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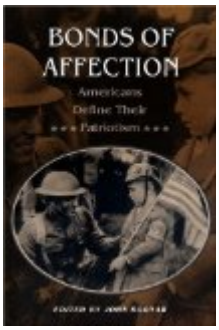

John Bodnar, ed.. *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. viii + 352 pp. $72.50, cloth, ISBN 978-0-691-04397-5.

Reviewed by Edward T. Linenthal

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Edited collections are almost always uneven, some sparkling essays mixed in with forgettable "filler." Happily, this collection of well-written and provocative essays is an exception. *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* offers readers explorations into a host of interesting questions about how Americans define and live out the essential links between an individual, the state, and the nation. In his introduction, editor John Bodnar, professor of history at Indiana University, whose *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1992), has received well-deserved praise, notes that "throughout U.S. history desires for a more equal society have clashed with sectarian aspirations of purity and dominance" (p. 11). Bodnar contrasts a liberal version of republicanism and classic liberalism engaged with ideals of equal rights with a nationalistic version of patriotism whose "true" patriots--male warriors--stand as the model of American patriotism.

Indeed, throughout these essays, there is a conscious tension between various versions of patriotism. Each author defines the tension somewhat differently, using different terms of definition, but to put it somewhat simplistically, the split is between an increasingly beleaguered liberal version of patriotism and the increasingly bellicose vision of patriotism with its rigid gender hierarchies, mass spectacles, and reliance on war and memory of war to nurture fascination with dominance and order. The essays also argue that as the power of the state has increased in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the liberal ideal has become less evocative. For these authors, the degeneration of patriotism into a fervent nationalism is a cause for concern.

The essays do not imply, of course, a "golden age" of liberal patriotism. Cynthia Koch's essay, "Teaching Patriotism: Private Virtue for the Public Good in the Early Republic," examines the emergence of a patriotic canon emphasizing virtue, defined in colonial society as "moral action in human society that is controlled by the individual's efforts to behave in accordance with--and glorify--divine intention" (p. 24). The canon--the heroism of Columbus, the noble savage, the importance of

free speech, political protest and revolution--registers "others" as recipients of mercy and romantic sentiment rather than equal rights. "Another patriotic vision," she notes, "one that encompassed political rights for all, or respect for the culture of Native Americans, freedom for slaves, or greater toleration for political dissent or religious differences--would have been rooted in notions of individual rights among a populace of social and political equals" (p. 51).

Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary's "Blood Brotherhood': The Racialization of Patriotism, 1865-1918" is a fascinating and important account of the triumph of Lost Cause mentality throughout the nation as southern ideologues successfully redefined the Civil War as a triumph of Anglo-Saxon courage on both sides in which whiteness defined patriotism. "By World War I," she notes, "official patriotic culture--defined by the ascendance of northern institutions, shaped by the language of masculinity, influenced by the rise of a martial spirit, and narrowed by the imposition of racialized criteria and intolerance of domestic opposition--eclipsed competing interpretations" (p. 81).

I offer only a few words on other essays to give readers a flavor of the contents, and then offer some final thoughts: Andrew Neather's "Labor Republicanism, Race, and Popular Patriotism in the Era of Empire, 1890-1914" examines how workers used the revolutionary tradition as part of their protest, in contrast to the "business" definition of patriotism, "unquestioned loyalty to government and the law, virtually unlimited power, and the defeat of socialism" (p. 90). Neather notes how labor became susceptible to the "rhetoric of empire, how race and republican values were linked, and how support for martial enterprises weakened traditions of dissent.

Stuart McConnell's "Reading the Flag: A Reconsideration of the Patriotic Cults of the 1890s" is useful reading given current controversies. Beyond that, however, he thoughtfully complicates the story, arguing that flag rituals were not merely a reaction in defense of old ideas, but the actions of "native-born whites groping toward a new definition of what 'American' meant" (p. 105). Anticipating subsequent essays that detail how patriotism shifted from local allegiance to more abstract national devotion, McConnell notes that the "patriotic cults of the 1890s set in motion the process of narrowing national loyalty to the brackish channel in which it now runs" (p. 119).

Gaines M. Foster's "A Christian Nation: Signs of a Covenant," argues that despite the fervor of various Christian civic crusades, the government "rejected any but a secular conception of itself and, when, asked, refused to make its relationship with God either real or substantial" (p. 138). Anyone familiar with the Christian Right's continued exasperation of Republican party devotion to the trappings of a Christian America without substantive action on their behalf will find this history an interesting one.

Kimberly Jensen's "Women, Citizenship, and Civic Sacrifice: Engendering Patriotism in the First World War" examines the struggle of women--black and white--to extract from the nation "civic and social recognition" in exchange for their loyalty and service. These women were path-breakers, as the "partial recognition of [their] patriotism, rewards within professional and local communities" led to the claim in World War II for full inclusion" (pp. 158-59).

David Glassberg and J. Michael Moore's "Patriotism in Orange: The Memory of World War I In A Massachusetts Town" carefully traces the biography of a memorial movement, and how this intriguing monument came to take on diverse meaning for veterans, pacifists, and other townspeople. As do other essays, this one reminds readers that monument activity reveals a patriotism "from the ground up." It is, he notes, a patriotism that "uses the symbolism of stars, flags, and the war dead to address local concerns and diverse but powerful emotions close to home. The statue of the returning soldier connects the sacrifice of

war not for the abstract nation-state but rather for the town's real way of life and its children" (pp. 189-90).

Lawrence R. Samuel's "Dreaming in Black and White: African-American Patriotism and World War II Bonds" examines the "Double V" war effort for African-Americans--victory abroad and at home. Echoing the irony of the title of Studs Terkel's ***The Good War***, Samuel notes that the very existence of the "Double V" "suggests that World War II's underpinnings of a unified and harmonious society joined together to fight a common enemy present a faulty or at least only partial foundation" (p. 192). African-Americans responded creatively to the bond drives, using them to express their patriotic impulses and also to turn the rhetoric of freedom and equal rights to their advantage.

Robert B. Westbrook's "In The Mirror Of The Enemy: Japanese Political Culture And the Peculiarities Of American Patriotism In World War II" argues that liberal nations are often at an ideological disadvantage in war, having to mobilize their communities by linking national goals to private moral obligations. During World War II, Americans shaped their identity in part through contrast to the Japanese, seen as having unquestioning devotion to the state and fanatical allegiance to the war effort. He argues that there might be a middle ground between the traditional--and, in his opinion--unevocative abstract liberal ideals and the fascist demand for total allegiance: liberal ideals "conceived not as transcendent, universal rights, but as the values of a particular national polity, rooted not in human nature but in the particularities and peculiarities of American history and culture" (p. 230).

Wendy Kozol's "'Good Americans': Nationalism and Domesticity in *Life* Magazine, 1945-1960" argues that new technologies representing "imagined" national communities promoted a "vision of patriotism that glorified state power," masculine dominance and equated patriotism and "social conventions and cultural ideals" (pp. 233-34). Her insightful analysis of the ideology of ***Life***'s photographs reveals how images of masculinity, domesticity, and their relationship to the Cold War world are embedded in ordinary culture.

In perhaps the most biting essay in the collection, George Lipsitz's "Dilemmas of Beset Nationhood: Patriotism, The Family, And Economic Change In The 1970s And 1980s," the author uses interesting cultural moments--former President Reagan's speech in Normandy, France, on the fiftieth anniversary of the invasion, for example--to argue that neoconservative visions of patriotism "emphasize public spectacles of power and private celebrations of success," instead of "creating community through inclusive and democratic measures" (p. 256). The continued refighting of the Vietnam War in American memory and in political rhetoric keeps people from focusing on real problems: "stagnation of real wages, automation-generated unemployment, the evisceration of the welfare state, threats to intergenerational upward mobility, privatization of public resources, and polarization by class, race, and gender" (p. 260). Lipsitz believes that the resurgence of the post Vietnam warrior--symbolized by Sylvester Stallone's "Rambo" series, engenders dangerous martial fantasies and contributes to a patriotic bloodlust. (Several relevant books that expand these themes are James William Gibson's ***Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America*** and Tom Engelhardt's ***The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation***.)

Barbara Truesdell's "Exalting '"U.S. Ness': Patriotic Rituals of the Daughters of the American Revolution" uses the civil religion model to examine the activities of the DAR. This essay can be read profitably with Charles Wilson's ***Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920***, as a companion case study in the institutionalization of particular patriotic visions.

John Bodnar's "Moral Patriotism and Collective Memory in Whiting, Indiana, 1920-1992" is a sensitive example of how local history reveals so well how various patriotisms are lived out. Bodnar identifies a patriotic narrative at work, one that is "grounded in the substance and memory of relationships and the question of authority inherent in those relations. It acknowledges the need to honor institutional and political authorities, but it counters that need with a dream and a demand for a society based on justice and concern for others" (p. 291). Bodnar notes the presence of ideologies of paternalism and corporatism in the presence of Standard Oil and in the "body of Christ" imagery in the Catholic church, both expressing an interconnected set of loyalties "between individual, family, employer, church, community, and nation" (p. 297). In recent years, the narrative is one of declension, perceived in increased divorce and in local memories of "betrayal" by Standard Oil. Repeating the basic theme of the collection, Bodnar states, "patriotism ... can never become a notion about simple devotion to a nation." Emphasizing the difference between nationalism and patriotism, he notes that in Whiting "patriotism was moral because it was directed not to the nation-state but to a community and a country that included other people and a series of institutions" (p. 303).

Robin Wagner-Pacifi's '"Talking Lords Who Dare Not Face The Foe': Civilian Rule And The Military Notion Of Patriotism In The Clinton Presidency" asks if the president's well-publicized tension with the military offers evidence of a "provisional transformation of the very concept of patriotism?" (p. 306). Arguing that a politicized military offers only grudging acceptance of Clinton as commander-in-chief, she offers the existence of a restrictive patriotism in which a "civilian elected official must have served in the military and must represent exclusively heterosexual imperatives to be deemed completely legitimate" (p. 321). She takes up, finally, William James's question about the "moral equivalent of war," asking if service to the country can take on expanded meaning.

The collection concludes with a brief but useful description of various nationalisms in Europe by William B. Cohen.

Several final thoughts: resting somewhat uneasily in many of these essays is the relationship of religion and patriotism, or perhaps better put, whether various patriotisms are themselves an expression of religion, with sacred content taken from the life of the nation, and form taken from various religious traditions. I think it not the case--as Bodnar argues in his introduction that the "grounds for patriotism were becoming more secular than sacred" (p. 13)--and I wonder what authors mean when they use terms such as "quasi-religious." I am not sure that the civil religion model is rich enough, but this is another argument. How striking that the experience of war is so central to the development, ritual expression, and personal devotion to nationalistic forms of patriotism. Perhaps it is time to recognize war as one of the fundamental ways in which human beings are religious: they destroy worlds, and they create--through blood sacrifice of self or other--new worlds. Warriors--usually male--become not only defenders but life givers. In this argument, it is definitely not harder for a liberal society to make arguments to go to war. In fact, while the task may be more complex given the heterogeneity of the society, the symbol of holy crusade, present in almost all American wars, provides the transcendent justification and the link to individuals. So to does the threat of the meaningless of death in war. Nations must offer justification for sacrifice, and people are eager to accept it in order to be comforted by meaningful death. Only the overwhelming dissonance of a situation like the Vietnam war, for example, threatens the ideology of sacrifice and brings about a cultural crisis. These patriotisms of power, to be sure, are not impervious to criticism by ideological dissenters, by powerful local traditions, by other versions of

patriotism, but they are Clearly, for better or worse, a dominant constellation of attitudes, actions, and sites that define in many ways individual and national identity. It is a credit to this fine collection that it raises for our inspection such questions.

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