*Saints in Three Acts*—or about Wright's potentially compromising response to Stein's problematic narrative of African American life, *Melanctha*, Weiss's book lays the foundation for further discussion about these issues. A clearly written account of a fleeting and unlikely alliance between two writers remarkably attuned to the larger aesthetic and political issues of modernity, Weiss's book shows how much both Stein and Wright studies can benefit from this kind of comparative analysis.

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***Money and Modernity: Pound, Williams, and the Spirit of Jefferson.*** **By Alec Marsh. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press. 1998. xvi, 290 pp. $39.95.**

One vexed aspect of reading Pound's and Williams's poetry lies in understanding the role played by economics. Most economically challenged literary scholars dismiss such considerations in *The Cantos* and *Paterson* as eccentric or peripheral. But Alec Marsh's useful study places economics directly in the center, suggesting that the poets' "American political background . . . constitutes a positive position and is not simply reactionary or anti-modern." Marsh's exposition of Jeffersonian economics is the most extensive I have read by someone not a Poundean or Social Credit ideologue, and it is far more accessible than, for instance, Pound's *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*.

Marsh suggests that Jeffersonians and their descendants, the populists, represent debtor classes that stand "for cheap money, and [are] opposed [to] usury, banks, Wall Street, and the institutions of the creditor class." The Hamiltonian strain in American politics stands for tight control of money and the use of credit to create new money. For Jeffersonians, value derives from both the land and the production and distribution of goods and services. Hamiltonians, on the other hand, believe that production and distribution provide occasions for controlling prices and producing capital. Marsh suggests that Pound's embrace of fascism represents an American populism, with affinities closer to Martin Heidegger than Alfred Rosenberg. We find Williams's pluralistic connection with populism more comfortable because he accepts modernity's teeming possibilities. While the monistic Pound needed "to reject much of modernity in the name of social justice, Williams declared that we must embrace it, in all its filthiness, if we are to control it."

The two poets also demonstrate different connections to pragmatism. Williams's connection goes back through Dewey to William James and Emerson. Thus the heavy allusiveness in *Paterson* is to *things* in the American environment. In *The Cantos*, however, because Pound's connection to pragmatism is not organic, the allusions are to other cultures—such as Confucian China or Sigismundo Malatesta's Renaissance Italy or the contemporary Italy of Benito Mussolini—that for Pound represent ideal economic situations. Both poets,

however, accept the Jeffersonian view that the value of poems is intrinsic and not dependent for price on a market managed by dispensers of credit. For both men, then, the production of poetry is not just a matter of aesthetics; it is good economics.

Marsh's ability to explain the Jeremiad quality of both poets and to connect this prophetic stance to their verse is another, though lesser, virtue of this book. I did find some of Marsh's readings pro forma and thesis-driven—particularly his reading of Williams's early poem "The Wanderer." His detailed explanations, however, of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian economics will allow other critics to go back to *The Cantos* and *Paterson*, the two poems most involved with economic issues. This return may help to recuperate both poets, perhaps especially Pound, who are increasingly being read only by small coteries.

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***The Suburb of Dissent: Cultural Politics in the United States and Canada during the 1930s*. By Caren Irr. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 1998. ix, 293 pp. Cloth, $54.95; paper, $18.95.**

At first, I was put off by Caren Irr's sometimes reductive prose in *The Suburb of Dissent*. For example, she describes Howard Fast, Harvey Swados, and "Stevenson liberals" as "middlebrow manipulators of mass culture." I kept reading because I was interested in Irr's argument that literature of the thirties articulated "many late-twentieth-century concerns—with nationalism, race, gender, sexuality, and the marketing of culture." Also, I can still tear up when I read W. H. Auden's "We Too Had Known Golden Hours," the source for the title and epigraph of this book.

To her credit, Irr includes Canadian writers of the thirties in the discussion of American leftist literary subculture. The comparisons she makes between Hugh MacLennan and Dorothy Livesay and their southern neighbors, particularly in regard to their acceptance of national identity and the definition of regional literature, broaden our understanding of the challenges of writing overtly political literature. Although Irr qualifies the accomplishment of Livesay's protodocumentary poems, "Depression Suite," she does a fine job illustrating how these poems, didactic as they might be, paved the way for Livesay to compose poetry rich in tension between public voice and private image.

Irr also brings a number of fresh perceptions to the work of Nathanael West by extricating him from the generally accepted view that he wrote in opposition to his thirties peers, that he had to suppress his left-wing political sympathies in order to write *A Cool Million*. She demonstrates that West was "engaged in the major debates . . . over the comparative merits of folk, mass, and proletarian cultures," and she suggests that, like John Dos Passos