

Spring 2008

Review of "Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life" by D.L. Baldwin

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Recommended Citation

Adams, Luther, "Review of "Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life" by D.L. Baldwin" (2008).
SIAS Faculty Publications. Paper 7.
http://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/ias_pub/7

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success of code-breakers in World War I reinforced the paranoia that war itself had stimulated, even between allies. By neglecting the importance of communications security and discounting the events of the war, the writers leave us with an oddly incomplete view of the role of telecommunications in the first age of globalization.

Daniel R. Headrick is professor of history and social science at Roosevelt University in Chicago. He is the author of The Invisible Weapon (cited in this review) as well as The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century (1981), The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850–1940 (1988), and When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution, 1700–1850 (2000), and co-author of The Earth and its Peoples: A Global History, 4th ed. (2007). He is currently working on the history of global imperialism from 1400 to the present.

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Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life. By Davarian L. Baldwin. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. xiv + 363 pp. Photographs, illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, \$59.95; paper, \$22.50. ISBN: cloth, 978-0-8078-3099-4; paper, 978-0-8078-5799-1.

Reviewed by Luther Adams

Davarian Baldwin's *Chicago's New Negroes* is a welcome addition to a growing body of work exploring the New Negro Movement outside of Harlem during the 1920s. As a well-researched work on the relation between black mobility, modernity, and the transformation of Chicago's urban landscape, it crosses disciplinary boundaries with spectacular results. *Chicago's New Negroes* posits "the mass consumer marketplace as a crucial site of intellectual life." Black migrants of the 1920s and 1930s are envisioned "as subjects creating and crafting their own ideas that would forever alter the course and shape of modern world" (p. 5). "Marketplace intellectual life" was a space where "competing black and white interests converged to struggle over a multiracial, if inequitable, modern identity." Through "New Negro ways of being," blacks in Chicago challenged "conventional theories of race, class, and national belonging" (p. 13). The social construction of physical space, exemplified in "the Stroll," Chicago's black commercial and business district, black beauty products, sports, gospel music, and film, were sites of discourse and debate that gave life meaning in the black metropolis (p. 19).

Within black communities, “Old Settlers” with Victorian sensibilities engaged “New Settlers,” who held a more modernist racial outlook, in debates over competing visions of racial uplift and respectability. Paradoxically, Baldwin’s conception of “Old Settlers” and “New Settlers” does not fit the standard periodization of the Great Migration between 1915 and 1921. Many advocates of what he calls “Old Settler” respectability migrated to Chicago during the New Negro Movement of the 1920s, while other paragons of “New Settler” modernisms, such as Jack Johnson or Oscar Micheaux, migrated in the early 1900s well before many characterized as “Old Settlers.” While there were clearly competing visions of racial uplift, it is not obvious that they can as easily be divided along an axis of “Old Settler” and “New Settler,” as Baldwin would suggest.

Baldwin rightly argues that “the consumer marketplace and intellectual life did not stand at odds in the black metropolis” (p. 19). However, with the exception of his discussion of gospel music, he devotes more attention to the debates within the “marketplace” of ideas than to the ways black consumers engaged in intellectual interchange. In his examination of the rise of Madam C. J. Walker and her hair-care empire, Baldwin argues that migrants used the mass-consumer marketplace to implant “an alternative set of values and visions of the world” (pp. 55–56). He focuses almost entirely on intellectuals, citing Walker’s creation of a “cult of the natural,” which valorized African heritage and unprocessed black beauty as an indicator of moral purity and a means to sell beauty products. However, many questions about the perspective of black consumers remain unexplored. For instance, did blacks buy these products to consume notions of a mythical African past, or did they do so simply because the products worked? What did consumption mean to a black migrant? How did consumption speak to the New Negro consciousness? Or did it merely signify participation in the broader mainstream mass culture that was growing up during the 1920s? It is unclear to what degree blacks bought the ideas that intellectuals brought to the marketplace.

Indeed, the idea of the marketplace itself is not examined. Rather, Baldwin’s “marketplace of intellectual life” is a seemingly neutral site. Yet, in reality, the marketplace is no less contested than are the ideas sold within it. Thus, it would be important to examine the relations between intellectuals and consumers, as well as envisioning consumers as participants in intellectual debate. For instance, Baldwin notes the significance of Oscar Micheaux’s five silent and nine sound films in constructing a New Negro racial consciousness, yet he also notes that, by 1922, the “novelty of ‘race films’ had worn off” for black consumers (p. 153). However, black consumers’ choice *not* to watch Micheaux’s films

or accept his vision of racial uplift during the height of the New Negro Movement is not analyzed. The consumer marketplace and intellectual life did not operate as a one-way street; it seems that consumers had as much influence as intellectuals in this marketplace. One wonders to what degree consumption represented a critique or analysis of the world, or whether the importance of an idea can be measured solely by the degree to which black migrants were willing to pay to consume it. Baldwin is best able to examine the influence of black patterns of consumption in the making of "sacred tastes," the preference of black migrants for sanctified churches and gospel music, but he does not sustain this analysis throughout the text.

Although Baldwin does not devote as much attention to the consumer marketplace as he does to the forum for ideas, he does make a number of important contributions. *Chicago's New Negroes* points to the need to examine the New Negro Movement in black communities outside Harlem. More significantly, Baldwin convincingly argues for a radical revision of black southern migrants, defining them as agents of modernity. Migrants, from Madam C. J. Walker to Thomas Dorsey to Jack Johnson, were the architects of political culture, and they expanded the world of ideas through adornment, film, music, and recreation. Rather than being the ignorant, backward, or primitive "folk" that their contemporaries labeled them, migrants were central actors in "theorizing, challenging, and building a New Negro world" (pp. 241–42).

Finally, through an interdisciplinary approach to an amazing array of sources, Baldwin offers unparalleled insights on black life during these years. His analysis of traditional archival material, film and theater-going experience, music, and black recreation creates a more complex, and compelling, vision of black life, where physical space, style, music, mass consumer culture, and the production of knowledge intertwined in "everyday life." As such, it represents an argument for the value of interdisciplinary inquiry.

Chicago's New Negroes is a work of vital importance for scholars and students across a range of fields, including history, literature, cultural studies, American studies, and African American studies. Oddly, given the importance he devotes to examining "the folk" as producers of knowledge, Baldwin relies on the language of cultural theorists to present his case. Thus, the book will appeal mainly to scholars and more advanced students of black culture, rather than attracting a general audience. This is a pity, since *Chicago's New Negroes* is a provocative examination of the New Negro Movement that has the potential to interest many outside the academy.

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published numerous articles on African American migration, including articles in the *Register* of the Kentucky Historical Society, *Ohio Valley History*, and the *Journal of Social History*. He is currently working on a history entitled "Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration in Louisville, Kentucky," which links the histories of the Second Great Migration, Civil Rights, and urban renewal.

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The Real Pepsi Challenge: The Inspirational Story of Breaking the Color Barrier in American Business. *By Stephanie Capparell*. New York: Free Press, 2007. xvii + 349 pp. Photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$25.00. ISBN: 0-743-26571-8.

Reviewed by Robert E. Weems Jr.

Stephanie Capparell, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, has written an engaging, well-researched account of Pepsi-Cola's pioneering efforts both to diversify its corporate sales force and to increase its market share among African American consumers during the mid-twentieth century. To tell this story, Capparell utilized a variety of sources, including accounts by "six surviving members of the original Pepsi special-markets teams . . . [who] made possible the retelling of this important episode of business history" (p. 285).

Besides utilizing oral histories in telling the story of "the real Pepsi challenge," Capparell consulted a large number of contemporary African American newspapers. Because of Pepsi's unprecedented reliance on African American salesmen to market the beverage across the country, the exploits of the "Brown Hucksters" received widespread, favorable coverage in black periodicals.

Although the African American pioneers at Pepsi-Cola were lionized in the black press, as traveling sales representatives they faced special challenges in "Jim Crow" America. First and foremost, unlike their white counterparts, black salespersons could never be certain that they would be treated courteously on trains or at hotels, restaurants, and gas stations. To mitigate this situation, Pepsi-Cola's black sales representatives, along with black travelers in general, relied upon *The Negro Travelers Green Book*. Published from 1936 to 1963, this guide contained information on public accommodations across the country that welcomed African Americans.

Based on her sources, the author provides readers with a considerable amount of information about Pepsi's black pioneers. She also recounts aspects of the corporate battle between Pepsi-Cola and Coca-