

specific terms. Such a focus could become a different project altogether, yet I believe there is room for Barbour to explore popular readings of these comics. One wonders if Native American youth purchased such comics, and if so, how they reacted.

This book offers the richest available account of comic book portrayals of whiteness and Indianness, and Barbour's readings of these narratives is insightful. By locating early imaginaries of the male Indian body in nineteenth-century art and literature, he provides necessary depth to the "playing Indian" phenomenon. Importantly, he identifies how these texts work to construct a particular notion of a white America, one that is animated by its (mis)uses of the male Indian body. On balance, Barbour's book is an invaluable contribution to studies of whiteness, masculinity, and the American Indian, and I recommend it to students and scholars alike.

Chuck Springwood
Illinois Wesleyan University

Holy War: Cowboys, Indians, and 9/11s. By Mark Cronlund Anderson. Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2016. 293 pages. \$27.95 paper; \$27.99 electronic.

Writing in the wake of 9/11, Mark Cronlund Anderson contends that US military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan should be seen as part of a long American frontier tradition of waging imperialistic war based on the lie of acting defensively and righteously against aggressive, savage enemies. Anderson sees the country's early frontier wars against American Indians as the template for this kind of thinking: "The United States has not merely been at war for two centuries," Anderson stresses, "but has also been fighting the same war for two centuries" (27). Later stand-ins for Indian nations included Mexico during the Mexican-American War, numerous Central American nations, leftist political movements, and in the post-9/11 era, Muslims, particularly Arabs. At one point, Anderson calls this patterned behavior "frontier autopilot" (200). In this, Anderson draws on Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, which not only argued that the character of America was built on civilization conquering savagery, but that the pattern was likely to continue in foreign imperialistic ventures. Taking up this idea, Anderson posits that American imperialistic violence was and is regenerative, likening the United States to a trauma victim who finds temporary relief and purpose in reliving the source of the trauma over and over again.

Tracing these themes through an eclectic exploration of historical events, texts, and movies, Anderson begins with the Mexican-American War and then proceeds to the Battle of the Little Bighorn; United States interventions in the Mexican Revolution, Nicaragua, and El Salvador; the Vietnam War; and invocations of the frontier and divine favor expressed by Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Along the way, Anderson argues that newspapers and the entertainment media have been complicit in the political enterprise of justifying United States militarism with "the white man's burden." In one passage that captures this approach, Anderson writes, "Custer became an American Jesus Christ because he gave his life for the nation, much as Tarzan, or the

Virginian, or Lieutenant John J. Dunbar in Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* offered their lives for the greater good while wiping the slate clean of imperial hubris" (88).

As this quotation suggests, *Holy War* is methodologically problematic. Apart from diagnosing the supposed trauma of entire historical societies, like other psychological historians Anderson cannot overcome the basic obstacle of being unable to psychoanalyze the dead. Because the author cherry-picks examples of politicians and media supporting American militarism without acknowledging the accompanying dissent, he makes the United States appear monolithic despite diversity and change in the United States over time. Likewise, he does not address how the public responded to imperialistic politics, prose, and pictures, except insofar as he tallies votes and box-office receipts. Some of Anderson's asides, such as his comments on phallic symbolism in the Rambo movies, strike this reviewer as designed for shock value rather than insight, as when he writes: "At the most basic Freudian level, [Rambo] doesn't need to ejaculate to kill you (i.e., shooting a gun); he can symbolically fornicate you to death by stabbing you with a really big knife" (157). The result is more polemical than analytical, despite Anderson's scholarly apparatus and intermittent scholarly tone.

Such lack of discipline undermines this book's real accomplishments. Though few readers of this journal will be surprised by Anderson's argument for an American tradition that drapes its militancy in Christian religiosity, the sheer number of contemporary examples he marshals are poignant reminders of how easily tactical cause can turn into religious crusade. George W. Bush's declaration that God had chosen him to lead the so-called "war on terror" is particularly chilling. Yet Anderson undercuts this contribution by ridiculing religion as a whole, as when he submits that "Rambo is no more over the top . . . than Moses was when he parted the waters, or Jesus was when he healed a leper, or Saint Rose of Lima was when she achieved sainthood while she really suffered from mental illness." He continues, "If you want to bash Rambo for stretching credulity, then all religion becomes fair game, at least insofar as the narratives are logically absurd and empirically nonsensical" (166). Passages like this do nothing to advance Anderson's argument and risk alienating a sizable number of his readers, who have the right to expect rigorous and respectful scholarship.

If Anderson's argument sounds familiar, it should. *Holy War* is less original than an update of such classics as Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* and Richard Drinnon's *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building*. Anderson might have done more to acknowledge his debt to these scholars while emphasizing the value of applying their insights to contemporary times. After all, there is an important cautionary tale here about how Donald Trump and his circle of alt-right racists, Christian-right extremists, and plutocrats might manipulate deep-seated American imperialistic impulses to wreak havoc in ways we can only imagine. Beware.

David J. Silverman

George Washington University