The contribution of William J. Maxwell’s publication of Claude McKay’s Complete Poems is momentous, particularly for Atlanticist literary studies. The volume contains important never-before published poetry and reintroduces readers to McKay’s most well known work in ways that will renew its interest considerably. Maxwell’s notes are extensively informing, almost to the point of making this a variorum edition; he gives substantial textual history for each poem, including variations from different drafts and publishing contexts where available. His annotations bear evidence of a sharp literary-historical impetus and very scrupulous standards for textual editing. In the interest of preserving the original context of the poetry, Maxwell includes the prefatory prose to particular volumes by McKay himself, as well as his mentors Walter Jekyll and Max Eastmann.

McKay’s early volumes in Jamaican dialect have received thoughtful attention from Michael North and from Winston James’s selected republication and thorough analysis in A Fierce Hatred of Injustice: Claude McKay’s Jamaican Poetry of Rebellion (2001). Songs of Jamaica and Constab Ballads are provided here without abridgment for the first time since their initial appearance in 1912 and with substantial notes—by Maxwell with extensive reference to Jekyll, who annotated the originals for educated white audiences. These inclusions should provide a formidable test to readers with over-confident and limited conceptions of the relation between poetic form, national language, and literary history.

McKay’s cosmopolitan itinerary, which has recommended his fiction to critics interested in trespassing on the traditions of national literatures, is much in evidence here. The sharply exilic perspective of his writing in and about the United States is palpable in the justly celebrated poems of the early Harlem Renaissance, as well as in verse written from the 1930s and 1940s, a period during which McKay was previously thought to have given up verse for the rough and ready, Hemingwayesque prose of his novels and social commentary. A previously unpublished suite of poems on cities makes for a dizzyingly peripatetic reading. Kingston, New York, Berlin, London, Paris, Marseilles, Fez, Marrakech, Tangiers, St Petersburg, Moscow and more are represented in sometimes bitter, sometimes enrapt tones that will surprise readers only familiar with more famous poems of nostalgia for his Caribbean homeland like “Tropics in New York.” His stays in France and the USSR have received significant examination from Brent Edwards and Kate A. Baldwin recently. However, this volume makes available to researchers notable moments of literary engagement in Weimar Berlin, England, and Morocco, which have yet to be examined with an eye for the valences of transnational encounter.
Many of McKay's critics have noted with wrong-headed apology that he was not a particularly complex versifier. The Complete Poems afford the opportunity to reconsider this diagnosis along lines less beholden to high modernist conceptions of literary experiment. McKay emerges as one of the foremost practitioners of the sonnet form—along with Edna St. Vincent Millay, Miguel Hernandez, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Ted Berrigan—in the 20th century. Maxwell convincingly reads the sonnet “America” as setting at odds a myriad of metrical prerogatives of the sonnet form (Spenserian, Shakespearian, and Baudelairean), with a detachment and a sprezzatura—the appearance of effortlessness or nonchalance—that sits by while empires fall. Infusing it with biting political and social commentary offset by an extremely blasé neo-Romantic sensibility, the sonnet is quickened at McKay’s fingers.

His language, despite his open and entitled revolutionary spirit, is often bound in layered density. He is fond of compound epithets and adverbs that contribute to the arch character of his voice, but just as often, he winds them down to the invariably lower-class subjects of his work. In “Dawn in New York” (1920), these compound words track to the upward and downward movement of light and dark, grandiloquent and hard-boiled:

The Dawn! The Dawn! The crimson-tinted, comes
Out of the low still skies, over the hills,
Manhattan’s roofs and spires and cheerless domes!

... The shadows wane. The Dawn comes to New York.
And I go darkly-rebel to my work (172–3).

The riptide paradoxes of McKay’s poetry are treacherous, and the absorption of his life in his work is Byronic in scope. The importance of sexuality in his wandering has recently come in for some examination with respect to his prose, but there is a great deal to consider in connection. “Bennie’s Departure” and “Consolation,” found in Constab Ballads, relate the high-wire balance of furtive and brazen in the speaker’s love of another man in the barracks of a Jamaican police academy. Later, the poems of Harlem Shadows, which score McKay’s loose affiliation with the free-love movement pitch a dance of garish abandon and cold reserve:

Last night I gave you triumph over me,
So I should be myself as once before,
I marveled at your shallow mystery,
And haunted hungrily your temple door.
I gave you sum and substance to be free,
Oh, you shall never triumph any more! (196)

These adventures fuel McKay’s vagabondage, and one of the joys of this volume is to see the reappearance of imagery and diction from the sexier poems in the more political ones. An Atlantic nostalgia and ferocity encircle and protect his ecstasies. What is finally extraordinary about his verse is the way that it can remain unquestionably revolutionary, and yet stand aside the pettiness of realpolitik. This is accomplished through a worldly humanism mixed of detachment and affect, rather than guided by a false and arbitrary sentimentality:
This mood that seems to you so passing strange,
This that you wrongly call a cynic smile,
Is nothing but the sequence of a sea-change—
I have been running round a little while. (218)

In these moments, McKay’s charm disarms as it takes arms, and his revolt takes hate on vacation. Maxwell is agile to point out that McKay “slipped back and forth among revolutionary, entrepreneurial, and artistic tourisms” (xviii). Among the many questions raised by this volume, one of the most vexing regards what to do with the literary history of an individual who will not stay put, when literary history is so tied to place and nation.

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When it was founded in June 2000, the International American Studies Association was designed to promote the interdisciplinary study of American culture and society on regional, national, transnational, and global levels. Three years later the organization held its first World Congress, posing the question, how far is America from here, in order to examine the issue of American identity. Specifically, to what extent is American culture and society a hemispheric and/or global matter; is there an American identity operating solely within the borders of the United States, or does it also extend throughout the Americas, if not also worldwide?

For those of us who were not able to attend the Congress, held 22–24 May 2003 in Leiden, the Netherlands, the resulting publication offers a rich assortment of musings and explorations on this topic. The volume contains forty essays, sub-divided into six categories: (1) American Studies from an International American Studies Perspective; (2) International, Transnational, Hemispheric America; (3) American Social, Ethical, and Religious Mentalities; (4) Comparative Perspectives, Literary Counterpoints; (5) American Identities; and (6) Space and Place in American Studies. Given that there were 57 distinct sessions at the Congress, with nearly 200 different presenters representing more than 30 countries, the editors presumably had to do considerable winnowing as part of their process of selecting essays for publication.

Since the volume contains neither an introduction nor conclusion—only half a page of acknowledgments—it is difficult to say on what basis these particular essays were chosen. Perhaps native English speakers were over-represented in the submission of papers for publication; but the fact remains that of the 42 contributors, 16 are affiliated with an institution in the United States, and another four from Canada and the UK. The suggestion here seems to be that America is not very far from the English-speaking world.
There seems to be a similar skewing in terms of the subjects covered. Exactly half of the forty essays deal with literary figures or literary texts. Fortunately, there are some splendid essays on Turkish-American, Korean-American, and Portuguese literature to supplement some of the usual suspects (Thoreau, Melville, Eliot, Pynchon, and Auster). However, the fields of photography, television, and the visual arts seem entirely absent, and I could find fewer than 20 pages (out of some 600 pages in all) devoted to the topic of film. The suggestion here seems to be that America is not very far from the world of literature.

An additional shortcoming is the lack of an index to the volume, which inhibits an overview of the topics covered. Moreover, a certain editorial sloppiness does scant credit to the International American Studies Association. Place names and proper names are misspelled (including Herman Melville’s); and the display of bibliographical entries lacks consistency—usually they are inverted and alphabetized by the author’s last name; but sometimes they are not inverted, and in at least one case they are alphabetized by the author’s first name.

Nevertheless, there is much of value here for anyone interested in the work of Americanists from many parts of the globe. Among my favourites are essays on cannibalistic thought in the Americas (citing Cole Porter and the Coca-Cola Company as examples), Janis Joplin’s racial identity as a singer of the blues, and Selma Ekrem’s autobiographical account of her coming of age in Istanbul. Moreover, Werner Sollors’s essay—originally, a plenary address at the Congress—is a good illustration of interdisciplinary American Studies, covering not only political allegories on war and the anxiety of the Pilgrims in Holland, but also what happens when you Google the phrase, “How far is America.” The results of that Internet search, much like the contents of this volume, may not be quite what you expected; but if you sort through the pages, you are certain to find more than a few items of value.

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The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism
Timothy Marr
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As America’s recent involvement in the Middle East has demonstrated, Americans’ perceptions of the region are often clouded by misunderstandings about the Islamic faith and a lack of knowledge about the region’s history. This misunderstanding has reverberations on both sides of the Atlantic. Timothy Marr’s The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism, while not explicitly addressing the current situation in Iraq, helps us to rectify at least some of those misconceptions and in the process perhaps re-orient the perspective of Atlantic Studies to include the cultural exchanges Europeans and Americans had with the Mediterranean littoral. However, while European Orientalism, and the attention it has received from scholars of colonialism and national identity politics for the past generation,
acts as an unspoken motivation for Marr’s study of American Islamicism, the United States remains the sole focus of the study. Marr’s powerful and suggestive exploration of the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world attempts to explain the complex and often contradictory relationship between the two entities, particularly the ways in which the Islamic nations have served as an important component of the United States’ cultural imaginary. Marr’s multidisciplinary approach to the emergence of American Islamicism—the ways in which it impacted the emerging national project, nineteenth-century religiosity, antebellum reform movements, and American conceptions of wealth and power—provokes not only a rereading of eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century American literature, but also a re-examination of American history and culture in the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War. Marr’s overall project encourages us to look at texts—such as Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*—from a transnational perspective, with a distinct emphasis on Islamic or oriental aspects that have been previously ignored.

Marr’s study examines several key cultural intersections in which America’s national project utilized the Islamic Orient as a foil for America’s more “progressive” agenda. He begins his discussion with the most interesting and instructive of these case studies: the young America’s interplay with the Barbary States—Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli—and its powerful effect on the nation’s self-image. Marr’s explication of the conflict vividly illustrates how the Barbary States’ capture and enslavement of American sailors off the coast of Africa proved initially an embarrassment to the new nation, only later to become a test of its resolve and military power. Although this key example is the most prominent illustration of the United States’ relationship with the Islamic Orient during the early national period, it is not an isolated one. As Marr demonstrates through a series of instructive cases, Islam, as an imagined space, exemplified “political tyranny” and “antichristian Darkness” (27), those qualities most threatening to the young American nation. And so, while the defeat of the Barbary powers ostensibly demonstrated the potency of the new American Navy, it also codified notions of American exceptionalism and supremacy in the face of an Islamic other ruled by a despot.

If America attempted to destroy the nations of “antichristian” Islam during the Tripolitan Wars, Marr argues that it embraced them during the early decades of the nineteenth century as evangelical Protestants set out on their “providential mission to help redeem the world and bring about the millennium” (84). Indeed, Marr’s analysis indicates that Christian missionaries used Islam for a variety of purposes: exposing the “corruption” within the Christian church, clarifying a logical progression of the events preceding the apocalypse, and indicating, once again, an American (or Christian) superiority over an orientalized other. Regardless of the missionaries’ interaction with the Islamic Orient, however, Marr emphasizes that a “meaningful dialogue” (133) was never developed, thus foreclosing any significant understanding of the region and its people.

The remaining chapters of Marr’s study examine the appearance of Islamic tropes and rhetoric in the antislavery and temperance movements, American Protestants’ attacks on Mormonism, and the texts of Herman Melville. The explication of Melville’s work proves particularly intriguing and is indicative of an overall strength of Marr’s text—an analysis that forces a re-examination of previously ignored yet ideologically provocative aspects of “classic” American literature. While Marr’s assessment is primarily invested in *Moby-Dick*, his discussion of Melville’s canon as a whole encourages us to reconsider our own reading and understanding of Melville’s works. Indeed, reading Melville’s text *Bartleby, the Scrivener*...
using the theoretical framework that Marr develops helps us to identify the pervasive presence of Islamicism and Orientalism couched among the text’s more-often-studied “American” elements.

*The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* offers a compelling look at the ways in which Americans have co-opted certain tenets of the Islamic Orient for their own unique purposes, ranging from nation building to identity construction. The text proves especially instructive for the reader whose understanding of America’s relationship with Islam is only cursory; however, for those with a more extensive background in Islamic studies, Marr’s thorough footnotes offer a deep bibliography for further research. Throughout, the prose is clear, concise, and accessible, and Marr’s decision to organize the text chronologically, beginning with the incidents off the Barbary Coast and ending with the nineteenth-century phenomenon of “turning Turk,” helps us to identify the progression in America’s understanding of the Orient. As Marr demonstrates, Americans’ conception of the Orient was dynamic, shifting from a place of vice that was to be condemned in the latter decades of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century, to a place of luxury that was to be emulated by American aristocrats attempting to display their wealth and power in the middle part of the nineteenth century. While the analysis at times seems overly rigid in its attempts to assign exacting interpretations of the Orient to specific periods in American history, the major premise about the uses of Islam in American culture remains salient. In light of our current cultural and political climate, Marr’s discussions about Islam offer an instructive look at the past that can also serve as a prescient guide to the future.

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*Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700*
Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra
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*Puritan Conquistadors* argues, “British American Puritans and Spanish American Catholics . . . saw the world of colonization in remarkably similar terms” (16). The similarities are so important that “we are better off if we simply consider the Puritan colonization of New England as a continuation of Iberian models rather than a radical new departure” (215). Cañizares-Esguerra makes his case for continuity with what seem to him to be two remarkable similarities:

Just as the Israelites had fought against the stiff resistance of Satan’s minions, the Philistines, Puritans and Spanish clerics felt entitled to take over America by force, battling their way into a continent infested by demons. Ultimately, the objective of both religious communities became to transform the ‘wilderness’ into blossoming spiritual ‘plantations’ (14).

Do these similarities carry the interpretive weight with which Cañizares-Esguerra would load them?
The foundational evidence for these similarities hinges on the author's interpretation of a genre he calls the Iberian satanic epic. According to Cañizares-Esguerra, these poems of the New World conquest have a “quasi-Manichean structure of two great cosmic powers engaged in battle over the control of the New World” (49). However, this gaunt, binary structure is largely a product of the author's imagination, in which the moral complexity of the genre's Classical antecedents are replaced with an impoverished vision of the world in which all realities are ultimately the result of the struggle between God and Satan for supremacy. The Devil as a literary character shows up here and there; yet somehow he fails in making these poems his own, or even about him. For example, the author claims that La Araucana, a widely read poem whose main subject matter was the yet unfinished* and for many contemporaries unwinnable* war against the Araucanians in Chile, has no other plot at its core than the fight between God and his enemies. Contrary to the author's claim, the Devil makes, at best, an incidental appearance in La Araucana, a poem in which a providentialist view of history is put to the test by the author's treatment of personal, historical, and political material. Cañizares-Esguerra claims that Paradise Lost was influenced by this genre; it is more accurate to say that the author has tried to squeeze the genre into Milton's framework.

There is no comparable epic tradition for the English New World, satanic or otherwise. Cañizares-Esguerra is left to seek for its motifs as best he can among a variety of sources. He simplifies his task by his hazily imprecise, broad-brush use of the term “Antichrist.” When Cañizares-Esguerra gets to New World puritans, who, according to the author, “embraced the Iberian Satanic epic wholesale” (71) his pickings are thin. These consist for the most part of scattered references to how the Indians were under the control of Satan and the scattered use of chivalric motifs. The plot of his main piece of sustained evidence, Edward Johnson's History of New England, is shaped in large measure by Johnson's attempt to connect New England's history with the tumultuous political and religious struggles that were taking place in mid-seventeenth century England, a context that Cañizares-Esguerra, who misidentifies Johnson as a minister, does not discuss. Locating Indians within a satanic context certainly made it easier for puritans to take their land, but Cañizares-Esguerra does not attempt to back up his assertion that this demonization was “more important” (14), or even nearly as important, to puritans than the myriad of other justifications they advanced for taking Indian land.

Chapters three to five discuss similarities in understandings of the Devil and nature. As would be expected, given a common intellectual world and given only recently sundered religious traditions, these similarities are considerable. Scholars with more conventionally limited areas of research, geographically and culturally, will appreciate and learn from Cañizares-Esguerra's widely ranging examples. Even so, the author stretches his points. For all the abuse that was poured on Anne Hutchinson's head, she was never portrayed as a monstrous, demonic cannibal (93). The author takes the single example of a puritan layman who thought that his bible would give him protection from Indian attack to generalize that “Puritans' belief in the Bible as a preternatural physical object in every way resembles the Catholic . . . use of the Cross” (117). One has to stand off at a very far distance before the shared use of biblical horticultural imagery blurs a Peruvian nunnery into a New England meeting house, while neither in New Spain nor New England did clerical elites construct “narrative[s] of universal salvation” (214).

Cañizares-Esguerra's effort to demonstrate that New England colonization should be considered simply a continuation of Iberian models leads him to repeated
oversimplifications and exaggerations of the materials from both regions. However, at one point in the book’s introduction, he offers a more modest purpose: he is only attempting to “demonstrate that some justifications for colonization in Puritan colonial Massachusetts were really not that different from those espoused in, say, Catholic colonial Lima” (9). *Puritan Conquistadors* certainly accomplishes that goal. With adventurous erudition, it evokes a shared culture of what the author calls “superstition, backwardness, and hubris” (205). *Puritan Conquistadors* serves as a useful and stimulating reminder that it was similarities as much as differences that made Protestants and Catholics intimate enemies in the early modern world.

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