The stress on commodification as the key concept for interpreting the sources means that their political, racial, and regional dimensions often receive scant treatment, barring a few tantalizing references: for example, Indian Affairs superintendent Thomas McKenney’s 1826 journey to meet the Chippewa Indians in what would become Wisconsin (pp. 68–72), or a northerner in 1830s Virginia who laments having to “depend upon . . . dirty, impudent, black *waiters*” (p. 116). Despite covering the half-century that saw the United States pass the Indian Removal Act, lay claim to vast swaths of Native American territory, and suffer intense sectional divisions over slavery, the book tells us little about how writers and travelers commented upon these defining issues of the day. Similarly, while the book traces the touristic trope of the “picturesque,” it does not tell us how much this trope contributed to the formation of racial and regional signifiers (p. 95). Finally, more could be said about how investment and settlement intertwined with travel promotion in nineteenth-century America. To be sure, Mackintosh is interested in those who were in pursuit of “leisure,” and he refers to the “settled states” (essentially the Northeast), yet such framings can be problematic for a period when travelers, investors, and settlers could be and often were one and the same (p. 173). Here we see a striking difference between the twenty-first-century tourist and their antebellum counterpart; Lonely Planet guidebooks don’t pitch content to farmers, businesspeople, and skilled workers, as many a promotional writer did two centuries ago. That had important implications, of course, for what was being “commodified” in many (not all) boosterist travel texts: not only picturesque *sights* but also real estate, homes, jobs, and industries—in short, all the components of political economies and racialized communities.

Nonetheless, this is an important work for understanding the historical construction of the tourist as both a desired and a divisive figure in American culture. While the lack of a bibliography is regrettable, the research is hugely impressive, and the book is lucid in its writing style, its thematic structure, and its deft analysis of the commodification of the touristic experience. It will engage and enlighten readers who seek a better understanding of the evolution of that negative modern archetype—the tourist as an “absurd and laughable consumer of trite experiences” (p. 149)—and it will be essential reading for scholars interested in the histories of tourism, of travel, and of the cultures of capitalism in nineteenth-century America.

HENRY KNIGHT LOZANO is senior lecturer in American history and director of liberal arts at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Tropic of Hopes: California, Florida and the Selling of American Paradise, 1869–1929 (2013)* and *California and Hawai‘i Bound: U.S. Settler Colonialism and the Pacific West, 1848–1959 (2021)*. He is also coeditor of *The Shadow of Selma (2018)*, with Joe Street.

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Forging Global Fordism: Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Contest over the Industrial Order. By *Stefan J. Link*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020. 316 pp. Hardcover, \$39.95. Notes, bibliography, index. ISBN: 978-0-691-17754-0.

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Reviewed by Spencer Tompkins

In *Forging Global Fordism: Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Contest over the Industrial Order*, Stefan J. Link challenges narratives that depict the interwar period as a time of American international withdrawal, arguing that U.S. economic dominance, accelerated by the Great Depression and World War II, propelled Fordism’s movement. He traces Fordism’s diffusion by locating connections between the United States and the development of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Link uncovers affinities among Ford’s postliberal populism, National Socialism, and Communism, revealing the different strategies that Nazi Germany and the Soviets used to collaborate with Western corporations. By mapping the flow of ideas, institutions, and production processes on a regional, national, and global scale, Link delineates the political history of mass production. He draws on regulation theory’s understanding of Fordism as a political economic regime of accumulation (Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The U.S. Experience* [1979]); “Americanization” literature’s focus on mass